

CALLER

THE COMMONWEALTH

Virginia Relay: Telecommunications services for the deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind and speech disabled

Fall 2015
Special Edition

Hamilton Relay Is Your New Virginia Relay Service Provider

As of July 31, 2015, Virginia Relay welcomes Hamilton Relay as the new Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) provider for Virginia. To help you understand what to expect with this transition, here are responses to a few Frequently Asked Questions:



Is Virginia Relay closing?

No, quite the opposite! Virginia Relay, the free public service that enables people who are deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind or have difficulty speaking to communicate with standard telephone users, is still available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We have simply chosen a new service provider. As of July 31, 2015, we begin a new five-year contract with Hamilton Relay as Virginia's provider of Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS).



Who is Hamilton Relay?

Hamilton Relay is a division of Hamilton Telecommunications, a diversified telecommunications service provider headquartered in Aurora, Nebraska. Hamilton Relay has provided telecommunications relay services for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind, or have difficulty speaking since 1991. Hamilton Relay currently provides TRS and/or CapTel service in 18 states, including Virginia, as well as the District of Columbia and the island of Saipan.



Why did Virginia Relay choose Hamilton Relay as its new service provider?

We chose Hamilton Relay because they have been providing high-quality TRS services across the country for 24 years. And with Hamilton Relay as our TRS provider, we are able to offer Virginia Relay users a host of new features, including 7-1-1 routing and a Speech-to-Speech User Training Line. Hamilton Relay also has a well-established presence in the deaf and hard of hearing community, both nationwide and here in Virginia, as they have been providing CapTel service in Virginia since 2011. With Hamilton Relay as our service provider, we are confident that Virginia Relay will continue to offer our users the highest quality TRS and customer service.



When I dial 7-1-1 to place a Virginia Relay call, who will answer my call?

Now, every Virginia Relay call is routed to one of five Hamilton Relay call centers located across the U.S., and answered by the first available Communication Assistant (CA). All Hamilton Relay CAs receive the same training and follow the same rules and protocols for call handling. That means you can expect each and every call made through Virginia Relay to accommodate personal calling preferences and be processed promptly, professionally and accurately by specially-trained CAs.

Continued on next page





Hamilton Relay Is Your New Virginia Relay Service Provider, *continued*



Will I need to create a new Virginia Relay Choice Profile?

No. All of your calling preferences as established in your existing Virginia Relay Choice Profile have been transferred and are automatically available to the Hamilton Relay CA every time you make or receive a call. To create your Virginia Relay Choice Profile, please visit www.varelay.org. To make updates to an existing profile, contact Virginia Relay Customer Care at the number below.



Will Hamilton Relay offer any new features?

Yes! With Hamilton Relay as our TRS provider, Virginia Relay is able to offer more features than ever before. New available features include: 7-1-1 routing, a Speech-to-Speech User Training Line, and Remote Conference Captioning (coming soon). A complete list will soon be available at www.varelay.org.



Will there be a charge for these new features?

No. All of the services and features available from Virginia Relay continue to be free public services, including TRS and CapTel. Charges still apply to long distance calls.



How do I place a Virginia Relay call?

As always, anyone can make a Virginia Relay call just by dialing 7-1-1. Or, you can use the following phone numbers to reach any of these specific services:

- TTY (800) 828-1120
- Voice (800) 828-1140
- STS (866) 221-6784
- Visually Assisted STS (800) 855-8220
- Spanish (800) 855-8200
- Customer Care TTY (866) 246-9300
- Customer Care Voice (866) 894-4116



Have more questions?

Feel free to contact Virginia Relay Customer Care:
TTY: 866-246-9300
Voice: 866-894-4116
Email: VARelay@HamiltonRelay.com
Visit: www.varelay.org.

Please note that under Hamilton Relay's rules and policies, Communication Assistants (CA) are required to relay all comments shared between the calling parties, and are not permitted to respond to comments or questions directed to the CA, or to have side conversations with either party. For assistance in using Virginia Relay, please contact Virginia Relay Customer Care.

New Services and Features Now Available to Virginians

On July 31, Hamilton Relay began as the new provider of Traditional Relay Service for residents of Virginia. As the newly contracted provider, Hamilton brings top-rated service and support to Virginians along with new relay features that are now available to you!

7-1-1 Routing

All services available from Hamilton Relay are accessible through 7-1-1. If the relay user has set up a Relay Choice Profile, the following things will all happen in less than a second when dialing 7-1-1:

- The call is automatically set-up in the correct connection mode (TTY, HCO, VCO, STS, Spanish)
- The call is immediately delivered to the appropriate Communication Assistant (CA)

If the relay user has no profile associated with the number they are calling from, the call will default to a voice connection. The CA will listen for different connect tones or speaking in order to connect the relay call in a timely fashion.

