

## § 9-2404. Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (March 16, 2017)

Third Quarterly Meeting  
March 16, 2017

Present:

Council Members: Stephanie Summers, Erin Buck-Skees, Charm L. Smith, Dakota Burgess, Janet Cornick, Jason Corning, Spencer Dove, Lisalee Egbert, Tanya Green, Marny Helfrich, Greg James, Nancy Jenkins, and Ed Schwabeland

ODHH Staff: Kelby Brick, Deborah Nathanson, and Allysa Dittmar

Call to Order: 2:07 PM

Meeting Minutes:

Minutes from December 2016 read and approved

MACDHH Chair Summers:

Reported on series of meetings the council officers had with a variety of state agencies to help assess current services available for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the State of Maryland and what can be improved; Clarified that the council is advisory, not managerial

Discussed House Bill 343 and its legislative status (Bill was voted against in the committee); Chair is committed to working with law enforcement agencies to improve when pulling over deaf/hard of hearing drivers; Inquired about who introduced the bill (both the legislator and the constituent)

Discussed House Bill 601 and its legislative status (Bill was passed both in the committee and on the floor - and has been signed into law). The bill concerns use of Trust Fund under the care of the Maryland Relay. Council Member Corning provided additional details about the bill itself and the impact the bill will have on the trust fund.

ODHH Director's report: See attached.

Council Reports:

Council Member Schwabeland (DLLR) shared info about his state agency: <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/aboutdllr/>

Council Member Helfrich (MSDE) shared info about her state agency:  
<http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/default.aspx>

Council Member Dove (MCCR) shared info about his state agency: <http://mccr.maryland.gov/Pages/About-MCCR.aspx>

Council Member James (DHR) shared info about his state agency: <http://dhr.maryland.gov/about-dhr/>

Council Member Cornick (DOT) shared info about her state agency: <http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/>

Council Member Green (DHMH) shared info about her state agency:

[https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/genetics/Pages/Infant\\_Hearing\\_Program.aspx](https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/genetics/Pages/Infant_Hearing_Program.aspx)

Council Member Burgess (DOA) shared info about her state agency: <http://aging.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

Council Member Buck-Skees (MSD) shared info about her state agency: <http://msd.edu/>

Council Member Jenkins: Inquired about House Bill 601 to which ODHH gave a through response. HB601 purports to take the trust fund to support a senior call-in center for the purpose of ensuring that the seniors are okay at homes. Requested additional details about the bill itself and asked how she may get in touch with her legislators to share her opposition to the bill. COMMENTS: Council Member Smith shared that ODHH does maintain information on the status of bills affecting Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind on their website.

Council Member Egbert: Shared about a bill she along with another individual co-authored through the Office of Senator Young but the bill was withdrawn when the bill did not represent the full vision of the co-authors. The purpose behind the original bill was to expose sign language to parents of deaf infants. The co-authors had hoped to expand on 1. exposing parents with sign language, 2. provide parents with a website listing all free sign language classes for the parents, 3. provide parents with vouchers to sign language classes at state universities, and 4. create a loan bank to share DVD's on sign language for parents.

Old Business: NONE

New Business:

Council Member Smith moved that the ODHH write a letter of opposition to House Bill 601. Seconded. Motion carried.

Announcements:

Gallaudet Eastern Regional Academic Bowl took place at the Rockville High school on March 11th and Rockville High School AB team members will be presenting at the Maryland State Steering Committee Stakeholder meeting on March 19th

ODHH will host a Deaf Business Summit on May 2nd

MDAD will host biennial conference on April 29th

Meeting adjourned at 4:11 PM



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To: Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Fr: Kelby Brick, Director, Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Re: March 2017 Report

Please note that this report provides only specific highlights of our work since the last council meeting, and is not in any way comprehensive.

**Annual Report:** The last time the council met, our FY '16 annual report was about to be released. If you haven't seen it yet, check it out at <https://odhh.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2016/12/ODHH-FY2016-Annual-Report.pdf>.

**New Hire:** Allysa Dittmar, our previous part time policy analyst has come onboard as a full time Communications and Policy Manager. Please welcome and congratulate her!

**Upcoming Town Hall:** Director Brick will be at CCBC-Catonsville's town hall event in an official capacity to represent the Office. The event is on March 25th at CCBC-Catonsville from 5 – 8 p.m., and those who attend the town hall get free tickets to the Romeo and Juliet performance at 8 p.m.

**Deaf Business Summit:** A Deaf Business Summit will be held on May 2 for Deaf and hard of hearing business owners. Please watch our social media channels for announcements and details. Ideas for sponsors and referrals to business owners are welcomed and encouraged.

**Support for Advisory Council:** We have provided interpreting services, staff support and other resources for meetings between council officers and other government representatives so that the council can strengthen its understanding of different state functions and its ability to provide advice to our office.

**New Appointees:** Governor Hogan has appointed to the Council community representatives Vikki Porter, Eddy Laird, Larry Gray as well as Gordon Outlaw from DHCD. The Governor also has reappointed Dakota Burgess and Jason Corning. The Senate has not yet approved the Governor's appointments and we will announce when the appointees are approved.

