

# THE MARYLAND RELAY Connection

SPRING 2019



## Maryland Relay Announces New MAT Program Evaluation Centers



We are very pleased to announce that approved applicants of the Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program can now receive evaluations for equipment in 10 locations throughout Maryland! The addition of new evaluation centers will make the process of receiving equipment easier and more convenient for MAT program participants.

The following organizations are now providing MAT program evaluations in 10 locations across the state:

★ **Telecommunications Access of Maryland (TAM)** oversees the MAT program and is serving applicants from Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Cecil, and Harford Counties at its Baltimore City location.

★ **Independent Marylanders Achieving Growth through Empowerment (IMAGE) Center of Maryland**, located in Towson, with Accessible Resources for Independence, located in Glen Burnie, is serving applicants from Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, and Howard Counties.

★ **Easter Seals** is serving applicants in Carroll, Frederick, Montgomery, Prince George's, and Washington Counties at its Hagerstown and Silver Spring locations.

★ **MAC, Inc.** is serving applicants on Maryland's Eastern Shore at its Salisbury and Easton locations.

★ **Maryland Technology Assistance Program (MD TAP)** is serving applicants in Baltimore City and Alleghany, Baltimore, Calvert, Charles, Garrett, and St. Mary's Counties at its Baltimore City, Cumberland and Mechanicsville locations.

*continued on page 2*



Voice/TTY: 800-552-7724 or 410-767-6960

Video Phone: 443-453-5970

Fax: 410-767-4276

[mdrelay.org](http://mdrelay.org)



You may notice that in our contact information, we include a Video Phone (VP) number. Persons using American Sign Language can contact us via Video Phone at 443-453-5970.

## Maryland Relay Announces New MAT Program Evaluation Centers, continued

“Our main goal is always to make telecommunication easy and accessible for all Marylanders,” said Asia Johnson, Maryland Relay public relations officer. “It is vital to the MAT program that we have evaluation centers throughout the state to help us serve as many people as possible, and we are thrilled to have established new partnerships with these community organizations.”

Equipment available through the MAT program includes:

- amplified phones
- captioned telephones
- ring signalers
- tablets
- large-button telephones
- hands-free phones
- and more

Qualified MAT applicants include those who do not use a standard telephone due to their hearing status, speech difficulty, low vision, limited mobility, or cognitive factors. Financial eligibility is also considered. If you are approved, you will receive notification via your preferred method of communication (standard mail or email) and must then schedule an evaluation at a MAT center to ensure you receive the equipment best suited to meet your needs.

To apply for the MAT program or for more information, visit [www.mdrelay.org](http://www.mdrelay.org) or contact Maryland Relay at 800-552-7724 (Voice/TTY), 410-767-6960 (Voice/TTY), or 443-453-5970 (Video Phone).

## Allysa Dittmar selected for Hamilton Relay 2018 Deaf Community Leader Award

Allysa Dittmar of Baltimore has been selected as the recipient of the Hamilton Relay 2018 Deaf Community Leader Award for the state of Maryland.

Allysa is the co-founder and president of ClearMask, a company that makes full-face transparent surgical masks to make communication easier. She came up with the idea after experiencing difficulty communicating with health professionals after an interpreter was not provided and all staff wore masks, which limited lip-reading and facial expressions.

Allysa is an activist, supporter and volunteer for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. She is chair of the Cultural and Linguistic Competence Committee for the statewide Behavioral Health Advisory Council in Maryland and has worked with the Deafness-Related Evaluations and More (DREAM) clinic, providing neuropsychological services to children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

During her years working at the Governor’s Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, she focused on health policy, access, and mental health issues and was involved in changing state regulations to provide access to telehealth for

people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing through ASL-fluent providers. She was also heavily involved in pushing for text-to-911 emergency services in Maryland, which was adopted by the State this spring.

We commend Allysa for her leadership and advocacy and are proud to present her with the Hamilton Relay 2018 Deaf Community Leader Award!



*Allysa Dittmar with her award, presented by Maryland Relay outreach coordinator Jenny Curran.*

# Helpful Tips for Using Your CapTel® Phone

## Clearing Previous Calls from Your Display

Your CapTel phone keeps a list of incoming phone calls, including calls you may have missed. The display screen shows how many new calls came in that were not answered. It also shows when callers leave an answering machine message. Over time, you may want to clear these lists from your display screen. Here's how:



### For CapTel 840 / 840i / 880i:

#### **New Messages**

Indicates incoming calls that left a message on the CapTel Answering Machine.

