

EHDI Advisory Council Motion

Adopted: April 21, 2015

Motion made by: Kelby Brick, Director, Governor's Office of the Deaf and  
Hard of Hearing

We move that the EHDI Advisory Council advises the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to issue a letter immediately to every parent of a child identified as Deaf or hard of hearing explaining that their child runs a severe risk of language deprivation and that the best way to prevent such deprivation is to ensure that their child is exposed at the earliest possible age to visual language in addition to English. In Maryland, this typically means English and American Sign Language (ASL).

Copies of the letters should be distributed through every EHDI channel along with instructions that professionals of first contact with families of newly identified Deaf and hard of hearing children pass on this letter to the families.

A copy of this letter should also be posted on EHDI's website as well and also translated into Spanish and ASL.

July 14, 2016

Secretary Van T. Mitchell  
Maryland DHMH

Dear Secretary Mitchell,

I am writing to you in my role as chair of the Maryland Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Advisory Council. I am pleased to inform you that the Council recently adopted a motion to advise the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) of steps to take to improve the health of Marylanders. Specifically, the council advises DHMH to inform parents of children identified as Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing about the risk of not providing access to language, and the importance of ensuring access to language at the earliest possible age. Fortunately, Maryland's EHDI and early intervention programs are poised to assist families in providing access to language to children who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing, and in Maryland this typically may involve providing access to American Sign Language (ASL), and spoken language.

The council noted in the motion that copies of the informational letter should be distributed via all EHDI channels of communication, provided to professionals who identify and report hearing status to the state of Maryland, and available via the EHDI program website in English, Spanish, and ASL. For your reference, I am attaching a copy of the text of the adopted motion, and I remain available to answer questions regarding this motion, and remain committed to facilitating access to the expertise of the council in any follow-up in moving forward to implementation.

The EHDI Program Chief at DHMH (Tanya Green) was present at the meeting in which this motion was adopted, and in her role as liaison between the Advisory Council and the Department, I understand that she has already brought this to the Department's attention. Staff at DHMH within the Maternal and Child Health Bureau had requested that this information be brought directly to your attention by the Chair of the Council. This letter is provided to fulfill that request and invite you to contact me directly with any questions, or to facilitate necessary follow-up.

Thank you for your time and active engagement in efforts to promote the health of all Marylanders. As a health care provider, researcher, and Maryland parent, I am appreciative of the efforts and dedication of all within DHMH and the Maryland EHDI program. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Linton Reesman, Ph.D., ABPP  
Chair, Maryland EHDI Advisory Council  
Board Certified Clinical and Pediatric Neuropsychologist  
Deafness Related Evaluations and More (DREAM) Clinic; Kennedy Krieger Institute  
Assistant Professor; Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences  
Johns Hopkins University-School of Medicine

---

---

CC: Howard M. Haft, DHMH  
Jennifer Newman Barnhart, DHMH  
Donna Gugel, DHMH  
Ilise Marrazo, DHMH  
Donna Harris, DHMH  
Tanya Green, DHMH  
Christina Megna, DHMH  
Kelby Brick, Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Members of the EHDl Advisory Council

Enc: motion copy text