

CALLER

THE COMMONWEALTH

Virginia Relay: Telecommunications services for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind or have difficulty speaking

Fall 2016

THANK YOU

Clayton Bowen!

This summer we said a bittersweet farewell to our dear friend and colleague, Clayton E. Bowen, who retired from the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) after an outstanding 37-year career in state government.

Clayton first joined VDDHH in 1998, and over the years held a variety of important leadership positions, including two terms as acting director. He most recently served as technology and relay manager, where he oversaw Virginia Relay and the Technology Assistance Program (TAP).

Though you may not know him by name, if you have been served by VDDHH or Virginia Relay at any point within the last 28 years, you have benefited from Clayton's wisdom, sound judgment, commitment to excellence and generosity of spirit. In recognition of his many contributions and professional achievements, Governor of Virginia Terry McAuliffe honored Clayton with a proclamation, which was formally presented to him by Secretary of Health and Human Resources William A. Hazel, Jr. at his June 30 retirement celebration.

Clayton is a native of Danville, VA and a graduate of Old Dominion University. He was formerly employed by Virginia's Community Colleges and the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI). Along the way, he has built an impeccable reputation among the entire family of disability service agencies, including our partners at the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, the Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority, the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD) and The Virginia Department of Social Services.

We continue to salute Clayton E. Bowen for his service to the Commonwealth and for all the good that he has done on behalf of Virginia's deaf and hard of hearing community. We wish him the same happiness that he has brought to all of us over these many years. Congratulations, Clay! Have a happy, fulfilling and well-earned retirement.



Secretary of Health and Human Resources William A. Hazel, Jr. presents Clayton with a proclamation from Governor McAuliffe



Linda Wallace, president of HLAA Greater Richmond Chapter with Clayton



VDDHH and Virginia Relay staff gathered to honor Clayton at his retirement celebration

"We wish him the same happiness that he has brought to all of us over these many years."

Tips for Using Speech-to-Speech

Speech-to-Speech, or STS service is especially designed for individuals who have difficulty speaking or being understood over the phone. This may include:

- Individuals who have mild to moderate difficulty speaking and being understood;
- Individuals who have significant difficulty speaking and being understood and use Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) speech generating devices;
- Patients in rehabilitation and recovery from injuries or procedures to speech production organs and tissues;
- Individuals (including family and friends, care providers, or employees and employers) wanting to contact someone who has difficulty speaking and being understood.

During an STS call, a specially-trained Virginia Relay Communication Assistant (CA) repeats and clarifies what the STS user says, as needed.

If you or someone you know is an STS user, or is interested in placing an STS call, here are a few tips to help make your next calling experience a positive one:

Complete a Virginia STS Relay Choice Profile.

Completing a Virginia STS Relay Choice Profile helps Virginia Relay process your call more quickly and efficiently, as it allows you to pre-select certain personal call preferences and automatically share those preferences with your CA anytime you place a call. Your STS Relay Choice Profile can store your contact information and personal notes, your preferred long distance company, frequently called numbers, scripted greetings/announcements, and whether you prefer a female or male CA. You can also choose your personal call-handling preferences, and notify the CA of any AAC devices you are using.

To meet all of your calling needs, you are able to save up to five individual profiles, and you can update your profile up to three times per week. You can complete or update your Virginia STS Relay Choice Profile online at hamiltonrelay.com, or by calling Virginia Relay Customer Care at 1-866-894-4116 (voice) or 1-866-246-9300 (TTY).

Use the STS User Training Line.

The Virginia STS User Training Line is a resource to help you familiarize yourself with proper etiquette and standard procedures for using STS. The STS User Training Line is available 24/7 to anyone who is a resident of Virginia and/or intends to use STS service with a Virginia resident.

Representatives of the STS User Training Line 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.

To reach the STS User Training Line, call Virginia Relay Customer Care at 866-894-4116 (voice) or 866-246-9300 (TTY).

Try Visually Assisted STS.

Because many individuals who have difficulty speaking are best understood when they can be seen, Visually Assisted STS gives them the opportunity to use both speech and visual cues when interacting with the CA during STS calls.

Using a webcam and computer with Skype™ software, the CA is able to see the Visually Assisted STS user’s mouth movements, facial expressions and gestures as they are speaking. The CA uses these visual cues to assist in better understanding the Visually Assisted STS user’s side of the conversation.

To use Visually Assisted STS, you will need a telephone with active service, a computer with a webcam, high-speed Internet connection (512 kbps recommended), and a Skype software user account. To place a Visually Assisted STS call, dial 7-1-1 or 800-855-8220 to be connected with a CA. For assistance with Visually Assisted STS, contact the STS User Training Line by calling Virginia Relay Customer Care at 866-894-4116 (voice) or 866-246-9300 (TTY).