To clear from display screen: Review the new messages (press the UP ARROW).

To delete all answering machine messages: Press YES for the Options menu, then select Answering Machine (YES) ➤ Clear All Messages (YES).

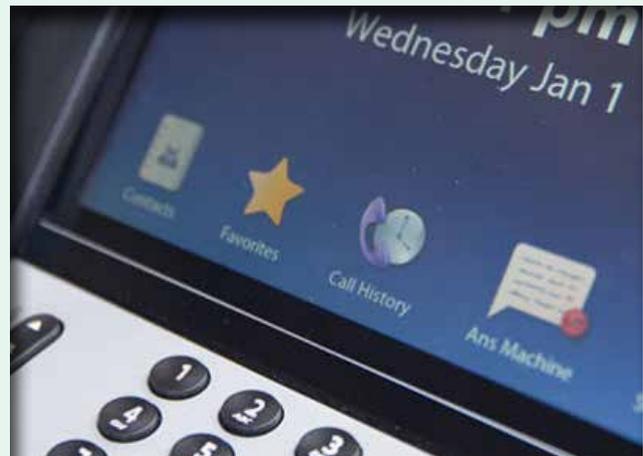
#### **New Calls**

Indicates incoming calls that were not answered.

To clear from display screen: Review the new calls (press the DOWN ARROW).

To delete all recent calls: Press YES for the Options menu, then select Call History (YES) ➤ Clear All Caller ID (YES).

*CapTel is a registered trademark of Ultratec, Inc.*



### For CapTel 2400i:

The number of new calls/messages are shown on the display screen icons. To review or delete calls, touch the appropriate icon.

## CapTel Offers 24/7 Assistance

If you're having trouble with your CapTel phone, help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (excluding major holidays)!

To contact:  
Just press the blue button  
on your CapTel phone  
or  
1-888-269-7477  
or  
1-866-670-9134 (Spanish)



# Q&A

## with Maryland Relay's Outreach Coordinators

Tarita Turner and Jenny Curran are outreach coordinators for Maryland Relay. It is their job to travel throughout the state, attend events, and give presentations to help Marylanders understand the services that Maryland Relay provides.

### When did you start working at Maryland Relay?

**Jenny:** I started as an intern back in 2003. After I graduated from Towson University, I developed my career and came back over a decade later. I've been an outreach coordinator since August 2017.

**Tarita:** I started as an outreach coordinator in August of 2018 but had been working for Maryland Relay since January 2018 as an administrative assistant.

### What is the most common question you get asked when you're at an outreach event or presentation?

**Tarita:** I often get asked simply, "what is Maryland Relay?" A lot of people aren't familiar with 7-1-1 or Relay services at all, so I explain how Relay works and how it's beneficial for everyone in the state.

**Jenny:** For those who have heard of Maryland Relay, they often believe that it's only for people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. When I'm talking to people in the community, I get to tell them about how it can affect so many people's lives, whether they're Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, have limited mobility, difficulty speaking clearly, or even know somebody who uses Relay. Plus, I can introduce them to the Maryland Assessible Telecommunications (MAT) program and how it can help get them the equipment they need.



Tarita Turner



Jenny Curran

### What makes Maryland Relay an important resource?

**Jenny:** For those who can use a standard telephone easily, we may take for granted how much we rely on the phone in our everyday lives. Not just for connecting with our families, we use the phone to schedule appointments with doctors, conduct business, or even just order a pizza. Being able to use a phone is vital to living a fully independent life, so Maryland Relay gives that feeling of independence to those who otherwise wouldn't have it.

### What do you love most about your job?

**Tarita:** Being able to connect with people every day is my favorite part of what I do. I love meeting new people and knowing that I can make a difference in their lives. Plus, I was born and raised in Maryland so being able to explore my home state and travel to different towns and cities has given me a stronger appreciation of Maryland. This state is so diverse and so beautiful and even though we look small on a map, we're mighty!

## Q&A continued

### What is the most common misconception you've heard about Relay?

**Jenny:** People often don't realize that Relay is so much more than TTY services. Technology is changing daily and we're constantly adapting and growing our services to meet the current needs of our users. Our MAT program has even expanded its tablet offerings, so it's easier than ever to stay connected and remain independent.

