



STATE OF NEBRASKA

NEBRASKA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

February 14, 2014

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Tim Schram
Commissioner, Third district
15151 South 234th Street
Gretna Nebraska 68028

Dear Commissioner Schram:

The purpose of this letter is to share our hope that the access issues for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing are appropriately and adequately addressed in the statewide implementation of Next-Generation 911 funded through the Enhanced Wireless 911 fund as required by LB 595 [2013].

In a report submitted by the Mission Critical Partners, it was reported that, "The increased quantity of available multimedia data will enhance and expand existing call taking functions. It may also extend the time it takes to process 9-1-1 calls, increase the workload of the call taker, and significantly change the call taker's experience (e.g., seeing the incident versus hearing the incident)". For many years, 9-1-1 call takers have been receiving TTY calls from people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, which consist of a visual means to communicating with the caller by typing. To our knowledge the use of a TTY at 9-1-1 Centers has not created an issue nor have we received any indication that this increased the workload of the call taker.

In today's world of technology, more and more people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing are communicating via texting. This technology has improved the lives of so many people and most of all has expanded the communication options that this population can choose to use to effectively communicate at a minutes notice with employers, family and friends. This technology has also aided in alleviating some of the communication barriers and issues that people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing face on a daily basis. The use of texting in my opinion is just another way of ensuring equal access to those people who are not able to use speech to communicate with 9-1-1 Centers in the event an emergency occurs.

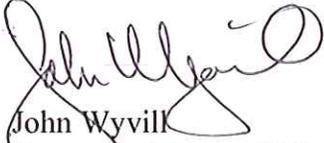
The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is available to provide training to First Responders in an effort to increase their knowledge and understanding of effective ways to communicate with people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Please let us know if this is something the Public Service Commission would be willing to collaborate with us in providing this training.

In closing, I would like to receive information on the 9-1-1 Centers in Nebraska that will have the use of technology in their Centers which will make it possible for people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing to text if necessary. Upon receiving this, we will provide this information to members of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

communities for their perusal. I would be happy to meet with you or your designated staff person to discuss this further if you have further questions pertaining to this critical issue.

Thank you in advance for your support in promoting accessible 9-1-1 communication in the State of Nebraska for the consumers we serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Wyvill", written in a cursive style.

John Wyvill
Executive Director Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

CC: Nebraska TRS Advisory Committee
Jonathan Scherling President, Nebraska Association of the Deaf