

A GOOD CALL



The Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (DDTP)

505 14th Street, Suite 400
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DDTP

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A GOOD CALL

Newsletter of the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program • October 2002



RELAY PROVIDERS OFFER ENHANCED SERVICES, STATE-OF-THE-ART UPGRADES

CALIFORNIANS WITH DISABILITIES have the freedom to communicate without limits because of the state's leadership role in supplying innovative telecommunication products and services. The California Relay Service (CRS) provides full telephone accessibility to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who have a speech disability or other functional limitations. The basic service involves specially trained operators who place calls and remain on-line to relay messages over a TTY and "voice" messages to hearing parties.

Currently there are two relay service providers: MCI and Sprint. Beyond basic service, both providers also supply a wide range of enhanced services to assist people who cannot use a standard telephone.

VCO

Voice Carry Over (VCO) was designed for people who have hearing disabilities but want to use their voices instead of a TTY to communicate. Providers also offer VCO to VCO and VCO to TTY or TTY to VCO services,

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ASSEMBLY BILL (AB) 1734 TRANSFERS DDTP ADMINISTRATION TO CPUC IN JULY 2003

Services to be bid out

New legislation by the State Assembly will fundamentally change the administration, management and funding of the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (DDTP) and its California Telephone Access Program (CTAP) and California Relay Service (CRS) starting July 1, 2003, under AB 1734.

Under the new legislation, DDTP's various functions - presently administered by the DDTP Administrative Committee (DDTPAC), a representative group of

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DDTP ACHIEVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

“The California Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program Advisory Committee is a model for the Nation.” William E. Kennard, Chairman 1997-2001, Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Washington, DC.

Consumer-volunteers hold all voting seats on the committees that steer and monitor the actions of DDTP. The importance of their leadership was acknowledged when the program was endorsed as a “model for the nation,” and the FCC instituted a similar approach at the national level: The Consumer/Disability Telecommunications Advisory Committee, established November 2000.

THIS IS A TIME of noteworthy accomplishment and impending change for the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (DDTP).

In 2000, our volunteer leadership centralized the DDTP to directly serve consumers instead of relying on local telephone companies. Although the consolidation of services has been carried out smoothly, the implementation of recent legislation could compromise the newly centralized organizational structure that is serving consumers so well.

We believe that what’s most important in planning for the future of DDTP is preserving consumer control by ensuring that they continue to have policy-making authority.

We have demonstrated the effectiveness of such a program, and are working to maintain a centralized

administrative entity able to coordinate and manage contracts for CRS, equipment and distribution, outreach, and more. I want to emphasize that it is our hope and intention that the DDTP will continue to be improved and directed by the consumers it serves.

The current Administration and Staff of the DDTP have much to be proud of in the existing service and product network now in place to serve Californians. From the enthusiastic Customer Advisors, Field Advisors, and Outreach Specialists affiliated with our 6 new Service Centers – to the highly skilled staff at our newly centralized call center in Stockton – to everybody committed to our innovative equipment acquisition and distribution program – to the dedicated volunteers who make up our Advisory Committees – congratulations and many thanks to you all!

RELAY PROVIDERS OFFER SERVICES...

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several important advantages:

- You see more text on a computer screen than on a TTY screen; split screen displays reserve one side for caller text and the other for responses from the called party.
- You can print or save call transcripts.
- You incur no toll or long distance phone charges – Internet placed phone calls are free of charge!

For more information about the MCI/ Worldcom Internet Relay Service go to www.ip-relay.com. For information about the Sprint Internet Relay Service go to: www.sprintrelayonline.com.

State-of-the-Art Upgrades

MCI and Sprint are continuously upgrading the assistance they offer, including new services and special discounts. You can call their Customer Service departments or look on their websites for more information:

MCI CRS Customer Service
1-800-735-0373 voice/TTY
www.wcom.com/about_the_company/global_relay

Sprint Relay Customer Service
1-800-676-3777 voice/TTY
www.sprint-crs.com

CRS is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with no restrictions on the length or number of calls placed. This valuable communication tool gives people with disabilities the opportunity to make personal and business calls just like any other telephone user.



