



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

# Monthly Bulletin

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## ODHH Legislative Updates

Legislative Session is underway and there are a number of bills that may be of interest to people with hearing loss in Maryland.

### **SB 68 – State Government - Human Relations - Closed-Captioning Activation Required**

This legislation requires that TVs located in a place open to the public have closed captioning activated at all times when it is open and the TV is on. This means if you are in a hospital/doctor's waiting room, a restaurant, or a car repair shop, if they have the TV on, the captions would also have to be turned on.

The bill can be found at <http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/bills/sb/sb0068f.pdf>. The hearing for this bill was on January 20th at 1:00 pm in front of the Judicial Proceedings Committee. Testimony is posted on the ODHH website at [http://www.odhh.maryland.gov/2010\\_updates.html](http://www.odhh.maryland.gov/2010_updates.html).

### **SB 79 – ODHH Responsibilities**

This legislation will amend the definition of "deaf and hard of hearing individuals" within our statute to include individuals who are deafblind. The changes will also change the name of the Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to the Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and increase the roster

for the Council from 16 to 18 members, adding a member with knowledge about deafblind individuals and a representative from the Department of Aging (State Agency). Finally, the bill will remove from ODHH responsibilities the acquisition and distribution of visual smoke detectors.

The bill can be found at <http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/bills/sb/sb0079f.pdf>. This bill was passed by the Senate and is now in the House of Delegates. We will let you know when a hearing is scheduled.

### **SB 102 - Election Law – Campaign Advertisements – Closed Captioning**

This legislation, proposed by Senator Stone, will require captioning on campaign advertisements distributed via broadcast TV, cable TV, and on the Internet.

The bill can be found at: <http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/bills/sb/sb0102f.pdf>. The hearing for this bill is scheduled for Thursday, February 4, 2010 at 1:00 p.m. in front of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Even if you cannot make it to the hearings, please write to or call your legislators and ask them to support these bills. Every call, letter, or email counts!

## Maryland Celebrates 20th Anniversary of the ADA

A Governor's proclamation and resolutions from the Maryland Senate and the Maryland House of Delegates began the State's yearlong celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In January, Governor Martin O'Malley proclaimed the 20th Anniversary stating that the ADA was "landmark legislation that protected the civil rights of individuals with disabilities and ensured that more than 54 million Americans received the same basic freedoms - independence, equal access, freedom of choice and inclusion - afforded to every citizen in

our country." In the proclamation, he encouraged everyone to participate in and promote events throughout the State that celebrate the rights and abilities of individuals with disabilities.

On Friday, January 29, Senator Jennie Forehand and Delegate Sue Kullen, sponsors for resolutions in the Senate and the House of Delegates respectively, made special floor presentations recognizing the significance of the ADA and the impact the legislation has made on the lives of individuals with disabilities. The resolutions, which

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# ODHH Updates and Director's Corner



**ODHH Director  
Lisa H. Kornberg**

2010 is off to a brisk start for ODHH. This Legislative Session, we introduced two bills aimed at improving the quality of life for Marylanders with hearing loss (page 1). We are busy tracking legislation that may be of interest to the constituents we serve and posting updates to the ODHH website. Stay tuned; there is more to come!

We are also gearing up for our first-ever Legislative Awareness Day, which is being held in Annapolis on February 15 at 3 PM (page 4). If you have not already registered, do it now! There are only a few spaces left for this very important event.

We are excited to be working with the Maryland Department of Disabilities to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Looking ahead, we will be planning a special event in December during Clerc-Gallaudet Week to highlight the accomplishments and history of people with hearing loss.

Finally, it is everyone's favorite time of year—tax season! The IRS has posted videos in ASL to explain tax forms and processes (page 4). Stay tuned to the ODHH website for updates and information about preparing your 2009 taxes. Also coming soon—information about the 2010 Census!

It is a busy and exciting time for ODHH and we look forward to working with you to ensure that all Maryland's citizens who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind have equal and full access to resources and services. *Lisa*

*“MAT is beginning the Wireless Pilot Program as a solution for people with hearing loss but may offer wireless solutions for people with other kinds of disabilities in the future.”*

## M.A.T. Wireless Pilot Program

The Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program exists to keep telephones an integral part of your daily life, providing free assistive telecommunications equipment to qualified residents of the State of Maryland.

The MAT program is now operating a Wireless Pilot Program and is distributing AT&T's Pantech Slade Phone, beginning with Maryland's deaf population. If you receive a wireless device through the pilot program, you can NOT also receive a landline telephone or TTY. Customers approved to receive wireless equipment will be responsible for paying all monthly service charges for using the device. Service

plan options will be offered to customers who are qualified for the Wireless Pilot Program.

If you have previously received telephone equipment from the program, you are not eligible to receive a device of any kind until 5 years from the date of you last qualified application.

MAT is beginning the Wireless Pilot Program as a solution for people with hearing loss but may offer wireless solutions for people with other kinds of disabilities in the future. For more information, or to obtain an application, visit <http://mdrelay.org/equipment.asp>.

## Recognizing National Black Deaf Advocates

As many of you know, February is Black History Month, which celebrates the accomplishments and the history of the black Community. In honor of this significant month, ODHH would like to highlight the consumer organization National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA).

NBDA was established in 1982 to promote leadership development, social equality, and educational opportunities for black deaf individuals, and they now have over 30 chapters. They are responsible for several nationally recognized programs including Miss Black Deaf America, Youth

Empowerment Summit (Y.E.S!), and the Collegiate Black Deaf Leadership Institute. Their programs provide teenage and college-age black deaf people with intensive leadership skills training.

NBDA is responsible for the creation of the first sculpture of a black deaf person. The sculpture, which is of Andrew Foster, was made by Virginia Cox. On May 12, 2004 the bust was given to Gallaudet University after 7 years of hard work.

