

Deaf Culture Question of the Week – Sept. 6 – 10, 2010

Bill Newell, Principal Washington School for the Deaf

Which state was the first to offer web-based Video Relay Services?

- a. California
- b. Texas
- c. Washington
- d. Virginia

Scroll down for the answer.

Answer: “c” – This week’s answer to the DCQW comes from Stephen Peck, TRS Program Manager.

“Washington was the first state to offer a piloted web-based Video Relay Services (VRS) through collaboration with Sprint Relay and Communication Services for the Deaf (CSD) in May of 2002. This piloted project later became a nationwide service that led to the progeny of many other innovations and VRS companies that are in operation today.

The first state to provide TTY relay services was California in 1987, approximately 3 years before title IV of the ADA mandated nationwide relay services available on a 24/7 basis. Washington became compliant with the ADA mandate in 1991 when it established the Washington Telecommunications Relay Services (WATRS).

Washington was also the first and only state to offer Communication Facilitator (CF) services to deaf-blind community members through a contract with the Deaf-Blind Service Center based in Seattle. CF services permits a deaf-blind person to use VRS in their home or at the DBSC facility in Seattle with the assistance of a CF who copy signs the VRS interpreter during a VRS call.

Steven Peck, CPM
Department of Social and Health Services
TRS Program Manager
Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
(360)-339-7382 (VP)
Steven.Peck@dshs.wa.gov