CONSUMERS PRAISE STAFF AT SERVICE CENTERS, AWARD HIGH MARKS TO COORDINATED SERVICES, SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT

AT DDTP we receive an overwhelming amount of mail praising our program and its services. According to consumers, you’re in good hands whether you interact with a Customer Advisor (CA) at one of our six Service Centers or schedule a home visit with one of our Field Advisors (FAs). These well-trained professionals have the technical knowledge and people skills needed to ensure that consumers can make the most of the specialized telephone products DDTP distributes free of charge for people who are hard of hearing, deaf, blind or who have low vision, speech disabilities, restricted mobility or cognitive impairments.

“Our people have done an outstanding job since we took over from the local phone companies in 2000,” says Terry Tibble, Field Operations Manager. “The feedback we get from consumers emphasizes that the coordinated system serves them better, and I have to agree. Our new organizational structure has allowed our team to provide exceptional service and to excel in every way.”

Since the consolidation of services, the DDTP network has expanded from the single Riverside Service Center to include centers in Fresno and Sacramento in 2001 and Santa Ana, San Diego and Oakland this year. In all, there are 10 CAs and 12 FAs whose job it is to make sure that Californians who are deaf or who have a disability can communicate easily by phone.

Our streamlined organizational structure has allowed us to respond to dramatically increased consumer demand. In May 2002 CAs broke the 1,000 mark – serving a total of 1,137 consumers at CTAP Service Centers in a single month. During the same month, FAs visited the homes of 552 consumers throughout the state, and provided troubleshooting via phone to an additional 120 homebound consumers. The FAs average close to 2,500 driving miles each month, and amassed 340,000 miles collectively for consumer visits in 2001.

A GOOD CALL

The Deaf & Disabled Telecommunications Program (DDTP) publishes **A GOOD CALL**.

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WHAT CONSUMERS ARE ASKING

Consumers who call our Call Center or visit our Service Centers often have similar concerns or requests for information. We'd like to share some of the questions that we answer most frequently, in case you were wondering too.

Q. Several years ago, I received telephone equipment from the phone company. Why don't they handle this any more?

A. California local telephone service is very competitive, with many phone companies. In order to streamline the California Telephone Access Program (CTAP), the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) ordered the centralization of specialized equipment and services. Since 2000, the CTAP has served all eligible consumers directly, regardless of which phone service provider they use.

Q. I'm not happy with my phone equipment. What should I do?

A You can exchange or upgrade specialized telephone equipment at any time, free of charge. Bring the equipment to one of our six Service Centers, or call CTAP at voice 1-800-806-1191 or TTY 1-800-806-4474 for other instructions.

Q. I love my amplified phone and would like another for upstairs. Can CTAP provide me with a second one?

A Unfortunately, CTAP can only provide one telephone equipment set per each certified individual in a household. But you may be able to receive a second phone from the Telephone Pioneers of California, a non-profit group that donates refurbished specialized equipment to those who need it. This organization also

provides used TTYs to family members of TTY users. For more information about the Telephone Pioneers, call CTAP at 1-800-806-1191 (voice) or 1-800-806-4474 (TTY).

Q. What should I do with old or broken specialized telephone equipment?

A Bring out-of-order phone equipment to one of our six Service Centers, or ship it to CTAP at no charge via UPS.

Q. Is cellular phone equipment available?

A Not at this time, since the California state mandate is to provide "access to basic telephone service." However, due to the increasing popularity and availability of wireless phones, our Equipment Program Advisory Committee (EPAC) is exploring specialized options that would be compatible with the mandate.

RELAY PROVIDERS OFFER ENHANCED SERVICES...

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making telephone communication more accessible to those who find typing difficult.

VRS

Video Relay Service (VRS) uses video conferencing to allow relay users who prefer to communicate in sign language to sign to a relay interpreter who then "voices" to the hearing person. The responses are, in turn, signed to the sign language user.

HCO

Hearing Carry Over (HCO) was designed for people with a speech disability who want to hear the people they call (or receive calls from), but need a relay operator to "voice" what they type on their TTYs.