If a user has indicated in his or her profile that a specific gender of CA is preferred, they will automatically be answered by a CA of that gender, if one is available. If the preferred gender is not available, the call will still be answered and processed.

To set up a Relay Choice Profile, visit www.VARelay.org or contact Virginia Relay Customer Care.

Speech-to-Speech User Training Line

Hamilton Relay's Speech-to-Speech (STS) User Training Line is a resource for individuals, family, friends, medical professionals, businesses and organizations to familiarize themselves with the proper etiquette and standard procedures of using STS. Individuals who are residents of Virginia, and/or intend to use the STS Service with a Virginia resident, will be eligible to utilize the training line.

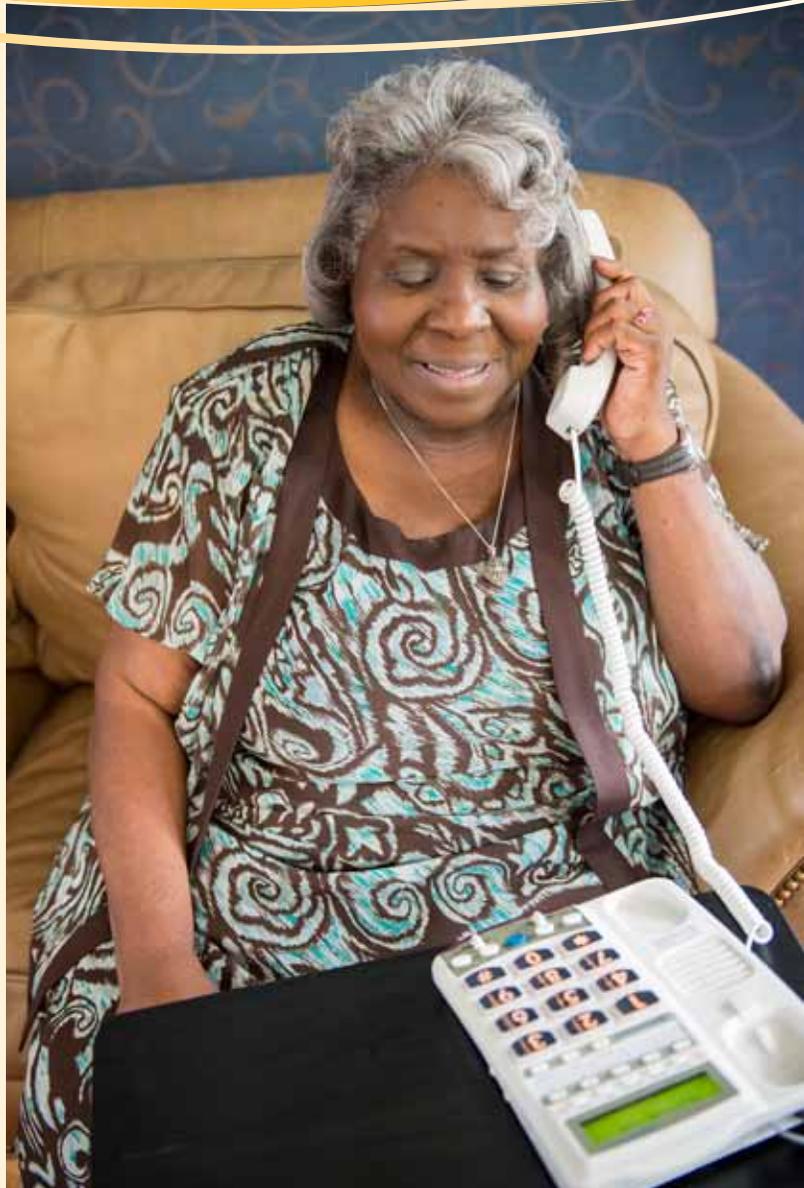
On the STS User Training Line, our representatives are prepared to:

- Describe how STS calls are placed and what happens on a typical STS call
- Explain call handling instructions including; dictated messages, privacy options, and "first thoughts" (information shared with the CA before dialing)
- Explain strategies used to help clarify speech patterns
- Review and establish Relay Choice Profile options
- Place practice calls

The User Training Line is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by dialing Virginia Relay Customer Care at 866-894-4116 (Voice) or 866-246-9300 (TTY). Hamilton is unique in that it utilizes highly trained and skilled STS staff to handle User Training Line calls.

Virginia Relay Customer Care

For more information about the new features available through Virginia Relay, visit www.VARelay.org or contact Virginia Relay Customer Care at 866-894-4116 (Voice), 866-246-9300 (TTY) or VARelay@HamiltonRelay.com.



Remote Conference Captioning – Coming Soon!

Remote Conference Captioning (RCC) enables individuals who have difficulty hearing what's said during conference calls to have a clear understanding of the conversation and participate in conference calls in a more effective manner. RCC services include Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) service delivered over the Internet for use by Virginia Relay users.

