

**State Interpreter Laws Collected**

We have heard from several states on interpreting laws and regulations pertaining to the sign language interpreting profession. Thank you to: Pennsylvania, Potomac Chapter RID (Maryland and Washington, DC), Mississippi, Wisconsin, Michigan and New Jersey

Having a current and thorough database of this information will help us gauge the need for GAP assistance within our affiliate chapters. Once collected we will post it on our Web site as a member resource and share our findings with NAD and other interested groups.

**RID met with the FCC on April 27**

RID met with FCC staff to emphasize the importance of working with interpreters who understand that the successful interpretations provided for each call is key to measuring true functional equivalence. We were able to stress that our members feel as if they have been marginalized and largely ignored in the process of establishing the VRS System. To read the *ex parte* notice filed after RID's meeting with the FCC and other comments, visit the GAP page of the RID Web site. (There you will also find RID's filings on the proposed reimbursement rate structure for VRS.)

**VRS Reform:** We asked that the FCC include instructions to the vendors requiring that they come up with methods and strategies to monitor and enforce regulations WITHOUT including the interpreters in the process.

**Whistleblower Rules:** RID recommended that rules be established and shared with providers and interpreters through information sent to the workplace and through the RID. We also asked that the FCC provide interpreters direct and clear guidelines regarding appropriate/reimbursable calls.

**Rate Setting / Methodology:** In summary, RID believes that qualified interpreters, safe working conditions and the delivery of high quality services should not be sacrificed as a result of any rate reduction.

**Emergency Communications:** RID recommended establishing standard operating procedures that would assure that all interpreters handling emergency calls hold the highest credentials and be provided in-depth training and effective employee assistance support.

**Point-to-point Calls – Deaf to Hearing Signers w/ VPS (10 Digit Numbering):** RID expressed support for deaf and hard of hearing citizens who wish to have direct communications with hearing family members, friends, service providers, governments and of course interpreters and interpreting agencies.

**RID wants to make recommendations to FCC regarding standards to assure occupational safety for interpreters. As such we are looking to you, the front line, to ascertain best practices and help us define optimum utilization and occupancy rates. Watch for a survey asking for your input SOON.**

**MICHIGAN: DODHH continues to draft proposed rules**

GAP Representative, Janet Bailey, visited the Michigan Department of Deaf and Hard of Hearing offices to discuss how to work together to come to successful resolution to issues. We are currently gathering information to provide to the officials in Michigan regarding the RID Certification Program.

**WISCONSIN: 2009 SB 389 Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Bill** passed and was signed into law by the governor on May 13<sup>th</sup>.

**WASHINGTON, DC:** The District of Columbia is currently looking at legislation to develop regulations for sign language interpreters working within the boundaries of our nation's capital. RID has been asked to participate in the work group in the research and development process. We will have more to report as work gets underway in this area and will be seeking member input as well.

**FEDERAL: Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Reauthorization Bill introduced**

With EHDI now officially introduced in the Senate, DHHA is working to meet with senators asking for co-sponsorship of the legislation. RID is a member of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Alliance (DHHA – [www.dhha.com](http://www.dhha.com))

On May 4, 2010, the **Equal Access to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communications Act** was introduced in the U.S. Senate. The bill (S. 3304), which will improve overall access to audio and visual materials on the Internet for the deaf and blind, was driven by the Coalition of Organizations for Accessible Technology (COAT), of which RID is an affiliate. Specifically, the legislation will:

- Create a one-stop shop for information on online products and services available to blind and deaf individuals;
- Close existing gaps in accessibility by requiring technology like smart devices, including an iPhone or Blackberry, to be hearing aid compatible;
- Require that programming shown on television also be closed captioned and video described when it is posted on the Internet. ex., nightly news, Razorback games, Lost;
- Require video programming devices, such mp3 players and DVRs, to be capable of closed captioning, video description and emergency alerts; and
- Authorize federal support for broadband service for low-income people with a disability, and specialized equipment for deaf or blind individuals.

**Upcoming Events of Interest**

GAP will be on the schedule at all of the region conferences:

- June 16 – 20, Region V Conference in Salt Lake City, UT
- July 21 – 24, Region III Conference in Bloomington, MN
- July 29 - August 1, Region II Conference in Chattanooga, TN
- August 5-8, Region IV Conference in Omaha, NE
- August 13-15, Region I Conference in Albany, NY

First North American Summit on Interpreting, June 17 in Washington, DC [www.interpretamerica.net](http://www.interpretamerica.net)

National Emergency Numbering Association (NENA) 2010 Conference, June 5-10 in Indianapolis, IN