



Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
December 3, 2008
Maryland Department of Transportation – Hanover, MD

Attendees: Dirk Albrecht (MSD), Alexis Allenback (DLLR), Marian Bland (DHMH), Amy Bopp (HASA), Thomas Brett, Cheri Dowling, Alicia Epstein, Paul Farrell (MSDE), George Kosovich, Jan Bryant (MDOT), Jack Rouse (MDHCD), Karen Sheffer, Judy Stout, Laurie Yaffe, and Yolanda Winkler (Governor's Office).

Outgoing Members: Benjamin Dubin, Ethelette Ennis, Michelle Schaefer (Service Coordination Inc.)

Guests: Brenda Kelly Frey (DOIT), Hayley Koteen (TU Intern)

Staff: Lisa Kornberg, Denise Perdue, and Laura Quinn

Interpreters: Elaine Benson and Erin Harrison

CART: Sherry Knox

The Advisory Council meeting began at 2:30 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS:

Council members, staff and guests introduced themselves.

Jan Bryant attended as a substitute for Julie Moyer, MDOT.

OUTGOING CHAIRPERSON – Ben Dubin

Mr. Dubin welcomed the new Advisory Council members and stated that there is still a lot to be done. He believes this will be a great Advisory Council that has been appointed by the Governor's office.

Alexis Allenback is the acting as chair for the meeting. She stated that it was humbled by the request by the Governor's Appointment Office that she serve for a second term and is in awe of all the work that still needs to be done. A new Chair and Vice Chair must be elected and Ms. Allenback encouraged one of the other agency members to step into the Vice Chair role.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 17, 2008

Corrections: Page 4 - MDOT, 1st paragraph says NPA but the N needs to be changed to M to represent Maryland Port Authority

Moved to accept: Jan Bryant **Seconded:** George Kosovich

Vote: Unanimous to accept with corrections

CHAIRPERSON REPORT

None

GOVERNOR CITATIONS:

The outgoing members were recognized for their hard work and presented with citations from the Governor to show his appreciation for their time and commitment.

CHAIRPERSON NOMINATIONS

The council is now full and in a current term and a new chairperson needs to be elected. The ODHH by-laws require that nominations be submitted one month in advance of the elections. A two-person nominating committee was chosen, consisting of Alexis Allenback (Agency Representative), and Tom

Brett (Private Citizen). Only current members will be eligible to vote. Nominations are due by December 19 and in January the advisory council will vote.

DIRECTOR REPORT - Lisa Kornberg

New Member Orientation

The Office provided a new Advisory Council member orientation for members joining the Council within the past 12 months. The orientation was very productive. Each participant was given a notebook containing pertinent information about the Council's purpose and goals, which included the by-laws.

Surveys

The surveys distributed at the last meeting needed to be turned in. The information provided will allow ODHH to do a spotlight in their Monthly Bulletin as well as let the Office know the goals of each Council member.

Review of Current Projects

ODHH is in the process of redesigning the web site and it should be launched prior to the Town Hall Meeting on Sunday. Currently posted on the site are minutes from past meetings and the Monthly Bulletins. In addition, ODHH is working on creating a new brochure and hopes to have it ready by sometime in January. Lastly, the Annual Report is out for printing.

ODHH has continued to try to meet with Agency Secretaries and MD hospitals. Training of the Maryland Hospital Association (MHA) has begun. The combined total of approximately 80 attendees participated in the first two sessions. The Department of General Services (DGS), who is responsible for all the government security, also received training for its officers and wants further training for their staff. In January Ms. Kornberg will be meeting with the Department of Aging and hopes to eventually do trainings with the Area Agencies on Aging. Finally, ODHH is continuing to work with the Department of Disabilities, the American Red Cross and others on emergency preparedness. That has included work with the Governor's Office to make sure that if there were to be an emergency in Maryland, that full access and communication would be available for all people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind. There's also some hope that captioned radios, which would include transistor radios, will also be available hopefully in 2009 and will serve as an information source for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing during emergencies.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (MSDE) – Paul Farrell

