

MACDHH – Minutes 03-12-14



Present:

Council Members: Carl Bailey, Ann Black, Amy Bopp, Stacey Bundy, Dakota Burgess, Cheri Dowling, Casey Harris, Kathleen Heck, Mickey Morales, Delinda Johnson (for Keneitha Taylor), Robin Underwood, Charm Smith, Sue McLean

ODHH Staff: Lisa Kornberg, Zainab Alkebsi, Jennifer Mari Gunderson, Estie Kruglak, Asia Brown (intern), Latoya Jason (intern)

Guests: Christine Telford (guest speaker), Andrew Cohen

Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the December 2013 Council Meeting were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made (A. Black) and seconded. Minutes were approved without amendments.

Guest Speaker: Christine Telford (Office for Blindness & Vision Services – DORS)

Christine first asked if there is a difference in communication needs between DeafBlind individuals and deaf and hard of hearing individuals. The start of her presentation was around communication and how there are many different types of communication beyond sign language and verbal. She then did a brief demonstration with Andrew Cohen, a guest at the meeting, using tactile and modified signing relating to space referential to show how vision affects communication modes. She also stressed the importance of understanding that there is a substantial difference between interpreters who know how to tactile or track and those who don't. She continued by explaining about different modes of communication like ABC gloves, using whiteboards, note cards and Tadoma. The technology for communication varies vastly for DeafBlind individuals versus deaf or hard of hearing individuals. Some of these include braille displays, JAWS, Window – EYES, FM systems, closed circuit TVs (CCTV) and Kurzweil – a scanner for paperwork. The goal of DORS, the Department of Rehabilitation Services, is for everyone to be as independent as possible to get employment. Mickey Morales asked if the technology on the show "Covert Affairs" for their blind character exists in real life, which it does not to the extent shown on TV. Lisa Kornberg asked what the best way to communicate in a large meeting like this one for people with varying hearing. Having multiple interpreters, a loop system, FM system and microphones is the best way. Zainab Alkebsi asked about any technology coming out. Possibly iPhones having digital displays pop up including Braille, the Google car that can drive itself, and metal hands to sign in place of a live interpreter. She then offered to set up a tour of the Workforce Technology Center or a tour to look at the National Federation of the Blind's technology. Right now there are no hard statistics about the DeafBlind population in the area. There are 182 DeafBlind individuals under the DORS services. Sue McLean asked about voice recording long meetings and then converting to Braille later. Some conferences do this, but many don't know to even ask about it.

New DeafBlind Subcommittee

Lisa: In December we hosted a meeting to discuss SSPs in the state of Maryland. We currently have a program where they offer a limited number of hours. Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind (CLB) has that program and we're looking to expand the number of hours offered as well as an SSP provider list to have around the state. Our task for the new year is to have this committee set up. Our three priorities for SSDB are SSPs, technology, and general information distribution. The issue is that there is no funding for SSPs. Up until now, interpreters and SSPs have worked well together in their respected roles, but we need to focus on job descriptions and roles for SSPs as well as actual expectations. We're really trying to educate state agencies, non-profits, schools, etc. that there is a difference between interpreters and SSPs. Christine Telford explained that DORS set up SSP services to be funded through the VR system. We need more than 15 hours per month. With the help of SSPs, more DeafBlind people can get jobs.

In response to Cleveland's question, the purpose of the DeafBlind subcommittee is to work with stakeholders in the state of Maryland to focus on identifying individuals in that community, look at SSP issues, technological issues, and distribute information. Also, we will look at state program policies to make sure this community is included. We will send out an email to members about interest in joining the subcommittee and develop a flyer for community involvement.

Subcommittee Reports

Behavioral Health (Carl Bailey reporting): The Behavioral Health committee recently met to clarify and define the role of the subcommittee and where it wants to go and which issues or subjects it wants to pursue. The subcommittee decided to hold off on questioning the new Deputy Secretary at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Jordan Randolph, until they could meet one more time. Lisa Kornberg brought up the issue of medical assistants. Many people do not have medical assistance because of private insurance, and they don't have access to mental health services. The question is, is the state responsible for providing those services to individuals with private or not health insurance. The subcommittee has been trying to work with state agencies that are responsible for medical assistants. The next subcommittee meeting will be held on May 12 at 11:00am at the Spring Grove Hospital Center.

Education (Dr. Kathleen Heck reporting): The Education Subcommittee met last week and had a very productive meeting. We talked about developing leadership activities and trying to hold a leadership conference for deaf and hard of hearing students and their families at McDaniel College in January 2015. We don't know about funding yet or where it will come from. We are focusing on middle and high school students for building self-advocacy skills and also some socializing. We also discussed captioning in school systems across the state. A lot of the school systems are still purchasing instructional material that is not captioned. We are looking for a new person, with MSDB, to come in next month as the coordinator. We're also looking into certification in the state for interpreters that work within the school system. Right now there is no regulation. After a few more questions about captioning, Lisa Kornberg addressed that the MSDE website, along with all state agencies, is working to get the entire website and all video captioned. She stressed that it's each departmental agency's responsibility to caption their videos, and ODHHS is working to teach them how to do that. Our next meeting is set for April 24th.