If you would like more information about NBDA, please visit their webpage at [www.nbda.org](http://www.nbda.org).

## Maryland Celebrates 20th Anniversary of the ADA (cont.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

honored Marylanders with disabilities, were presented to Catherine A. Raggio, Secretary of the Department of Disabilities and Andrew D. Levy, Chair of the Maryland Commission on Disabilities.

"We have made great progress in eliminating discrimination against individuals with disabilities, but our work is not done," said Senator Forehand.

"Marylanders with disabilities have a great deal to offer and we are committed to ensuring they have the opportunity to reach their personal and professional goals."

"It is an honor to celebrate 20 years of progress for people with disabilities," said Delegate Kullen. "We have accomplished a lot, but we have a ways to go to ensure that people with disabilities live successful lives doing their part for their communities."

In addition to the Governor's proclamation and the Senate and House resolutions, a variety of events and activities will be held across the State during the year 2010. These include a free seven-part webinar series that began in January entitled "Essential Workplace Skills" that focuses on a variety of work issues for people with disabilities including: accommodations, strategies for overcoming barriers,

job retention and advancement and resolving conflict. Other events include the Jacobus ten Broeck Legal Symposium sponsored by the National Federation of the Blind in April, Disability History and Awareness Month in October and the State's annual Americans with Disabilities Act celebration on July 26, 2010.

The Americans with Disabilities Act, which was signed into law on July 26 1990, was landmark legislation to protect the civil rights of individuals with disabilities.

For more information about the Maryland 2010 Celebration of the ADA, visit the Maryland Department of Disabilities website at [www.mdod.maryland.gov](http://www.mdod.maryland.gov). To receive a copy of the Governor's proclamation, call the Maryland Department of Disabilities at 410-767-3660.



**Presentation of the House Resolution recognizing the 20th anniversary of the ADA**

## Join NVRC to Monitor Captioning of Super Bowl Commercials

Take your places in front of the television on Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup> for Super Bowl XLIV to help NVRC with its annual monitoring of captions on the commercials. This year coverage of the game is being provided by CBS. The official start time is 6 pm with kickoff at 6:30 pm.

Why does NVRC target the Super Bowl for this caption monitoring? Because its huge audience attracts many advertisers who pay a very high price for their commercials. Wikipedia says that a 30-second commercial for Super Bowl XLIV will cost \$2.8 million. Compared to this, the cost to add captioning is teeny tiny.

NVRC like to have several volunteers to help them with the tally, including readers who live in other parts of the country. Some commercials are broadcast nationally while others will vary by region. They would like to capture both regional and national information.

Commercials you can expect to see no matter where you are watching will include Career Builder, Coca-Cola, Frito-Lay, US Census Bureau, and Paramount Pictures.

To help, send an email with the following information to NVRC:

I live in (name of city and state).

I watched Super Bowl 2009 on television using (pick one):

- Local broadcast (TV with antenna/rabbit ears)
- Cable TV (include name of cable TV company)
- Satellite TV (include name of satellite TV company)

Super Bowl ads (list in the order seen and note "with CC" or "no CC" and let us know if there were captions that were messed up)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Let NVRC know if you have problems with captions being missing or garbled during the commercials or the game. NVRC would also like to know what brand of TV you are watching, the model if you know what it is, and whether it's a digital TV or analog (tube) TV. For more information, visit <http://nvrc.org/>.



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**Martin O'Malley**  
Governor

**Anthony G. Brown**  
Lieutenant Governor

**Lisa H. Kornberg**  
Director

**Julie Anne Schafer**  
Editor

# ODHH on the Move

## February 2010

*Deaf and Hard of Hearing Legislative Awareness Day*

Monday, February 15, 3-9 PM  
Prince George's County Delegation Room (Rm 145)  
Annapolis, MD

*Baltimore City Veteran Muster*  
Saturday, February 27, 9AM-1PM  
TBA  
Baltimore, MD



\*\* Please note that ODHH will be closed on February 15 in observance of President's Day, but please join us in Annapolis for Legislative Day\*\*

## March 2010

*Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Quarterly Meeting*  
Tuesday, March 2, 11 AM - 2 PM  
MDOT Headquarters  
Hanover, MD

*Harford County Veteran Muster*  
Saturday, March 6, 9 AM-12 PM  
American Legion Post 39  
Bel Air, MD

*Make It Happen Resource Fair*  
Saturday, March 20, 10 AM-2 PM  
Rock Creek School  
Frederick, MD



## Register NOW for Legislative Awareness Day

### DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING LEGISLATIVE AWARENESS DAY



ODHH is hosting a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Legislative Awareness Day on Monday, February 15, 2010.

**Location**  
House of Delegates Building  
Prince George's County Delegation Room (Room 145), Annapolis, MD

**Registration**  
To register, visit the ODHH website at [www.odhh.maryland.gov](http://www.odhh.maryland.gov) and click on the "Legislation" tab.

### Schedule

**3 PM**  
Advocacy Training and Tour

**5 PM**  
Welcome and Award Presentation

**6 PM**  
Meetings with Legislators and Dinner on your own

**8 PM**  
Participants may view House and/or Senate Sessions



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

### Questions?

410-767-7793 (voice)  
443-453-5954 (VP)

[jschafer@gov.state.md.us](mailto:jschafer@gov.state.md.us)



The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is working to make sure that important tax information reaches the deaf community.

During the 2010 tax season, the IRS is adding new ASL PSAs to its series entitled, "Tax Tips", with open captions and voice over.

Please check back often for new video updates between now and April 2010. You can view the videos on the IRS' YouTube ASL Channel at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/IRSvideosASL>.