**Tarita:** I've had people express concerns about privacy and being uncomfortable having another person on the line while they're on the phone. People don't realize how truly private your Relay calls are. Before Relay, those who couldn't use the phone needed another person, whether a family member, friend, or neighbor, to make their calls for them. Imagine having to ask someone to call your doctor or speak to your bank. With Relay, you're having your own conversation and really getting that sense of privacy back. The operators are held to very strict codes and standards and every call is completely confidential.

### What's the most important thing people should know about Maryland Relay?

**Tarita:** It's so easy! Making a call through Maryland Relay is easier than people seem to think, and the operators are very helpful. If you have questions, they're there to walk you through it.

**Jenny:** Not only is it easy, it's free. Maryland Relay is a free public service. Other than your basic phone bill, you don't pay to make calls through Relay. Plus, if you qualify for the MAT program, even the equipment you use will be provided by the State so there really isn't a financial obligation. It's accessible for everyone.



## TDI Premier's Video "Lifeline for Deaf People"

Before the invention of TTYs and Relay services, using a phone was one of the greatest challenges that individuals who are Deaf faced every day. But have you ever wondered about the history of the devices they now use to make phone calls?

Al Sonnenstrahl, vice chair of the Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay (GABTR), produced and directed a video that not only explains the history of the TTY but shows individuals who are Deaf—or hearing but raised by parents who are Deaf—telling their first-hand experiences of struggling to use a telephone. This video was premiered by Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI) at its 50th anniversary gala in October 2018.

The video is predominately in American Sign Language with both open captions and narration. Plus, you may see someone you recognize. Our own Brenda Kelly-Frey, director of Telecommunications Access of Maryland (TAM), is featured in the video telling her story of being raised by parents who are Deaf!

**Find the video on YouTube by searching "Lifeline for Deaf People" or visiting TDI's YouTube channel.**



## Emergency Preparedness Tips

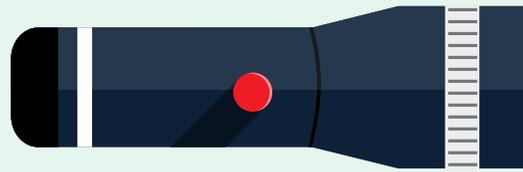
Emergencies often come without warning, so finding ways to prepare yourself ahead of time can make recovery faster and can allow you to help others. Maryland is susceptible to hurricanes, flooding, tornadoes, and severe winter storms so it is important to have a plan in place at all times.

Contact your local non-emergency police number ahead of time to see if your community has a system in place to make emergency voice and TTY calls to inform you of evacuation processes or other important information. The police department or an emergency notification agency would send out this warning call.