Virginia Relay users will soon be able to request RCC services by completing an RCC Schedule Request Form on the Virginia Relay website. Hamilton guarantees Virginia Relay users access to RCC Services if scheduled 24 hours in advance. Hamilton offers RCC Services with a two hour notice for emergency situations.

In order to use Remote Conference Captioning, a text user must have access to a conference bridge which allows the captionist to listen to the audio portion of the call. The text user will also need access to an Internet-connected computer, tablet, or smartphone. There is no software to download, just a link to follow to view the captions.

Connor Christian Receives 2015 Hamilton Relay High School Scholarship

Connor Christian from Arvon is a graduate of Buckingham County High School and the recipient of the 2015 Hamilton Relay High School scholarship for the Commonwealth of Virginia. As the winner, Connor received a \$500 scholarship to use towards his higher education.

The Hamilton Relay Scholarship opportunity is available to high school seniors who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or have difficulty speaking. A recipient is selected within each of the states where Hamilton is the contracted service provider. Connor was awarded his scholarship after completing the application process, including writing an essay under the topic of communication technology.

Connor is attending Emory & Henry College this fall to study kinesiology and exercise science.



ADA 25
AMERICANS WITH
DISABILITIES ACT 1990-2015

Virginia Relay Recognizes ADA 25

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the revolutionary Virginians with Disabilities Act (VDA) and the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These two critical pieces of legislation have and continue to ensure the rights of people with disabilities.

To celebrate how far we've come, and examine ways in which we can address remaining issues in the future, the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), the Network of Centers for Independent Living (CILs) in Virginia, and the Statewide Independent Living Council are hosting a two-day anniversary conference October 8-9 at the Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa/Short Pump. We will share more details on Facebook about this event as they become available.



Christopher Hoffmann Receives 2015 Better Hearing and Speech Month Recognition Award

Christopher Hoffmann is the 2015 recipient of the Hamilton Relay Better Hearing and Speech Month Recognition Award for the Commonwealth of Virginia. He was nominated by his peers because of his dedication to volunteerism and improving the lives of others.

Christopher manages Design Services and Space Planning in the Office of Campus Design and Planning at Gallaudet University and is professionally affiliated with the Northern Virginia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. He also volunteers for Rebuilding Together, a program that repairs and rehabilitates homes in the community.

Christopher served as a volunteer at Kendall Demonstration Elementary School (KDES) where he shared his knowledge and introduced students to the world of architecture and how it applies to mathematical learning. During the time he spent with KDES students, he assisted them in planning and constructing their own building models. In addition, Christopher participates in the Annual Community Improvement which helps to restore facilities for children.



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Richmond, Virginia 23229-5012

Visit us at VaRelay.org

Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC)

Consumer Members:

Carl Amos, Ed.D.

Representing Hearing Relay Users

Robbin Blankenship, VRAC Vice-Chair, 2015-2017

Representing Speech-to-Speech (STS) Relay Users

William Hess

Representing Voice Carry-Over Users

Betti Thompson, VRAC Chair, 2015 -2017

Representing Internet (IP) Relay Users

Ann Ollif

Representing Virginia Association of the DeafBlind (VADB)

Arva Priola

Representing Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

Helen Justice

Representing Virginia Association of the Deaf (VAD)

Valerie Luther

Representing Captioned Telephone Relay Users

Mani Aguilar, Au.D

Representing Speech and Hearing Association of Virginia (SHAV)

Linda Wallace

Representing Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Virginia Chapters

Barclay Shepard

Representing Hearing Relay Users

Lisa Harbour

Representing Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA)

John Slone

Representing Video Relay Users

Non-Voting Members:

Gary W. Talley, VDDHH Outreach Manager

VDDHH Outreach Programs

Paul Steussy, Hamilton Relay

Hamilton Relay Outreach Coordinator

Lauren Cramer, Hamilton Relay

Hamilton Relay Account Manager

Upcoming Events

Senior Safety Fair

September 23, 2015
Gloucester

Senior Advocate 2015 Veterans Expo

September 25, 2015
Norfolk

Virginia Association of the DeafBlind Annual Meeting

September 26, 2015
DBVI Library, Richmond

Remote Area Medical (RAM) Expedition

October 3-4, 2015
Grundy

Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC) Fall Meeting

October 8, 2015
Henrico

Statewide Independent Living Council's Conference and ADA 25th Anniversary Celebration

October 8-9, 2015
Richmond

Virginia Rural Health Association Conference

October 13-14, 2015
Staunton

VADB/VRID Haptic Communication Workshop

October 17, 2015
Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind,
Staunton

HLAA Walk 4 Hearing

October 24, 2015
National Mall, Washington DC

Remote Area Medical (RAM) Expedition

November 14, 2015
Warsaw



Find Us on Facebook!

Virginia Relay now has a Facebook page! Just enter "Virginia Relay" in Facebook's search field and click the "Like" button at the top of our page to get regular status updates of Virginia Relay news, events and more.