**PENNSYLVANIA**

# **PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

**Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265**

Public Meeting held May 23, 2019

Commissioners Present:

Gladys Brown Dutrieuille, Chairman

David W. Sweet, Vice Chairman

Norman J. Kennard

Andrew G. Place

John F. Coleman, Jr.

Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay M-00900239

Service Advisory Board

**OPINION AND ORDER**

**BY THE COMMISSION:**

The Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) is a communications service regulated by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (Commission) that offers a person with disabilities the ability to communicate “by wire or radio with a hearing individual in a manner that is functionally equivalent to the ability of a person who does not have a disability to communicate using voice communication services by wire or radio,” *i.e.*,access to the Public Switched Telephone Network in the same manner as a person without disability.[[1]](#footnote-2) TRS offers persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or have difficulty speaking three ways to connect to the service using various means: Traditional Telephone Relay, Video Relay and Internet Relay. Users who access TRS by telephone simply dial 7-1-1 to connect to a skillfully-trained Communications Assistant, or CA, who follows a strict code of ethics and confidentiality for telephone TRS communications. The CA then relays messages to the other person. TRS is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

By Order entered May 29, 1990 (*May 29, 1990 Order*), the Commission established the Telecommunications Relay Service Advisory Board (TRS Advisory Board) for the purpose of reviewing the success of TRS in Pennsylvania. The TRS Advisory Board was also assigned the task of identifying any additional improvements which might need to be implemented to ensure the continued success of the TRS program. The TRS Advisory Board is composed of the following representatives: Hamilton Relay Inc. (Hamilton Relay) (1 representative who may serve unlimited terms); Hamilton Telephone Company d/b/a Hamilton Telecommunications (Hamilton Telephone) (1 representative who may serve unlimited terms);[[2]](#footnote-3) the Pennsylvania Telephone Association (1 representative who may serve unlimited terms); the Commission (2 representatives who may serve unlimited terms); the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry’s Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (ODHH) (1 representative who may serve unlimited terms); the Telecommunications Device Distribution Program (TDDP) implementing entity (1 representative who may serve unlimited terms); and representatives from the community of persons who are, or who have experience with, people who are deaf or hard of hearing, or those with language and speech disorders or who suffer from a disability that impacts their access to telecommunications services (7 representatives who may serve up to three, two-year consecutive terms).[[3]](#footnote-4) The TRS Advisory Board meets quarterly in Harrisburg and functions as a user group providing guidance in such areas as problem solving and future enhancements.

The TDDP implementing entity is the entity or organization selected by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)[[4]](#footnote-5) to implement the TDDP. TDDP is implemented by the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University (Temple Institute). Article V, Section 5 of the By-Laws provides that the member from the TDDP implementing entity may serve unlimited terms on the TRS Advisory Board. The Temple Institute has nominated Sandra McNally to serve on the TRS Advisory Board for an unlimited term. The TRS Advisory Board supports her nomination. Accordingly, this Order shall memorialize the appointment of Ms. McNally to the TRS Advisory Board for an unlimited term.

Ms. McNally is Assistant Director of Assistive Technology Programs at the Temple Institute. She began working at Pennsylvania’s Initiative on Assistive Technology (now known as TechOWL) in 2002 and became Program Director in 2014. She also oversees other funded statewide assistive technology activities, including Pennsylvania's TDDP, and iCanConnectPA, the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program in Pennsylvania. In 2018, Ms. McNally became Chair of the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association, a national organization. She is also a member of the Advisory Council for the Board of the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging. The parent of two adults with disabilities, Ms. McNally has first-hand knowledge of the impact assistive and generic technologies can have on people’s lives.

On these bases, we conclude that Ms. McNally will be a beneficial addition to the TRS Advisory Board and the residents it serves; **THEREFORE,**

**IT IS ORDERED:**

1. That the appointment of Ms. Sandra McNally to the Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay Service Advisory for an unlimited term is approved.

2. That a copy of this Opinion and Order be served on:

Sandra McNally

Institute on Disabilities

1755 N. 13th Street

Student Center Rm 411 South

Philadelphia, PA 19122

** BY THE COMMISSION,**

Rosemary Chiavetta

Secretary

(SEAL)

ORDER ADOPTED: May 23, 2019

ORDER ENTERED: May 23, 2019

1. 35 P.S. § 6701.2; *see also* 35 P.S. § 6701.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Hamilton Relay is the certificated jurisdictional provider for intrastate TRS in the Commonwealth. *See* Docket No. A-2014-2447601. Hamilton Telephone is the contractual provider for intrastate Captioned Telephone Relay Service in the Commonwealth. *See* Docket No. A-311355. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. At a special meeting held on April 12, 2019, the TRS Advisory Board amended its By-Laws to include, *inter alia*, the addition of the TDDP implementing entity as a representative of the TRS Advisory Board and the expansion of the number of terms the community representatives may serve from two to up to three, two-year terms. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. OVR is an office within the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)