Dr. Farrell shared that MSDE has been working on a pilot program for deaf students with emotional disturbance. There are a number of deaf students in the state of Maryland that have co-occurring disabilities which included emotional disturbance. However, involvement with programs and rehabilitation are extremely difficult due to the communication barriers with these students. The multiagency planning group, which includes representatives from the Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD), the MSDE and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), has begun developing a pilot program for emotionally disturbed deaf students. This is a two-phase pilot for secondary level students. Participants will come from both MSD and from the public school system. There are a total of five students who will participate in this pilot. Phase one of the pilot will be a day program beginning in January 2009 at the Frederick campus of MSD. Phase two will incorporate a residential component utilizing the Regional Institute for Children (RICA) facilities in Rockville. RICA is a community-based public residential, clinical and educational facility serving adolescents with severe emotional disabilities. MSDE hopes that this new collaborative effort will centralize services and bring students with emotional disturbance who are deaf, currently being served out of state, back to Maryland.

There was an online survey titled “Meeting the Needs of Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing”, that was sent out to all local programs throughout the state, which closed on October 3rd. However, due to a technical error with the software, there was some missing information. It has since been retrieved and the summary of the survey results is being compiled. There was a question, provided by ODHH that was included in the survey to assess whether there is a need for local administrators and staff to learn more about issues, technologies, communication barriers, or Deaf culture. Dr. Farrell will be providing a summary of that feedback to ODHH. Once the complete survey has been summarized, the feedback from local administrators will be used in the planning of MSDE’s next meeting for the development of a comprehensive statewide plan for deaf and hard of hearing students.

Dr. Nancy Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools, and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) approved a hiring exemption for DORS to hire a specialist for the deaf and hard of hearing position, previously filled by Howard Leonard. They are expected to have the position filled by the next State Board of Education meeting on December 17th and 18th.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGEINE – Marian Bland

Lieutenant Governor, Anthony Brown, created legislation to develop services for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan who are in need of behavioral health services. There is a need to respond to calls from veterans who may have behavioral health needs and some of these same veterans are coming back with hearing loss as a result of serving in the war. DHMH has resource coordinators in each of the four regions: Central Maryland, Eastern Shore, Southern Maryland, and Western Maryland. The resource coordinators work very closely with the U.S. Veteran Administration to get veterans connected to mental health and substance abuse services. There's a 1- 877 number that will connect callers to the resource coordinator in the appropriate area.

Ms. Bland announced that the Maryland Mental Health Transformation Office has launched its website, www.marylandtransformation.org, which will provide the opportunity to learn about the mental health transformation project. You can provide input into how the state should transform mental health services in Maryland.

Lastly, there is a program called The WRAP Program, which is the Wellness Recovery System. On December 4th the Mental Hygiene Administration (MHA) will hold a conference to talk about how Maryland is going to roll out the WRAP program and set up wellness centers statewide for people with disabilities. Ms. Kornberg added that she is doing a sensitivity and awareness training about deaf and hard of hearing for Cheryl Sharp, the director of the WRAP program.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT- Jack Rouse

Mr. Rouse reports that he is involved with a mortgage loan program for people with disabilities. Additionally, there are energy audits in which there are funds available from the Maryland Department of Energy for the rehabilitation of homes owned by individuals. If a person has a disability, there are no income restrictions. The website is www.MDhousing.org. The information is available on the DHCD website and of course they can be reached by phone, fax, e-mail or the TTY.

Mr. Dubin asked if there is anything DHCD can do in regard to independent housing for someone who is deaf or hard of hearing and needs accessibility in the home. Mr. Rouse stated that it is part of the rehabilitation program but that there are minimum cost requirements for funding. Funding is available to make upgrades and modifications for accessibility. The funding was meant for things like wheelchair ramps and was not sure if things like visual smoke detectors are costly enough to qualify.

