

As you can see from my title above, I am a speech language pathologist. Here are my thoughts about the pending STS issue before the FCC:

1. Nationwide Provider contracted with the FCC: The advantage of having a nationwide provider would be that doing so would remove intrastate calls from individual state's jurisdiction. Under the current system, providers are paid less than it costs to make the STS and IP STS service available. Thus, there is not much incentive for service providers to improve the quality of service or increase the number of users.

2. Reasons for the Limited use of STS

Persons who may benefit from STS have complex disabilities and limited employment opportunities. They live in poverty. They typically can only afford the least expensive telephone service.

3. Potential User Population

There are 2.8 million persons 15 and older with speech problems and 523,000 of them have severe difficulties with communication skills.

4. Single Outreach Provider

The advantages of a single outreach provider may include: 1) reducing the number of administrative functions; 2) curtailing the ability of a contractor to expand resources that promote that contractor's own company; 3) makes it easier to conduct a nationwide media outreach program; 4) makes accountability easier and more transparent; and 5) allows the FCC to build requirements into the bidding process.

5. Bundling STS with other Outreach

STS provides a unique service to a unique population. Bundling outreach initiatives may cause confusion about what each service provides and to which population.