



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF & HARD OF HEARING

ODHH Monthly Bulletin

December 2010

A message from Director Lisa Kornberg

Even though the year is winding down, December is poised to be a busy month. The Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will meet on December 7th to discuss plans for 2011. ODHH staff will present a self-advocacy training on December 12th. And the Department of Justice will hold a public hearing on many issues affecting deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind Marylanders on December 16th in Washington, D.C.

But December is also a month of awareness. On December 1st, we recognize World Aids Day, established in 1988 to provide governments, national AIDS programs, faith organizations, community organizations, and individuals with an opportunity to raise awareness and focus attention on the global AIDS epidemic. In Maryland, the Deaf AIDS Project is at the forefront of addressing HIV and AIDS in the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind communities.

During the first full week of December, we also recognize Clerc-Gallaudet Week, which celebrates two individuals who played a central role in the birth of deaf education in America.

December is indeed an exciting and busy month. And we are looking forward to it.

From all of us at ODHH, have a safe and happy holiday season!
-Lisa

In This Issue

Spotlight on: Deaf AIDS Project

Public Comment Sought on Captioning, Next Generation 9-1-1

Event: Legislative Awareness Day

World AIDS Day is December 1st

Spotlight on: Deaf AIDS Project



The Deaf AIDS Project (DAP) was created nineteen years ago in response to a dire need for HIV/AIDS education in the deaf community. Since DAP's inception in 1990 under former director Harry Woosley, Jr., the mission of the project has remained the same: to educate the Deaf and hard of hearing community about HIV, methods of transference and resources available to HIV-positive clients and their families. DAP is a government grant project under the non-profit organization Family Service Foundation, Inc. Although there have been amazing developments since 1990 concerning accessibility, facilitation and care available to both HIV positive and negative Deaf clients, there is a vital need for continued HIV



The purpose of Clerc-Gallaudet week, held the first full week of December, is to recognize the birthdays of people who were significant in deaf education history: Laurent Clerc (deaf) and Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet.

Clerc invited Gallaudet to observe classes at Paris institution for the deaf. Gallaudet then invited Clerc to come to U.S. and help start a school for the deaf. On June 18, 1816 the two men started a 52-day voyage to the United States. During the long voyage, Clerc taught Gallaudet sign language.

Upon arrival in the United States, the two educators worked tirelessly to raise funds and increase awareness of the need for a school for the deaf in the United States. Their efforts were rewarded when the American School for the Deaf (then known under a different name) opened in Connecticut in 1817.

Quick Links

[ODHH Website](#)



education to community members and human service agencies who do not know the distinct cultural and linguistic needs of the Deaf community.

Although DAP works tirelessly to educate and test community members, studies still show that there is a lack of understanding and comprehension about HIV in the Deaf community, leading to a higher prevalence of HIV among members of the community. Recent data shows that Deaf people are on average twice as likely to contract HIV as their hearing counterparts, which is why education about safer sex practices a valuable tool for decreasing the spread of HIV within the community. There is a negative stigma surrounding HIV testing causing people to feel that being tested makes them automatically guilty of participating in risky behaviors. However, this is not true. The CDC recommends that all sexually active persons be tested every six months.

DAP says that to its knowledge, Maryland is the only state in the country that asks about "hearing status" on the testing encounter forms. Last year, DAP successfully lobbied the AIDS Administration to delegate a code for "ASL" under the language section. The DAP is making significant progress, and encourages community members to become more involved.

DAP services include HIV testing, as well as HIV test counseling in ASL, throughout the state. They educate health care providers and interpreters about AIDS in the Deaf community and provide recommendations and support for addressing challenges. In addition, DAP educates members of the Deaf community about HIV and is working toward developing a culturally competent HIV prevention curriculum specifically for the Deaf community.

If you are interested in setting up a presentation, volunteering, testing, referrals, condom distribution, or more information please don't hesitate to contact Sylvie Soulier at tsoulier@fsfinc.org or check out the DAP website at www.deafnonprofit.net/dap/.

Public Comment Sought on Captioning, Next Generation 9-1-1



The Department of Justice has scheduled three public hearings on four [Advance Notices of Proposed Rulemaking \(ANPRMs\)](#), which seek public comment on the possibility of revising the ADA regulations to address accessible web information and services, movie captioning and video description, accessibility of Next Generation 9-1-1, and accessible equipment and furniture. The ANPRMs were published in the Federal Register on July 26, 2010, and the comment period for them closes on January 24, 2011. There will be a hearing held at the United States Access Board in Washington, D.C. on

December 16, 2010, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For additional information, including the procedures for registering to comment at the hearings and for requesting special accommodations, [click on this link for the advance text of the Department's Notice of Public Hearings.](#)

You may be wondering, "What exactly is 'public comment' and what is its purpose?"

Many federal, state, and local agencies request the opinions, experience, and expertise of constituents when making changes to policies and plans, goals and objectives. Submitting public comment is important because it is an opportunity to affect policy that touches daily life. A call for public comment invites any member of the public, including individuals, communities, and organizations, to influence policy-making in a very concrete way.

Though writing public comment is relatively easy to do, too few people take advantage of the opportunity when it presents itself. The first step is finding calls for public comment. You can do this by monitoring the Federal and Maryland Registers.

If you want to comment on a local government matter, consult local newspapers. Local government calls for public comment are published in the Public Notice section

[Contact Us](#)

Maryland.gov

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

ODHH on the Move

Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Tuesday, December 7
11 AM - 2 PM
Talbot County Dept. of
Social Services
Easton, MD

Self Advocacy Training

Saturday, December 12
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM
Christ United Methodist
Church of the Deaf/Deaf
Shalom Zone
Baltimore, MD

of newspapers. Notifications are also posted in local government offices or, possibly, on their web sites.

The second step is writing the comment itself. Base your comment on your qualifications to respond, whether they are personal experience, organizational advocacy, vocational or professional background, or specialized knowledge. If the call for public comment requests that you provide specific information, then provide that first. Be sure that your comment has a narrow focus, evidence and analysis supporting your opinion, public support of your view, and resolutions or alternatives (if applicable). Finally, be sure to review and revise your comment to ensure it is taken seriously.

Event: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Legislative Awareness Day



On Monday, February 21, 2011 (President's Day), ODHH will be hosting a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Legislative Awareness Day to help engage Marylanders with hearing loss in the legislative process.

Since our creation in 2001, ODHH and the communities we serve have identified a need for greater involvement in the legislative process. Part of the mission of the Office, echoing Governor O'Malley's vision of "One Maryland," is to ensure that all Maryland citizens who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing have equal and full access to resources and services and that they

have opportunities for participation in all aspects of community life. The main objective of the 2011 Awareness Day is to familiarize the citizens we serve with the legislative process and provide a way for them to access the distinguished lawmakers of the General Assembly.

So mark your calendars for February 21. More information, including a registration form, will be posted to the ODHH website this week. If you have any questions, please contact Julie Anne Schafer at jschafer@gov.state.md.us.

Questions? Comments? Contact:

Julie Anne Schafer, Esq.
Assistant Director
Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
217 E. Redwood Street, Suite 1300
Baltimore, MD 21202
410-767-7793 (voice)
443-453-5954 (VP)
jschafer@gov.state.md.us
<http://www.odhh.maryland.gov/>

[Forward email](#)

✉ **SafeUnsubscribe®**

This email was sent to lquinn@gov.state.md.us by jschafer@gov.state.md.us.
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Email Marketing by



Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing | 217 E. Redwood Street | Suite 1300 | Baltimore | MD | 21202