ACTION ITEM: Jack Rouse was asked to research the minimum amount of work to be covered by his program.

Ms. Winkler, of the Governor's Office, wanted to know if the programs were only being marketed in-house or if they are widely advertised. Mr. Rouse said they are widely advertised and that more information about the program can be found on the website. ODHH will look into making a link on their web site and target it specifically to for deaf and hard of hearing population, including application deadlines etc. Maybe each agency can present an article about their services for the monthly bulletin. It was recommended that ODHH have an article in the Monthly Bulletin about the program.

MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF (MSD) – Dirk Albrecht

MSD has just launched their new oral program in August. The class is made up of 1st grade students who have Cochlear Implants. The class is taught orally with sign language support if needed. The program bridges the gap a little between oral and sign language usage.

The question was asked if students in the certificate of completion program have the opportunity to take family life courses such as sex education. Mr. Albrecht confirmed that the classes are offered to both diploma track and certificate track students.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING, AND REGULATION- Alexis Allenback

Within the past six months there have been major changes in two areas of DLLR. 1) The Office of Personnel Services (OPS) is now called Human Resources (HR) and 2) The Office of Equal Opportunity and Program Integrity is now called the Office of Fair Practices. Both offices have new directors brought in from the outside business community. These two new division directors will be reviewing all areas of the DLLR and its division's.

The two largest divisions within DLLR are the Division of Development, where Ms. Allenback works, and the Division of Unemployment Insurance. The Division of Development translates into county one-stop career centers that assist people in finding new jobs, new careers, training opportunities, and is a place for employers to find job seekers. The second large division, the Division of Unemployment Insurance is strictly a call center insurance program. It is not open to the public for walk-ins, everything is by phone. Because both of these divisions receive funds from the Federal Department of Labor, they have to meet ADA Title II requirements. Unfortunately right now while there is a dramatic increase in case loads of claims for unemployment insurance, neither the human capital nor the technology has kept up with the volume of calls received about unemployment whether they are TTY or voice.

Ms. Kornberg suggested adding a video phone (VP) line for those who do not use English as their first language. However, that would need to go through the Department Secretary. In addition, Ms. Kornberg was concerned that sometimes individuals are not allowed to call through relay service because it is considered a third party line. Ms. Kelly-Frey, the Assistant Director of the Maryland Department of Information Technology (DOIT), stated that the federal government deemed relay service not to be a third party entity and she would like the opportunity to speak with any agency that claims that relay is a third party entity, since that issue was resolved years ago.

Ms. Ennis, a community member, suggested that interpreters be out front where they can be easily accessed if a deaf person came in wanting to know who to see when entering the One-Stop centers.

ROLE OF STATE AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES – Yolanda Winkler

Ms. Winkler, the Governor's Deputy Chief of Staff, shared with State Agency representatives on the Council that it is their duty to report back to their Secretaries and to share any concerns and information gathered at the quarterly Advisory Council meetings. They do not need to go up the chain, but can communicate with the Secretary directly. The Secretary's report to the Governor and should not be in the dark about issues that are being raised at the Council meetings.

BWI AIRPORT – Neal Heaton

Video Phones / TTY

BWI Airport is looking into adding video phones. There is no definitive time for installation because of budget concerns, each VP has a cost of approximately \$7,000.00, but it is in the future plans. The video phones in the Chicago airports have email and internet capability in addition to the calling capability. At the presentation he attended about VP's in Chicago, each phone had menu options with multiple service providers. The State supports competition between providers. The airport has noticed fewer people utilizing pay phones and is reducing the number of pay phone in the airport. Ms. Winkler suggested that the airport install a demo unit to see how well it is utilized. The program is still in its early stages, but they would want to get feedback from community and the Advisory Council to determine whether or not the video phone technology would be beneficial at BWI.