Other suggestions & reminders:

- You can specify whether you want the CA to repeat everything you say, or prefer the CA remain in the background and only repeat when either party requests clarification.
- The CA will begin to repeat after every three to four words you say. It is helpful for the CA if you pause while he or she is repeating.
- There may be instances when you will be asked to repeat your message to ensure that it is conveyed correctly.
- You may take all the time you need to complete your call.



Meet Eric Raff, VDDHH Deputy Director

Earlier this year, the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) welcomed Eric Raff as its new deputy director. Eric oversees the VDDHH administrative staff and contractors as well as Virginia Relay, TAP, interpreter services and outreach.

Eric is new to Virginia, although he has worked with agencies that provide services to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind for nearly 20 years. He was previously the director of the Washington State Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for 12 years. He holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Gallaudet University and a master's degree in public affairs from Indiana University.

"I am very excited to embark on this new opportunity in Virginia," says Eric. "I am proud to join the dedicated VDDHH team to help provide more equal access opportunities throughout the Commonwealth and look forward to engaging with the deaf community."

Virginia Relay is excited to have Eric on the VDDHH team! To join us in welcoming him, you may contact Eric Raff at 804-404-9090 V/VP or eric.raff@vddhh.virginia.gov.



Virginia Community Leaders Recognized with 2016 Awards

Virginia Relay's service provider, Hamilton Relay®, enjoys the opportunity to give back to the communities it serves each year by recognizing leaders within each of the states where it is the contracted relay and/or captioned telephone service provider. This year, the following individuals were honored for their accomplishments and contributions to individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have difficulty speaking:



College Scholarship Recipient: Taylor Thomas-Harris

Taylor Thomas-Harris, a graduate of Matoaca High School in Chesterfield was awarded a \$500 scholarship to use towards her higher education. The Hamilton Relay Scholarship is awarded each year to a high school senior who is deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind, or who has difficulty speaking. To be chosen for the scholarship, Taylor completed an application and wrote an essay on the topic of communication technology. Taylor is attending Longwood University this fall to study sociology.

Taylor Thomas-Harris with Frazelle Hampton, Captioned Telephone Outreach Coordinator

Better Hearing and Speech Month Recognition Award: Brenda Eggleston

Brenda Eggleston of Chester was chosen to receive this year's Better Hearing and Speech Month Recognition Award because of her dedication to improving the lives of individuals who are hard of hearing.

Brenda is an active member of the Greater Richmond Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA-GR) and currently serves as the secretary and the refreshments chair.

Brenda also manages HLAA-GR's hospital kit initiative. She has spent the past year researching and developing a kit that would allow someone with hearing loss to better communicate with doctors and nurses. She also meets with hospital administrators to provide education on how best to communicate with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing.

In addition, Brenda developed and maintains lists with detailed information about the different services and resources available to those with hearing loss. The list is often requested by community members, doctors, hearing healthcare professionals and community agencies.



Paul Stuessy, TRS Outreach Coordinator with Brenda Eggleston

SIT Hosts Deaf Awareness Week Open House

This September during Deaf Awareness Week, the Statewide Interagency Team (SIT) of Virginia hosted an open house at the VDDHH and Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) offices in Richmond.

Guests watched demonstrations of the latest assistive communications technologies, and met representatives from local agencies and organizations dedicated to meeting the needs of Virginians who are deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened and DeafBlind.

Thanks to everyone who attended!



Elizabeth Spiers of the Virginia DBVI promoting the iCanConnect program for people who are DeafBlind



Mary Nunnally of DARS and the SIT speaks with visitors



Eric Raff, VDDHH Deputy Director with **Linda Thornton** and **Paige Berry** of the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI)



The Statewide Interagency Team of Virginia



Our team of interpreters



Ron Lanier, VDDHH Director, with **Paige Berry** of the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired

Virginia Now Offers Remote Conference Captioning

If you have difficulty hearing what's said during conference calls, be sure to give Remote Conference Captioning (RCC) a try! A new, free relay service available to Virginia residents, RCC delivers word-for-word captions over the Internet to allow people who are deaf or hard of hearing to have a clearer understanding of conversations and participate in conference calls in a more effective manner.

To request RCC services for your next conference call, complete a RCC Scheduling Request Form at www.hamiltonrelay.com/rcc, or call Virginia RCC Customer Care at 1-877-339-2665 (Voice). Virginia Relay users are guaranteed access to RCC services if scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. RCC services can be scheduled with a two-hour notice for emergency situations but are not guaranteed.

