



NEWS

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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. Cir. 1974).

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STATEMENT OF FCC COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTING AMERICANS TO EMERGENCY PERSONNEL WHENEVER THEY DIAL 911

Last month, Kari Rene Hunt Dunn met her estranged husband in a Marshall, Texas hotel room so that he could visit their three children. During that encounter, Kari's husband forced her into the bathroom and began stabbing her.

Kari's nine-year-old daughter did exactly what she had been taught to do during an emergency. She picked up the phone and dialed 911. The call didn't go through, so she tried again. And again. And again. All in all, she dialed 911 four times—but she never reached emergency personnel. Why? Because the hotel's phone system required her to dial 9 to get an outside line. Tragically, Kari died as a result of this vicious attack.

Kari's daughter behaved heroically under horrific circumstances. But the hotel's phone system failed her, her mother, and her entire family.

In my first speech as an FCC Commissioner, I said that "when consumers dial 911, they need to reach emergency personnel; it shouldn't matter whether they are using the public-switched telephone network (or PSTN), a VoIP application, or a wireless phone." Neither should it matter whether they are using a phone at a hotel, motel, or office building. If you dial 911 in a large building, you need to reach someone qualified to help. And you should be able to do so: The technology to make that happen already exists.

That's why today I am starting an inquiry to determine what steps can be taken to prevent tragedies like Kari's from happening again. As a first step, I am sending a letter this afternoon to the ten largest hotel chains in the United States asking some basic questions. What happens when a guest in one of your hotels dials 911 from a phone in his or her room? Does he or she reach trained emergency personnel? If not, what is your plan for solving this problem?

Kari is gone, and there is nothing we can do to bring her back. But her death will not be in vain if we can take action to ensure that whenever someone calls 911, they connect with emergency personnel. Over the coming weeks and months, that's exactly what I intend to do.