



April 21, 2020

Dear Valued Customer,

As our country and the world continues to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, I want to reiterate that Sprint along with the Accessibility team have been working diligently to keep our telecommunications relay services (TRS) running smoothly. We recognize that at this time when Americans are called upon to reduce in-person interactions, the need for reliable communication services is even more critical and this is no less true for Americans with disabilities. Therefore, the Sprint Accessibility team remains committed to serving our valued customers and the communities we connect, while also prioritizing the well-being of our employees and our contractors' employees.

Pursuant to Sprint Accessibility's teleconference briefings on March 25<sup>th</sup> and April 7<sup>th</sup> in addition to email communications sent shortly thereafter as direct follow-ups to each briefing, the COVID-19 pandemic is a Force Majeure event that has triggered the need for a number of temporary adaptations to our State TRS operations. The items below are a recap of the key items communicated to date either during the teleconference briefings, by email communication, or by a member of the Accessibility team:

#### Speed of Answer

- Consistent with the Federal Communications Commission's March 16, 2020 [Order](#) granting TRS providers temporary waivers of certain TRS rules, the following FCC temporary waivers are now applicable to each state TRS Contract *effective March 1, 2020 through May 15, 2020*:

"Waivers applicable to non-VRS forms of TRS - Due to the recent sharp increase in TRS traffic and the continuing challenge of maintaining CA staffing during this national emergency, it may be temporarily infeasible for TRS providers to comply fully with the daily speed-of-answer standard applicable to all forms of TRS other than VRS. Based on these circumstances, the Bureau finds good cause to waive, from March 1, 2020, through May 15, 2020, the requirement that non-VRS TRS providers answer 85% of calls within 10 seconds, measured on a daily basis, conditional on the TRS provider ensuring that 85% of calls are answered within 120 seconds, measured on a monthly basis. We grant a conforming waiver of the rule requiring adequate TRS facility staffing to provide callers with efficient access under projected calling volumes, to the extent necessary to conform to the specific speed-of-answer waiver granted above."

#### Call Routing

- Due to high call volumes, Sprint is temporarily suspending our usual in-state routing rules when service levels are deteriorating. Instead, Sprint will route to the next available agent in an attempt to handle calls as quickly as possible. This action is necessary due to the overall impact of COVID-19 on call centers including notable increased call volumes and length, staffing shortages, occasional call center closure for deep cleaning, etc.

#### Quality Assessments

- All forms of quality assessments and test calls that divert Communication Assistants (CA) away from handling calls are temporarily suspended. This action is necessary due to the overall impact of COVID-19 on call centers including, among other things, notable increased call volumes and length, all of which heightened the demand on CAs.

#### Relay Conference Captioning

- Sprint has put in place options for expanded RCC hours for approved State TRS programs. All hours are in their respective time zones. The current RCC hours are 8-6pm Monday-Friday. The extended RCC hours for consideration are 8-8pm local time Monday-Friday and 8-2pm local time on Saturdays. This is being implemented on a state by state basis where approved by the States. Should you be interested in the extended RCC hours, you can reach out to your Sprint Accessibility team contact regarding the approval and implementation process.

#### On-screen Alert Message

- To minimize frustration and preserve customer experience, an on-screen alert message was deployed to all PSTN CapTel users' phones to inform the users of the long queue times and advise the users not to hang up. Sprint subsequently became aware that some customers found this on-screen message intrusive. To resolve this complaint, Sprint implemented a solution as of April 7, 2020 which automatically clears the message from users' screen following their first call. In short, if a user's phone still bears this on-screen alert, it will permanently clear once they make their next call.

#### Work from Home Solution

- Although not yet implemented, the COVID-19 crisis has prompted Sprint to explore the feasibility of our CAs working from home. Members of the Accessibility team in conjunction with Sprint IT have made enormous progress in a short time and we anticipate deploying a work from home solution within the next few weeks. With only a few minor exceptions, Sprint will continue to comply with the FCC 64.604 minimum standards. The work from home solution will allow call center operations to maintain a safe work environment for the CAs and to increase flexibility should a call center require sanitization. We intend to communicate with you in greater detail prior to the launch of the CA work from home solution.

Please reach out to me should you have questions or concerns regarding any of the above items. The Sprint Accessibility team will continue to provide you with updates in the days and weeks to come.

Extending positive thoughts for the continued health and safety for you and yours during these unprecedented times.

It's a privilege to serve you!

Respectfully,



Mike Ellis, CPACC  
Global Vice President