Note: RCC is not a substitute for CART and is available only for conference calls.



Difficulty Hearing over the Phone? Use this Guide to Determine Which CapTel® is Right for You.

Designed for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and can speak for themselves, CapTel works like any other telephone – with one important difference. Using the latest in voice recognition software, the CapTel phone displays every word the other person says. So you can listen to what is being said while reading word-for-word captions of your conversation on the CapTel phone's display screen.

Best of all, the CapTel captioning service is free*!

CapTel phones are available in a variety of models to best meet your needs. All models feature a brightly-lit display screen for captions with adjustable font sizes and colors. All models also include indicator lights, speed dial, answering machine, and Caller ID.

All CapTel phone models are available to Virginia residents for a special rate of just \$75. No-cost and reduced-price CapTel phones are also available to those who qualify through the Technology Assistance Program (TAP), administered by the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH).

Use this helpful guide to determine which CapTel phone is right for you:



Choose the **CapTel 840** if you:

- Have difficulty hearing over the phone, but can speak for yourself.
- Do not have Internet access.
- Have analog telephone service. If you are not aware of what telephone service you have, please contact your telephone service provider.
- Prefer traditional buttons when navigating on-screen menus.
- Like the size and feel of a traditional phone.

NOTE: Requires analog telephone service



Choose the **CapTel 840i** if you:

- Have difficulty hearing over the phone, but can speak for yourself.
- Have both telephone service and high-speed Internet access (cable, DSL, Ethernet or WiFi).
- Prefer traditional buttons when navigating on-screen menus.
- Like the size and feel of a traditional phone.

NOTE: Connects to both your telephone service and Internet service



Choose the **CapTel 880i** if you:

- Have difficulty hearing over the phone, but can speak for yourself.
- Have low-vision or difficulty reading standard-sized captions.
- Have both telephone service and high-speed Internet access (cable, DSL, Ethernet or WiFi).
- Prefer traditional buttons when navigating on-screen menus.
- Like the size and feel of a traditional phone.



Choose the **CapTel 2400i** if you:

- Have difficulty hearing over the phone, but can speak for yourself.
- Have both telephone service and high-speed Internet access (cable, DSL, Ethernet or WiFi).
- Prefer touch-screen navigation for on-screen menus.
- Prefer Bluetooth® connectivity or speakerphone capability.
- Like the size and feel of a contemporary phone.

For more information, or to obtain your CapTel phone, please call VDDHH at 1-800-552-7917 (V/TTY).



Providing Accessible Telecommunications Since 1991

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Visit us at VARelay.org

Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC)

Consumer Members:

Mani Aguilar, Au.D., CCC-A

Representing Speech and Hearing Association of Virginia (SHAV)

Carl Amos, Ed.D

Representing Hearing Relay Users

Robbin Blankenship (Vice Chair)

Representing Speech-to-Speech (STS) Relay Users

Lisa Harbour

Representing Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA)

William Hess

Representing Voice Carry-Over Users

Helen Justice

Representing Virginia Association of the Deaf (VAD)

Valerie Luther

Representing Captioned Telephone Users

Ann Olliff

Representing Virginia Association of the DeafBlind (VADB)

Arva Priola

Representing Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

Betti Thompson (Chair)

Representing Internet (IP) Relay Users

Barclay Shepard

Representing Hearing Relay Users

John Slone

Representing Video Relay Users

Linda Wallace

Representing Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Virginia Chapters

Non-Voting Members:

Gary W. Talley

VDDHH Outreach Programs

Lauren Cramer

Hamilton Relay Account Manager

Paul Steussy

Hamilton Relay Outreach Coordinator, TRS

Frazelle Hampton

Hamilton Relay Outreach Coordinator, Captioned Telephone

VRAC News

VRAC member **Robbin Blankenship** has opened a new catering company. Robbin's Heavenly Treats is based in Richmond, and creates custom cookies, cakes, and other specialty desserts. Place your order online at www.robbinshenlytreats.com.

VRAC member **Arva Priola** announced that she will be retiring at the end of this year. Arva has worked for the disAbility Resource Center for the past 21 years. In her career, Arva has received multiple honors for her work and advocacy in the deaf and hard of hearing community.

We want to thank Arva for her years of passionate dedication, and wish her a very happy retirement!



Left to right: Arva Priola and Robbin Blankenship



Find Us on Facebook!

Virginia Relay 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.

Upcoming Events

Dr. Shantell Lewis

November 11 | 9 a.m. – noon

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3507 Boulevard B, Colonial Heights
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