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Federal Communications Commission
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Washington, D. C. 20554

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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OCTOBER 1 BEGINS NEW ERA OF TELEPHONE ACCESS

711 Will Permit Easy Nationwide Access to Relay Services

Washington, DC -- On October 1 of this year our country begins a new era of telephone access. That is the day that the familiar calling shortcuts of 911 and 411 will be joined by 711 - the new three digit number for access to all Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS).

It's fast, functional and free.

TRS facilitates telephone conversations between people who do and those who do not have hearing or speech disabilities. In one type of TRS, a text telephone (TTY) user calls a voice telephone user through a TRS provider (or relay center), where a communications assistant places the call to the voice user, and then relays the conversation by transcribing spoken content for the TTY user and reading text aloud for the voice user.

711 is good news for everyone, not just persons with disabilities. Both voice and TRS users will be able to initiate a call from any telephone, anywhere in the United States, without having to remember and dial a seven or ten-digit access number. There are currently over 100 separate numbers nationwide for accessing relay services. Being able to dial the same three digits nationwide to access TRS, instead of having to be familiar with each state's unique access number, makes TRS much more accessible in our mobile society.

Under the new rules adopted last year by the FCC, 711 TRS dialing must be provided by all telecommunications carriers in the United States, including wireline, wireless, and payphone providers. The FCC rule also encourages all PBX suppliers to configure their systems for 711 access to TRS.

In addition, to ensure the efficient, effective, and successful use of 711 access to TRS, the FCC required carriers and relay providers, in cooperation with the states, to engage in on-going and comprehensive education and outreach programs to publicize the availability of 711 access.

If consumers find that they are unable to get 711 TRS access after October 1, they should contact the FCC's Consumer Center at 1-888-CALL-FCC (voice) or 1-888-TELL-FCC (TTY), or by e-mail at access@fcc.gov.

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