

As a person with hearing loss, I know how important technology is. The CapTel phone opens up a whole new level of communication to those people who wear hearing aids, but for one reason or another still do not hear well on the phone. TTY's are outdated equipment for today's telephone user, it takes a long time to go back and forth, people who receive tty or relay calls often hang up on people or are reluctant to talk with them. The CapTel phone allows a person with hearing loss to use their own voice, listen to the other person, and fill in missed conversation by reading the captions. The captions continue to improve as the operators become more experienced, and the software improves. If something is unclear, the person using the CapTel phone, having control over the conversation simply asks the other person to repeat and the captions show a second time. People will become more familiar with this technology over time, and phones will continue to improve. But, they will not do so if states continue to drag their feet in adding this service. I happen to live in Colorado where the service is in place, but I worry about other people with hearing loss living in states where it is not approved. They are missing out on an important accommodation to using the phone that would allow them to have a more natural phone conversation, with a more normal time flow, and stay connected with the world around them, including being more independent. I am able to make calls to my doctor and know that I understand everything that is being said on the phone. I can have my phone messages captioned, so that I can respond within minutes instead of having to wait for someone else to listen to the message for me. I can stay connected to family members that I can't understand without having the CapTel phone, recently when my Mom was having health problems, I was able to call my brother, who I resist calling without the CapTel, because I can only understand less than 40% of what he is saying. I don't have to ask people to repeat and become frustrated with me.

Please consider making CapTel phone service mandated in every state.
Thank you for your time.