STS

Speech-to-Speech Relay (STS) allows people who have a speech disability to use their own voice or a voice synthesizer, instead of a TTY, and uniquely trained operators as "voicers."

Internet Access Expands Relay Service

Both CRS providers also offer an Internet Relay feature that allows consumers to make highly interactive relay calls to voice telephones from computers with Internet access. Calls can be made from anywhere an Internet connection exists: home, office, school, library, hotel, Internet cafe, and more. The service connects users with relay agents who dial and facilitate calls in the usual manner, although there are

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IMPORTANT DDTP CONTACT INFORMATION

The administration and staff at the DDTP always appreciate your input. We've provided this list of contact names and numbers so that you can easily reach us and others involved with the program. Please keep this list handy and refer to it as often as needed.

Oakland DDTP Headquarters Staff
(510) 302-1100

Shelley Bergum, Executive Director
Sharon Albert, Deputy Director

Barbara Bianchi Kai, Marketing & Outreach Department Manager
Dan Carbone, Consumer Affairs Specialist
Lilia Castellanos, Equipment Department Manager
Jill Connaway, Committee Assistant
Katy Franco, Committee Coordinator

Laura Holton, Procurement Specialist
Michelle Hudson, Human Resources Coordinator
Judie Hughes, CTAP Operations Assistant
Robert Iles, Administrative and HR Department Manager
Lawrence James, Accounts Payable Assistant
Stefanie Knott, Marketing Administrative Assistant
Laura Komaromi, Field Operations Administrative Assistant

Sara Liu, Senior Accountant
Jim Murphy, Accounting Department Manager
Mary Reddington, Executive Assistant
Sharon Shafran, Customer Contact Department Manager
Terry Tibble, Field Operations Department Manager
David Weiss, CRS Department Manager
Victoria Westbrook, Inventory Control Manager
Eunice Yuji, Equipment Buyer

Caylin Yula, CRS Administrative Assistant
Zak (Andrew Zakrzewski), System Administrator

The California Telephone Access Program (CTAP) Call Center
(800) 806-1191 (voice)
(800) 806-4474 (TTY)
(800) 889-3974 (Fax)

Note: The Call Center is not a public location. Contact the Call Center by mail, fax or phone

CTAP SERVICE CENTERS

CTAP - Fresno

1320 East Shaw
Suite 130
Fresno, CA 93710

STAFF:

Jobina Navratil, Outreach Administrative Assistant
David Rocha, Customer Advisor
Val Silva, Field Advisor
Skippy Sumner, Customer Advisor

CTAP - Sacramento

2033 Howe Avenue
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Sacramento, CA 95825

STAFF:

Rich Arroyo, Customer Advisor
Tim Hickerson, Customer Advisor
Evelyn Hodges, Field Advisor
Vivian Terry, Outreach Specialist
Mike Ver Velde, Field Advisor Specialist-Trainer

CTAP - Oakland

1970 Broadway
Suite 650
Oakland, CA 94612

STAFF:

Lisa Orduño, Outreach Specialist Supervisor
Jewel Jauregui, Field Advisor Specialist Supervisor
Jennifer Minore, Customer Advisor Supervisor
Matt Idler, Customer Advisor
Candi Daviton, Customer Advisor
Mike Deming, Outreach Specialist
Frances Franco, Outreach Specialist
Henry Jarquin-Baez, Field Advisor
Robyn Roberts, Field Advisor

CTAP - Riverside

6370 Magnolia Avenue
Suite 310
Riverside, CA 92506

STAFF:

Kevin Halliburton, Customer Advisor
Elizabeth Santillan, Field Advisor
Suzette Schuster, Field Advisor
Trixy Taylor, Customer Advisor

CTAP - San Diego

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South
Suite 400
San Diego, CA 92108

STAFF:

Todd Bader, Field Advisor
Sue Finney, Customer Advisor
Shan Nielsen, Customer Advisor
Irene Vintinner, Outreach Specialist

CTAP - Santa Ana

2677 North Main Street
Suite 130
Santa Ana, CA 92705

STAFF:

Coleen Ashly, Field Advisor
Paula Barksdale, Field Advisor
Bessie Chatman, Customer Advisor
Carol Jones, Customer Advisor Supervisor South
Andie Squires, Outreach Specialist
Jodie Tyo, Field Advisor
Javier Ulloa, Field Advisor
Pat Walker, Customer Advisor

CTAP FIELD STAFF (Various Locations)

Brenda Bailey, Outreach Specialist, Los Angeles
Pam Conner-Costa, Field Advisor, Redding
Theresa Tong, Outreach Specialist, Los Angeles

Special Open House Week Starts Oct. 7th with Exciting Special Events. Open M-F, 9am-6pm. For directions, visit www.ddtp.org



OUTREACH EFFORTS AIM TO BOOST AWARENESS

Special Focus On Rural Areas

TO INCREASE awareness and provide expanded telecommunications services to people with disabilities and impairments across the state, DDTP has embarked on an aggressive Outreach program. "We took a careful look at how and where we've promoted our products and services in the

past, and are focusing extra attention on communities we believe are underserved," explained DDTP Deputy Director Sharon Albert.

The efforts of our Outreach Specialists are the key to increasing the number of consumers requesting DDTP services. They raise awareness through instructive presentations at conventions, support group meetings and other events, and also provide applications and brochures explaining how to access services and equipment.

The new Outreach effort, known as the Marketing Outreach Outbound Call Program (MOOC), aims to

attract new customers through specially targeted presentations and demonstrations as well as more extensive information placements. For example, we will be contacting a wider variety of ethnic organizations, and a more diverse assortment of medical offices, academic institutions, and nonprofit, state, and federal agencies and facilities. Our Program Representatives will also be in touch with a broader range of locations to discover new opportunities for distribution of applications and brochures.

The information gathered through the new Outreach program will support our 10

Outreach Specialists, who in the past have had to re-search this information, and also schedule and conduct presentations. During 2001, the Outreach Specialists made nearly 1,200 presentations, up from approximately 800 in 2000. Through the end of June 2002, they have already provided almost 600 presentations.

"This targeted effort is just one of the benefits of a consolidated call center handling both inbound and outbound calls," Albert explains. "The Call Representatives can be much more organized and efficient in gathering and verifying the names of those who

could benefit from Outreach, virtually eliminating duplication of efforts and multiple calls." The information will also be used for other campaigns to extend DDTP services to more Californians. "This systematic program has revealed data we will use to better understand the lifestyles, needs and concerns of underserved communities, and how to best reach them," says Albert.

If you know of an organization or group that could benefit from information about DDTP products and services by hosting a presentation by one of our Outreach Specialists, please call:

1-800-995-6831.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS VOLUNTEER ENERGY, EXPERTISE AND TIME

VOLUNTEERS play a significant role in the DDTP's administration. With their help, administrative costs are consistently kept to a minimum, allowing us to invest over 95% of our budget into equipment and services provided to consumers statewide. Three committees, which meet once a month, include volunteers who are

appointed to serve for up to two consecutive three-year terms. We are grateful for the time, energy, and expertise of the consumer advocates who are currently serving and those who have served in the past. In this issue, we will profile three current committee members.

The DDTP Administrative Committee (DDTPAC)

The DDTPAC is charged with managing the Trust that finances the program, and overseeing all financial matters concerning it, including the annual DDTP budget. The committee also makes recommendations to the CPUC that relate to the policies and operations of the program.

After working with DDTPAC

for 12 years, and serving 2 consecutive 3-year terms as its chair, San Francisco-based John Darby will be stepping down this fall, as his term expires. But John plans to stay involved with the DDTP as an advocate and supporter.

"One of the biggest challenges we faced was taking over from the telephone companies to centralize our program operations," says Darby. "It would be wrong to let our centralized program dissolve without at least trying to continue to provide the coordinated services and procedures we've developed."

John was trained as an audiologist, and his nearly four decade long career has been dedicated to rehabilitation

and social services for those with hearing disabilities. In addition to his efforts on behalf of the existing DDTP, he is also involved with the Wireless Access Coalition, a group promoting hearing aid compatibility with digital communication, particularly wireless phones.

"The telephone is such an important activity of daily living," Darby says. "There will always be more work to be done to make sure that it is accessible to all."