### Prepare an emergency supply kit that includes:

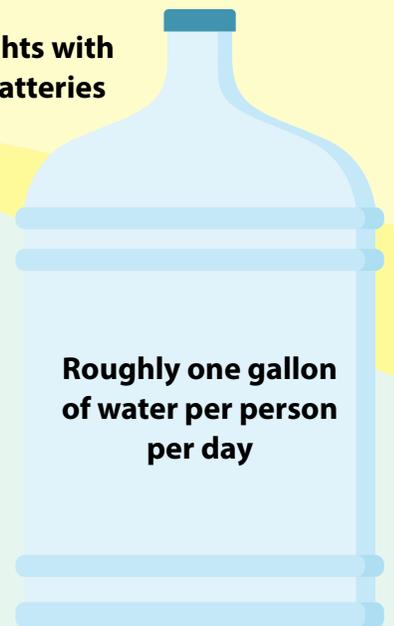


**A three-day supply of packaged or canned food that does not need electricity to prepare**



**Flashlights with extra batteries**

**Medicines and prescriptions**



**Roughly one gallon of water per person per day**

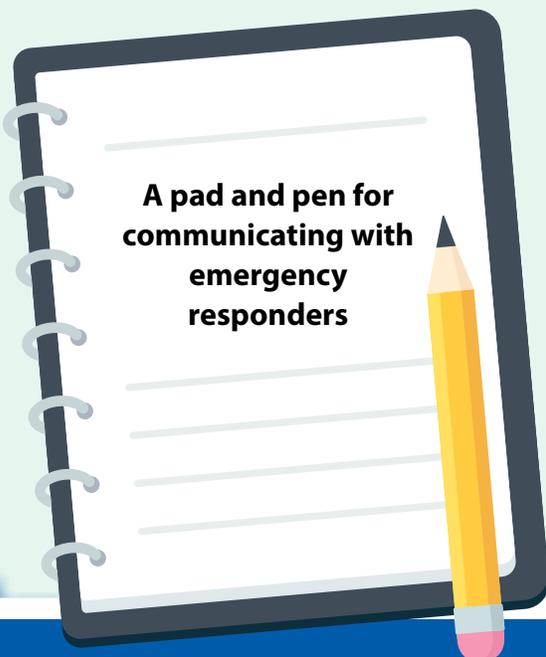


**Personal care items such as tooth brushes, tooth paste, and bathroom tissue**



**Extra batteries for hearing aids, cochlear implants, or assistive listening devices**

In addition to an emergency kit, make sure every room in your home has a fire alarm with a strobe light signaler. Remember to be aware and prepare! You may need to rely on your resources for several days.



**A pad and pen for communicating with emergency responders**

## Create or Update Your Maryland Relay Customer Profile

Have you completed your Maryland Relay customer profile? Customer profiles ensure that our operators use your personal call preferences on every Maryland Relay call you make or receive, including primary language, speed dials, and how you want the operator to greet the people you call.

If you have already created your profile, remember to keep it up to date. If you've moved or have had any changes to your personal information, update your profile to help us better serve you.

**To fill out or update your customer profile, visit [hamiltonrelay.com](https://hamiltonrelay.com).**



## GABTR Seeks New Representative

The Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay (GABTR) has an opening for one representative who has difficulty speaking and requires the use of specialized telecommunication equipment. Board members are responsible for reporting to and from their community. The Board meets quarterly in various locations throughout the state and terms are three years.

**To apply please go to <https://govapps.md.gov/appointments/apply/> or contact [Sabrina Fields at Sabrina@mdrelay.org](mailto:Sabrina@mdrelay.org).**



## Meet Betty Dodds Putkovich: GABTR Chair

The Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay (GABTR) provides Maryland Relay with vital feedback and insight on the issues that affect Relay users, including quality and trends in Relay services, technology, and community outreach. The members who serve on GABTR are helping us make strides in improving communication accessibility, and we want you to meet them!

Betty Dodds Putkovich is the chair of GABTR. She was appointed to the board in 2005 by Governor Robert Ehrlich.

Betty is Late-Deafened and has been very proactive in the issues of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities. She has and continues to serve on many boards, including as a founding board member of Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Government (DHHIG), an organization advocating for fair treatment of government employees who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Betty's husband Ken also serves on GABTR. She enjoys traveling, cooking, baking, and corresponding with church members who are homebound or in nursing homes.



**Telecommunications Access of Maryland**  
*Maryland Dept. of Information Technology*  
301 West Preston Street, Suite 1008A  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201



 [facebook.com/MarylandRelay711](https://facebook.com/MarylandRelay711)

 [twitter.com/MDRelay711](https://twitter.com/MDRelay711)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Look for Maryland Relay's Outreach Coordinators at these upcoming events.  
To see a complete list, visit [mdrelay.org](http://mdrelay.org).

**May 8-9**

**Harford 50+ Senior Expo**

The Richlin Ballroom  
1700 Van Bibber Road, Edgewood, MD 21040

**May 10**

**BBJ 2019 Spring Business Growth Expo**

The Delta Hotel by Marriott Baltimore Hunt Valley  
245 Shawan Road, Hunt Valley, MD 21031

**May 22**

**Prince George's County Senior Provider Network  
Senior Health and Fitness Day**

Prince George's Sports and Learning Complex  
8001 Sheriff Road, Landover, MD 20785

**May 30**

**Augsburg Village Health and Wellness Fair**

6825 Campfield Road, Baltimore, MD 21207

**June 6**

**2019 Maryland Gerontological Association  
Conference**

The Meeting House  
5885 Robert Oliver Place; Columbia MD 21045

**June 18**

**Cockeysville Senior Center**

10535 York Road, Cockeysville, MD 21030

**June 24-25**

**Maryland Municipal League Conference**

The Ocean City Convention Center