**PENNSYLVANIA**

# **PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

**Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265**

Public Meeting held April 25, 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 hearing, deaf, and hearing or speech impaired 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 TRS Advisory Board By-Laws provide for seven representatives from the community of persons who are, or who have experience with, people who are deaf or hard of hearing, those with language and speech disorders, or those who suffer from a disability that impacts their access to telecommunications services to serve on the TRS Advisory Board. The nominee for the TRS Advisory Board for the two-year term ending January 31, 2021, is A. Kay Tyberg.

Ms. Tyberg is a TRS Advisory Board member whose second two-year term expired on January 31, 2018.[[4]](#footnote-5) She has served on the TRS Advisory Board in various capacities, including Chairperson. Ms. Tyberg is a Certified Peer Mentor Consultant - Deaf/HOH Office of Aging Ombudsman – PA, a Deaf Advocate Sign Language Instructor and Committee Chairperson Hearing Loss Association of America – PA Arts & Entertainment Co-Chairperson Public Awareness Lycoming County Chapter (an affiliate of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)). The HLAA is the largest consumer organization in the country for people with hearing loss, providing support, education, advocacy and self-help. Ms. Tyberg has worked as a deaf advocate in Pennsylvania and in other states and has been active in educating hearing parents and late deaf adults about accessibility to TTY/TDD,[[5]](#footnote-6) Captioned Telephone and relay services for family members with hearing loss. Ms. Tyberg’s expertise, input, and continued service to the TRS Board would prove beneficial to the TRS Board; **THEREFORE,**

 **IT IS ORDERED:**

 1. That the appointment of Ms. A. Kay Tyberg to the Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay Service Advisory for the two-year term ending January 31, 2021 is approved.

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

1. Kay Tyberg

1012 E. Atlantic Avenue, Apt. 2

Altoona, PA 16602-6929

 **BY THE COMMISSION,**

Rosemary Chiavetta

 Secretary

(SEAL)

ORDER ADOPTED: April 25, 2019

ORDER ENTERED: April 25, 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. Ms. Tyberg was appointed to her first two-year term, which ended January 31, 2016, by Order entered January 9, 2014, at this docket. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. “TTY” refers to TeleTYpewriter which is a “[t]ypewriter-style device for communicating alphanumeric information over telecom networks. TTY is the most widely used type of emulation for PC computer communications.” “TTY/TDD” refers to a “unique Telecommunication Device for the Deaf, using TTY principles.” *See Newton’s Telecom Dictionary,* 25th Ed. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)