

An Overview of Speech to Speech

What is Speech to Speech?

Speech to Speech is a free, 24-hour telecommunications relay service that allows a person with a speech disability to call and connect with a trained Communication Assistant who can serve as the caller's "voice" and repeat his/her responses when necessary. It is federally mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

What are the origins of Speech to Speech?

Speech to Speech was founded by Dr. Bob Segalman in 1996, and it became a nationwide service in March 2001. In Texas, the Public Utility Commission oversees Speech to Speech, which is a feature of Relay Texas. Sprint Telecommunications is the current Relay Texas service provider.

How does Speech to Speech work?

The Speech to Speech service provides a Communication Assistant (CA) to assist a person with a speech-related disability in communicating over the telephone. A CA is an operator who is specially trained to understand people with speech-related disabilities. Speech to Speech uses a three-way call system, where the caller, the person being called and the CA are all on the line at the same time. The CA re-voices what is being said by a person with a speech-related disability when necessary.

Is my call really private?

Yes. State and Federal telecommunication relay regulations prohibit CAs from disclosing any content of a conversation. During a call, the CA cannot interfere in the conversation. Although the CAs may take notes to assist them during a call, they cannot keep a record of the call. Any notes must be destroyed immediately after each call. CAs must agree to adhere to the confidentiality requirements by signing a code of ethics agreement.

Who can benefit from Speech to Speech?

Speech to Speech services can benefit a person with speech disabilities due to the following conditions:

- Cerebral Palsy
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Down Syndrome
- Parkinson's Disease
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Stroke
- Stuttering

- Laryngectomy

This service can also be used by anyone who needs to speak to a person with a speech-related disability. For example: If a doctor needs to contact a patient with a speech disability, he/she can initiate a call to Speech to Speech.

For more Information

For more information about Speech to Speech, visit www.stsnews.com.

For more information about Speak Up Texas!, log on to www.speakuptexas.com.