The DDTP administration and staff thank John for his years of dedication and service, and extend our warmest best wishes for his future activities.

The CRS Advisory Committee (CRSAC)

The CRSAC deals with issues regarding the CRS and makes recommendations to the DDTPAC for improving service and ensuring that CRS vendors comply with current contract requirements.

Sacramento-based committee member Judy Viera has had a long career of involvement with people who are deaf and hard of hearing through advocacy, legislation, grant development, and administration. She has worked in education, rehabilitation, and the telecommunications industry.

"I'm an advocate for functional equivalency in telecommunications," she says. "We must work to maintain the stability and integrity of the CRS and avoid confusion

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ASSEMBLY BILL (AB) 1734...

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volunteer consumers - will come under the direct authority of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Currently, the CPUC plans that provision of DDTP programs will be competitively bid out to contractors, utilizing a new method of payment whereby the telephone surcharge revenue is transferred from the CA Relay Service and Communications Devices Fund to the State Treasury, as also required by AB 1734, and then vendors are paid by the State, rather than by the DDTP directly.

Until the new changes take effect, DDTP's present administration and management will continue to fulfill its mandate to involve consumers in policy decisions. It also will coordinate its infrastructure of Call Center, Service Centers, warehousing and outreach to continue providing high quality services for consumers, while the new requirements are elaborated and put into place by the CPUC.

During this process the challenges will include plans to:

- preserve consumer control of the DDTP to maintain continued responsive operation and delivery of products and services
- maintain consumer control of the Advisory Committee within the CPUC that will oversee the program, and ensure that it has policy-making authority
- continue to build a statewide community presence through an expanded network of service centers
- assure that the DDTP remains a well-integrated and consolidated program and is not broken into components without a central consumer-controlled administrative entity coordinating all of the contracts for CRS, equipment distribution, outreach, and more.

By October 1, 2002 the DDTP Administrative Committee must submit recommendations to the CPUC about the new organization in order to help ensure its long-term quality and integrity to best serve consumers.

Consumers are encouraged to continue providing information, advice and opinions for both DDTPAC's recommendations and to ensure that the transition process and changes to go into effect in 2003 will be responsive to their needs. The committees which administer and advise DDTP hold meetings every month, and are open for public input. See the meetings scheduled on page 10, or at the website www.ddtp.org.

Consumers may also communicate directly with the President and Commissioners of the CPUC to gain more information or make suggestions about changes to the organization and administration of the DDTP that will take effect in 2003.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS...

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for consumers." Judy has worked on programs administered by the PUC in both Texas and California, and is serving the second year of her first term with the CRSAC.

The Equipment Program Advisory Committee (EPAC)

The EPAC oversees the California Telephone Access Program (CTAP) part of the DDTP. It makes recommendations to the DDTPAC to improve CTAP and ensure that it addresses evolutions in technology so that all Californians with disabilities can access basic telephone services.

While working as a Career and Job Placement Counselor at Compton Community College, Newberry Springs-based committee member Dolores Olson was appointed liaison to the Handicapped Students' Programs office. "I became convinced that disabled people should be part of the general community," she says, "and I've been working towards that end ever since."

Dolores is an advocate for seniors and people with a disability, and has been a volunteer Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) counselor since 1996. She was recently elected to be a California Senior Assembly member, and has just begun her second three-year term with the EPAC.

IMPROVED CALIFORNIA RELAY SERVICE PLANNED



DDTP ISSUES REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

IN AN EFFORT to significantly enhance and update California's services, the DDTP has released a comprehensive Request for Proposals (RFP) aimed at:

- revising critical communication supports
- introducing innovative new services
- facilitating increased responsiveness to customers' needs

Separating the RFP into three individually bid components and allowing multiple providers of relay call center services will bring about the following consumer benefits:

- simple access to more relay choices
- improved relay service quality
- inventive new relay service options

The segmented structure of the RFP should also attract the widest range of competitive, quality oriented providers.

