

November 6, 2000

**ACUTA Regulatory Update:**

**FCC reminder to Manufacturers and Providers of Voice Mail and Interactive Menu Products and Services re: Accessibility Obligations under Part 7 of the Commission's Rules**

On September 22, 2000, the FCC issued a reminder to manufacturers and providers of voice mail and interactive menu products of their accessibility obligations under the commission's rules. The full text of the reminder may be found at [http://www.fcc.gov/Daily\\_Releases/Daily\\_Business/2000/db0922/da002162.txt](http://www.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2000/db0922/da002162.txt) and the original order may be found at [http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Common\\_Carrier/Orders/1999/fcc99181.txt](http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Common_Carrier/Orders/1999/fcc99181.txt).

The reminder was directed to the problems that consumers with disabilities have when accessing voice mail and interactive menu services. Specifically, the order addressed the problems with timing intervals not being adequate for consumers with disabilities and those using TDD relay services to respond to message prompts.

We would like to remind ACUTA members that they are obligated under the FCC order to take steps to correct these problems when they are readily achievable. The term "readily achievable" can be defined as being affordable and doable when considering the entire institution's budget--- not just the telecommunications budget. Therefore, if a programming change and/or a different class of service would solve an accessibility problem, the change should be made. If the problem could be solved with the purchase of an additional voice mail or interactive menu option, that purchase would need to be made if required to solve an accessibility complaint and if it is affordable when considering the institution's budget.

ACUTA members might consider reviewing their IVR and voice mail systems with their vendors to see what accessibility options are available. Some manufacturers offer options for TDD access at a reasonable cost. Members should also consider reviewing timing intervals with their ADA coordinator to see if accessibility problems exist.

ACUTA Legislative/Regulatory Affairs Committee