



# NEWS

**Federal Communications Commission**  
**445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.**  
**Washington, D. C. 20554**

**News Media Information 202 / 418-0500**  
**Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>**  
**TTY: 1-888-835-5322**

---

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  
December 12, 2013

NEWS MEDIA CONTACTS:  
FCC: Mark Wigfield, 202-418-0253  
E-mail: [mark.wigfield@fcc.gov](mailto:mark.wigfield@fcc.gov)  
NIA: Barbara Cire, 301-496-1752  
E-mail: [cireb@mail.nih.gov](mailto:cireb@mail.nih.gov)

## **FCC AND NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING TO PARTNER ON RESEARCH ADVANCING ACCESSIBILITY TO COMMUNICATIONS FOR AMERICANS WITH HEARING DISABILITIES**

**Washington, D.C.** –Federal Communications Chairman Tom Wheeler and the National Institute on Aging (NIA) Deputy Director Dr. Marie A. Bernard signed an agreement today to partner on research into the use of modern IP technology to improve and make more accessible phone service to Americans who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing.

Under the joint agreement, the FCC will collaborate with the NIA to develop and support research plans for assessing Internet Protocol (IP) technologies that can benefit older adults with hearing disabilities or deafness. Such benefits could be incorporated into the FCC’s Interstate Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) program, which enables people with disabilities to do what most Americans take for granted: make a simple phone call.

“The IP transitions are upon us and so is the obligation for the FCC to invite a diverse set of experiments that will allow the Commission and the public to understand how the IP transitions can further important social goals, including access for all Americans,” said Chairman Wheeler. “Today’s Memorandum of Understanding will allow the FCC to work with other expert agencies to increase knowledge on how next-generation networks can best serve the needs of older Americans and those with disabilities.”

Deputy Director Bernard added, “This effort addresses a critical need to leverage expertise and resources in a world of rapidly changing technologies where we have a unique opportunity to find and use the best technologies to improve the lives of older people and those with special needs. NIA is pleased to be involved with this initiative.”

The interagency Memorandum of Understanding establishes guidelines for the two agencies to work together on objective, rigorous research into the current and anticipated use of IP-based relay technologies to provide service to people who are deaf, deaf-blind and hard of hearing. Specifically, the research plans will assess and evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and consumer response to current and future approaches to delivering TRS, including automated speech-to-text and video plus automated speech-to-text technologies.