Availability of Internet Protocol (IP) Services

The RFP requires all relay call center vendors make use of Internet compatible communication devices by requiring:

- Video Relay when the consumer's personal computer is equipped with video hardware and software (camera, software and plug-in board), and high speed network access (such as ISDN, cable modem or DSL), or from a videophone
- Web Chat Relay from the consumer's computer or other Internet compatible device instead of from a TTY

Additional hi-tech services specifically identified in the RFP include:

- Caller ID
- Automated caller profile through 711 dialing
- English to Spanish and Spanish to English translation
- Voice-over IP
- Multi-point Video Conferencing

Call for Consumer Input

The DDTP invites consumers and the general public to contribute comments and suggestions for its consideration in issuing the relay contracts to take effect in mid-2003. The RFP is available for viewing or downloading at: www.ddtp.org.

“ I am a boy who lost his hearing two years ago due to a sickness called meningitis at age 8 when I was in Nigeria. I thank those people who made it possible for me to own my first TTY. I promise to take care of the machine. ”

ODUNAYO AKINTOMIDE
Davis



COMMITTEE CONTACT INFORMATION

THE DDTP PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE (DDTPAC)

Meets on the first Tuesday of each month.

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Disabled Community Representative
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Hale Zukas
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Joe Tirado
Certified Exchange Carrier
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THE CALIFORNIA RELAY SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CRSAC)

Meets on the fourth Friday of each month.

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Cecilia Hartley
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Judy Viera
Deaf Community
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Cheryl Bella
Sprint Relay Invited Representative on the Committee (Non-member)
TTY: 877-657-6363
Fax: 916-636-6101
cheryl.b.bella@mail.sprint.com

THE EQUIPMENT PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EPAC)

Meets of the second Tuesday of each month.

Wayne Baker
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Kathleen Spear
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Sheila Killian
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Dolores Olson
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Michael R. Peevey
commissionerpeevey@cpuc.ca.gov

Carl Wood
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EQUIPMENT TIPS

Make The Most Of Amplified Equipment

To get the most benefit from amplified phones and ringers, experiment with both the Volume and Tone controls. Volume tuning controls loudness, while the tone adjustment corrects frequency. A high setting for both may not provide the clearest sound. If you have high frequency hearing loss (or have difficulty hearing children's voices), try the "Low" tone setting with a "High" volume setting.

Protect Phone Adaptors

To save your specialized phone adaptor from burning out, always plug it into your TTY or telephone equipment BEFORE plugging it into the A/C wall outlet.

Tone Or Pulse?

To avoid or eliminate an annoying clicking sound when you dial a telephone number, be sure that your telephone "Tone/Pulse" switch is set to "Tone" or "T." Then you'll only hear a short beep when you press the keys.



PRODUCT UPDATE

2-LINE VCO PLUS 3-WAY CALLING ALLOWS SMOOTHER FLOWING CONVERSATIONS

Combination Especially Helpful To Those With Residual Hearing

If you send and receive calls on a TTY, but would rather speak directly to the other party in your own voice, the Voice Carry Over (VCO) service is just for you! VCO Service allows you to speak into the phone, but still receive text responses typed by the California Relay Service (CRS) operator on your TTY display.

Consumers with residual hearing, in particular, find the VCO service especially helpful. They can hear some of what the other party says, or at least get a feel for the rhythm of the conversation, while watching text on their TTYs. And, a growing num-

ber of hard of hearing consumers have found that combining VCO service with a second phone line that takes advantage of 3-Way Calling service provided by their local phone companies works even more smoothly. The combined services reduce interruptions and result in more naturally paced phone conversations by eliminating the cues and pauses of single line calls.

Here's How It Works

To make use of 2-line VCO you must have two separate telephone lines, and subscribe to 3-Way Calling from your local telephone service provider. The first telephone line is dedicated to a TTY or VCO telephone, and the second line is used

with a standard voice telephone.

During the phone call:

- you speak directly to the person you're calling
- the person you're calling responds directly to you
- the CRS operator types what the hearing person is saying

The combination of VCO and 3-Way Calling can also simplify conversations between two VCO users. For example, two Seniors with hearing loss who qualify for 3-Way Calling could participate in truly interactive phone conversations.

TTYs, VCO phones, and 3-Way Calling are all available through CTAP. Contact us for more information.