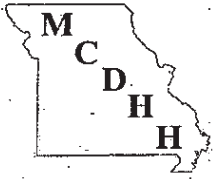


# MISSOURI COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING



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A. Barry Critchfield, PhD  
Executive Director

John Van Eschen  
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RECEIVED

Matt Blunt  
Governor

NOV 14 2008

UTILITY OPERATIONS  
DIVISION

Dear Mr. Van Eschen:

At the recent meeting of the Telecommunications Relay Committee it was requested that the group consider a reduction in the surcharge paid by telephone users, from the current .13 to .11 cents. After some discussion there (and consideration since); I have come to the conclusion that it would be in the best interests of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in the state if the surcharge remain as it is currently.

My reasoning for this decision is as follows:

1. It is not yet known what impact the current economic challenges world-wide will have on revenue for the state of Missouri.
2. Technology is changing rapidly, and the devices currently available under the TAP program are, in many cases, outdated and need to be upgraded.
3. Elderly people make up the majority of persons with hearing loss in Missouri, and this population is growing rapidly with the aging of the "Baby Boomer" generation. We cannot predict what impact this will have on future telecommunications services and equipment.
4. There seems to be a need for greater utilization review of the existing services and equipment. The discussion on October 22 seemed to indicate that there is a fair number of previously installed devices not being used.

It is my hope that, as a committee and in collaboration with the TAP personnel, we can work to become more proactive rather than reactive in this much-needed service.

Sincerely,

A. Barry Critchfield, PhD, Director  
Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

## COMMISSION MEMBERS

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THOMAS BASTEAN  
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Parent of a Deaf/Hard of Hearing Child

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