

Greetings!

NAQC News Flash



Ensuring Quitline Access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals

"Take Back and Transfer" Solution

Greetings NAQC Members!

The Challenge

It has recently come to our attention that deaf and hard of hearing individuals across the U.S. are experiencing difficulty when trying to access quitline services using the Video Relay Service (VRS). * See below for more information on VRS. VRS call centers are set up across the U.S. and a deaf caller can be linked up to any of them. It is rare that a deaf caller and the VRS interpreter are located in the same state however. This presents an obvious difficulty for ensuring access to quitlines. A deaf caller, using a VRS interpreter located in another state, is potentially unable to access the quitline services provided for their state. This is due to the state quitlines placing a caller ID recognition system on their lines and rejecting or redirecting calls that do not originate from within their state.

You may remember that the State of Oklahoma presented their experiences with this challenge and their work to resolve it during NAQC's 2007 Annual Meeting. When deaf and hard of hearing callers called the Oklahoma Helpline utilizing VRS the national automatic number recognition routed the call to South Dakota. This automatic routing created confusion for the deaf caller as well as for the South Dakota quitline staff and was an obvious barrier to access.

The Solution

Working with partners, including NAQC, Community Services for the Deaf and the National Cancer Institute (NCI), a "take back and transfer" solution was developed in order to ensure that all deaf and hard of hearing callers to 1-800-QUIT-NOW who are using the VRS would be connected to the appropriate state quitline. While there are limitations to this solution we wanted to remind you of how to use it

and the importance of communicating this system to your staff (See [instructions](#) attached).

NAQC, NCI and the National Coalition on Mental Health and Deafness are currently working together to develop an even more streamlined solution to this limitation of our current quitline structure. We will report our findings to you as soon as they are available. In the meantime, should you have any questions related to "take back and transfer" please email Bob Zablocki at zablocb@mail.nih.gov.

Thanks so much for your continued good work on behalf of people trying to quit tobacco.

More Information on VRS

Video Relay Service (VRS) is a form of Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) that enables persons with hearing disabilities who use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with voice telephone users through video equipment, rather than through typed text. Video equipment links the VRS user with a TRS operator - called a "communications assistant" (CA) - so that the VRS user and the CA can see and communicate with each other in signed conversation. Because the conversation between the VRS user and the CA flows much more quickly than with a text-based TRS call, VRS has become an enormously popular form of TRS. For more information about other forms of TRS, see the FCC's consumer fact sheet at www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/trs.html.

Important Resources:

["Take Back and Transfer" Instructions](#)

Contact Us With Questions

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