They are trying to maintain their responsibility under the ADA to make sure that there are enough TTY devices on each of the piers and at various locations throughout the airport. The airport is required to have one TTY before security and one TTY after security.

Announcements

There was concern about access to communications at the airports, such as public announcements. Many deaf and hard of hearing people miss their flight because the monitors do not always display announcements, such as gate changes. However, much of the communication is from the individual airlines and not from the airport itself. Once a passenger is in the terminal the airline is responsible for communication with the passengers. They can look into a procedure change placing all announcements on the notifications boards rather than just when requested.

It was suggested that when the airport signs contracts with the airlines and restaurants, who essentially rent out space from the airport, that they include a provision requiring them to make announcements accessible and to use captioning on their TV's. It may be possible to incorporate it into the new contracts but it is unlikely that existing contracts would be amended.

The Hearing Loss Association of America has been collecting data regarding airports (on a national level) and individuals can submit comments through a form on their policy web site.

MENTAL HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE – Marian Bland

The Mental Health Subcommittee has been meeting on a near monthly basis and membership has significantly increased.

Mid-Shore Mental Health System launched a series of cultural competency trainings with the help of Gallaudet University. There was an issue with the funding being pulled back, but MHA was able to identify other funding for the training. Training is expected to resume in January. The series is being held at Gallaudet University (GU). Participants can attend the trainings in person or the presentations will also be available on-line. The online trainings will include captioning.

The committee has been working on a needs assessment. The committee looked at a document by the federal government from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and decided instead of conducting a needs assessment they were going to use the same model that is used nationally. This method calculates the estimated numbers of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing in Maryland.

The Committee is continuing to work on a proposal to submit to the Deputy Secretary at DHMH outlining recommendations to improve services in Maryland.

Several graduate students from GU conducted a community needs assessments in the Deaf Unit at Springfield Hospital. The Committee wanted to find out what the needs are for consumers who are deaf and hard of hearing, particularly those who have been in the hospital for a year or more.

TRANSITION TEAM – Laurie Yaffe

Judy Stout and Laurie Yaffe were members of Governor O’Malley’s transition team when he was elected and informed the Governor about the following issues:

- 1) Pre-K to 21 Education:
 - a. Children not being exposed to a language,
 - b. Families not getting information about MSD from MSDE, and
 - c. Standards for ASL interpreters in public schools.
- 2) Employment and Assistive Technology for the Deaf.
- 3) It was important for a leadership change at ODHH and the Advisory Council should have deaf professionals who are invested in the process. The Governor made the change in leadership and the Advisory Council seems to have changed on its own.
- 4) A new strategic plan needs to be created.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE

A Strategic Planning Subcommittee needs to be formed to work on the new strategic plan for ODHH and the Advisory Council. The Committee can help to determine how the Office can meet the needs of the community. The Council members want Ms. Kornberg, the Director of ODHH, to attend and provide input. The interests of the community, based on the upcoming Town Hall Meeting, will also help with the development of the plan. The strategic plan needs to be broad. It must also represent the entire community that ODHH represents not just the Deaf community.

Judy Stout agreed to chair the subcommittee. Hayley Koteen, the TU intern at ODHH, volunteered to attend the Strategic Planning Subcommittee meetings and take notes. The subcommittee will meet before the next Advisory Council meeting.

Strategic Planning Subcommittee Membership

Chair – Judy Stout

Members - Dirk Albrecht, Marion Bland, Alicia Epstein, Paul Farrell, George Kosovich, Karen Sheffer, and Laurie Yaffe.

2009 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Future Advisory Council Meetings have been planned for the following dates:

March 3, 2009 – 6:00 PM – 9:00PM

June 2, 2009 – 2:00 PM – 5:00PM

September 1, 2009 – 6:00 PM – 9:00PM

December 1, 2009 – 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Meeting Adjourned 5:04 PM