**Increased Funding for DORS:** Governor Hogan proposed his FY '18 budget in January, outlining several ways to support Maryland residents with disabilities. For example, a \$1 million increase in state funding was proposed for DORS (Division of Rehabilitation Services) to help reduce the waitlist for services by more than 600 individuals, including Deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

**Teacher Certification:** We have worked with MSDE to update education certification regulations for teachers of Deaf and hard of hearing children. The revised language changes “hearing-impaired” to “Deaf and hard of hearing,” removes the special education certificate requirement, and identifies content-specific coursework required of applicants. The changes are now in the process of being reviewed and approved by MSDE.

**Deaf Cultural Digital Library:** DCDL is getting off the ground under the leadership of coordinator Susan Cohen as well as our Policy Manager Deborah Nathanson. They will be hiring staff so please encourage qualified candidates to contact Susan Cohen.

**Foster Care:** DHR has been working hard with our support to improve the foster care system’s accessibility and service provision for Deaf and hard of hearing children and families.

**Transportation Access:** MDOT and MTA have been working with us on a number of issues, including improving accessibility of MTA’s disabled fare system and interpreting services provided at MVA locations.

**Domestic Violence:** In a continuation of our efforts to address domestic violence, we have participated in some of the state planning sessions for addressing domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking.

**State of Emergency on Opioid and Heroin:** Governor Hogan announced a State of Emergency on opioid and heroin abuse. We’ve worked with the cabinet, MEMA and other agencies regarding accessibility of such information including critical PSAs on this issue. A Certified Deaf Interpreter team was present to make the Governor’s announcement accessible.

**Budget Issues:** We testified at the legislative budget hearings and our testimony was shared via our social media channels and e-mail distribution. A copy of our testimony can be found at <http://dbm.maryland.gov/budget/FY2018Testimony/D11A04.pdf>.

**2017 Legislative Session:** We have been monitoring various bills, which can be viewed at our legislative webpage: <http://odhh.maryland.gov/legislation> and as appropriate, providing technical assistance on some of those bills. Of key interest are:

- HB 254 (proposes the provision of closed captioning in public places without the "upon request" clause; builds upon a bill that the previous Office was actively involved in; STATUS: still pending)
- HB 343 (proposes an optional symbol for license plates to indicate that the driver is deaf; STATUS: unfavorable, and this was due to the civic engagement and activism of deaf and hard of hearing constituents)
- HB 601 and cross filed SB 248 (proposes a senior citizen call-in center that raids funds from Maryland Relay; STATUS: now in the Senate's Finance committee for first reading)
- HB 1645 (proposes a taskforce that looks at the role of mental health in interactions of deaf individuals with law enforcement; STATUS: still pending)
- SB 1150 (proposes that programs and mechanisms such as the Infants and Toddlers program and IEPs provide sign language instruction to parents of newly identified deaf infants; our own Lisalee Egbert spearheaded this effort; STATUS: still pending)

**Coordinating Offices:** We have been working with other coordinating offices to streamline communications and make communications more accessible and efficient. For example, we work with the Governor's cabinet and offices to ensure that social media materials are accessible.

**Legislative Awareness Day:** LAD was postponed to Columbus Day - October 9, 2017. We released a vlog explaining details via our social media channels and e-mail distribution: <http://bit.ly/2m2c9Z6>.

**Maryland Health Connection:** Last year, the Office worked with Maryland Health Connection (MHC), Maryland's official health insurance marketplace, to ensure that the enrollment process is accessible for all Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders. MHC has been producing videos in American Sign Language (along with closed captions) to help Deaf and hard of hearing consumers understand the enrollment process. ASL is also now an option that applicants can choose as their preferred language during the online enrollment process. ASL videos continue to be added.

**Deaf Brewers:** Governor Hogan, Comptroller Franchot, Director Brick, the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, and the Brewers Association of Maryland came together to celebrate the significant economic impact that craft brewing has in Maryland. Governor Hogan presented a proclamation declaring this month "FeBREWary" here in Maryland. Also present were Deaf entrepreneurs who are in the process of opening up their own breweries. This is an example of the Office's commitment to the Deaf Ecosystem, addressing employment and business ownership in the Deaf and hard of hearing community.

**Governor's State of the State Address:** The office coordinated the accessibility of Governor Hogan's State of the State address. The video was captioned and interpreted live by a Certified Deaf Interpreter team.

**Behavioral Health Advisory Council:** Director Brick is co-chair of the Cultural and Linguistic Competence Committee on the statewide Behavioral Health Advisory Council (BHAC). The Office worked with BHAC regarding feedback about Maryland's clinical crisis walk-in services and mobile crisis teams, which helped them identify priorities to guide decision-making as the BHAC works to expand these services. The Office also provided feedback to the BHAC on other gaps in mental health services pertaining to Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to guide policy-planning priorities. We are currently looking for a new co-chair for the Cultural and Linguistic Competence Committee.

**Disability Awareness & Support Advisory Committee:** Allysa Dittmar represents the Office on the Disability Awareness & Support Advisory Committee through the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. It is a joint partnership between the Maryland Department of Disabilities and DHMH's Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Control, and focuses on the inclusion of people with disabilities into public health to improve the health outcomes of those with disabilities throughout the state of Maryland.

**State Expenditures on Interpreting Services:** The Office has been working with the Comptroller's Office to gather information on state expenditures on ASL interpreting services and seek ways on how we can make such services more efficient and cost-effective.