Communication Access (Casey Harris reporting): The Communication Access subcommittee discussed drop-in services with communication, not to take the place of interpreters but having the ability to go somewhere and not waiting right away. Amy Bopp worked with Nollie Wood from the Mayor's Commission on Disabilities to improve signage, direction and structure at the Housing Office. We also discussed different communication kits we may want to develop in the future. We've looked into nursing homes and reached out to The Office of Healthcare Quality, but haven't made any progress yet. We've also looked at making visual alarms. The Maryland State Fireman Association provides money for one alarm per sleeping room. The problem is they provide a bed shaker, but what if the deaf person is not in bed? We have to approach it gently since we are not the ones providing funding. The other issue is there is not a lot of information within the program and there seems to be confusion about providing these alarms, which is something we want to address. We will also look into setting up a representative about flashers and bed shaker alarms. We have not set a date for our next meeting yet.

Departmental Reports (sent in via email)

DHR (Carl Bailey): Nothing to report.

MDOA (Dakota Burgess): Nothing new to report at this time. However, here is information related to the upcoming Governor's Leadership Award. Nominations are now being accepted for the 7th Annual Governor's Leadership in Aging Awards, which will take place on Thursday, May 15, 2014. The Department has held the Governor's Leadership Awards since 2008, as a way to recognize individuals and groups for excellence, outstanding contributions to the field of aging, and commitment to the overall quality of life for seniors. It is held every year in May in observance of "Older Marylanders Month." The award categories are: (1) Trailblazer-An individual, community group, business or organization that has demonstrated leadership in advocacy, developed an innovative program, research project or training for seniors; (2) Visual or Performing Arts-An individual, 60 years of age or older, or a group (members must be 55 years of age or older), who has demonstrated excellence in the visual or performing arts; and (3) Health and Vitality-An individual 60 years or older who demonstrates a commitment to healthy living and who serves as a role model to others. In addition, a Lifetime Achievement Award is bestowed upon an individual of outstanding achievement and who has made an exceptional contribution to enhancing the lives of older Americans. If you would like to nominate someone for an award, download the www.aging.maryland.gov and submit it to Judy Holland no later than March 28, 2014. For more information contact Ms. Holland at (410) 767-2635, judy.holland@maryland.gov.

MCCR (Cleveland Horton): Nothing to report.

MSD (Stacey Farone): MSD will be hosting two Spring Open Houses. The first will be at Frederick Campus on March 28th and the second will be at the Columbia Campus on April 4th. Information is on the MSD website.

The MSD High School Spring production of "Noises Off", under the direction of Jessica Willoughby, recently ran from February 28th - March 8th. This year's play was a huge success and allowed the high school students to showcase their acting skills.

MSD continues implementation of the new MD College and Career Ready Standards to prepare all students for the PARCC assessment in 2014-2015

MSDE (Dr. Kathleen Heck): In January 2014 a part-time audiologist was hired to work with the Maryland Hearing Aid Loan Bank. In January 2014 the Maryland State Team attended the Deaf Education Summit in Denver, Colorado. The team, consisting of the Superintendent of the School for the Deaf, a DORS representative, a parent, a local school system representative, and an MSDE representative, met to discuss barriers and solutions to transition for DHH students, and what best practices suggest. The team will be meeting several times during this year to develop a plan to address this topic.

MDOT (Robin Underwood): Nothing to report.

DHMH (Delinda Johnson on behalf of Keneithia Taylor): The DHMH Office of Equal Opportunity Programs (OEOP), Equal Access Compliance Unit (EACU) has drafted a User Guide and Fact Sheet for utilizing the Visual Communications Services (VCS) contract that went into effect January 1, 2014. The guide and fact sheet provides a summary of useful information including webpage guidance, rates and term and definitions regarding VCS so that staff are well informed on how to procure the applicable vendors. This information will be disseminated to staff via inclusion in the DHMH Staff Interpretation and Translation Services packet.

OEOP is working with the Foreign Language and Interpretation Services vendors and Visual Communication Services vendors to register all 237 departments for accounts. An ADA Designee and LEP Coordinator training will be offered by OEOP in the summer of 2014 to DHMH local liaisons who assume these roles.

Executive Director's Report (*Lisa Kornberg*)

Estie Kruglak, who had been interning at the office since September, came on board part time as the special assistant on February 26th. After four interviews, Jennifer Mari Gunderson was offered the Outreach and Communications Coordinator position, which began on March 17th. ODHH held a Town Hall meeting at the Silver Spring Library on March 22nd and had over 40 attendees, including six DeafBlind community members. At that meeting, we reviewed the roles and responsibilities of ODHH, summarized the legislative session and discussed different issues including senior housing, appropriate terminology to use when referring to deaf, hard of hearing and DeafBlind people, and the needs in the DeafBlind community. ODHH has also been working on updating and revising our website and brochures. We have been posting our monthly bulletins in written, video, and captioned formats and have been reviewing what needs updating on the website. The staff continues to work on updating our content. ODHH participated in numerous Deaf History Month events and outreach events including presenting a proclamation for the CCBC 30th Year Anniversary Celebration, a booth at the deaf expo at the Maryland School for the Deaf, participating in Deaf VISA, participating as an exhibitor at the Maryland State Steering Committee conference, and attending FCC hearings on closed captioning. We've also had many trainings on sensitivity and awareness as well as community supervision with various departments and organizations around the state.

Brief Legislative Summary

Cheri Dowling explained that Senate Bill 20, which was to change the name of ODHH to add DeafBlind, was withdrawn. While we consulted agencies that were here on the bill, we did not consult the community. We did not do our homework to consult the community about their support for the bill. We found out after submitting the bill that we did not have the support of the community. So Ann Black and Cheri Dowling sent a letter to Senator Forehand asking to withdraw the bill. Lisa Kornberg added that withdrawing the bill does not reflect our support of the DeafBlind community. We are more active than ever. Instead of worrying about the name, let's focus on creating a community that is active. Last summer council members were supposed to share the email with this information with their respective communities to get their input. We were all so excited about it that we voted without doing our homework. Ann Black emphasized that DeafBlind is a dual disability and we need to educate everyone on that. She expressed her disappointment in withdrawing the bill and how it should be handled better for next year. Christine Telford explained she received questions from citizens of the blind community about the bill as well. There was a lot of confusion between deaf AND blind and DeafBlind. Nancy Jenkins mentioned that over the next year we need to work to educate the community that ODHH serves the DeafBlind

community and to educate that DeafBlind is one word, a dual disability. Lisa Kornberg explained that the Advisory Council represents the whole state, and this may not be the best place to work on SB20.

Zainab Alkebsi talked about SB103, which is to change the name of the birth screening process to Early Hearing and Detection, EHDI. It also aims to eliminate the term “hearing-impaired” and change it to “hearing status” and aims to update follow-up requirements with families so newborns are receiving the care they need. We also would like to add ODHH to that council, which has passed in the Senate and is now in the House. The hearing will be Tuesday, March 18th. SB446/HB396 seeks to establish a commission for web accessibility and to add ODHH to their committee. HB51 is about bullying and we have proposed an amendment to make the bullying hotline accessible for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. That includes advertising the Maryland Relay number and training the staff on how to receive those calls. Right now, that bill is still on hold. The last bill is HB653 for the Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL). That has passed the house and is currently in front of the Senate. DCDL amended an existing bill to require all library services through the Department of Education to include connections with DCDL to expand knowledge and information on Deaf culture. It is not a departmental bill.

Lisa Kornberg stressed that no bills mentioned were submitted by ODHH and no bills were supported by the Governor. ODHH serves as an information clearinghouse and has no opinions as an office. We are a neutral party. It is up to community advocates to work on this, not ODHH. However, ODHH can amend a bill to ensure the inclusion of the deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind community.

New Business

Cheri: Any discussion for setting up the DeafBlind subcommittee? Ann Black makes a motion, Mickey Morales seconds it. Also, the EHDI Maryland Stakeholders meeting is Thursday, May 15th. Registration is quickly filling up.

Lisa: CLB agreed to braille all of our meeting materials, so if you are bringing materials please let us know in advance. There is also a Town Hall Meeting on March 22nd. The state requires that we host a public forum for people to express concerns, talk about what they want from our office and share what is going well and what is not going well. We encourage state employees to show up so they can hear from their community. Also, our new office needs additional construction and will be modified.

In regards to Nancy Jenkins talking about emergency preparedness – talk to Cleveland Horton about not receiving TTY calls from BG+E

Christine Telford: And two announcements. The first announcement is that May 20th and 22th DORS will be collaborating with Connections Beyond Sight and Sounds to present a workshop on transitioning youth focusing on DeafBlind individuals and their needs. And also DORS will be training Humanum on how to do job development and job placement for DeafBlind individuals that use sign language to communicate. That will be an in-house training.

Next Meeting: June 12, 2014, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Meeting adjourned at 4:14 PM

****Note, the next meeting has been postponed until June 18th, 1:00pm to 4:00pm.****