



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

# Monthly Bulletin

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## Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Day a Success

On Monday, February 15, 2010, ODHH hosted its first-ever 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.

Despite some threatening weather forecasts, the event was a huge success, drawing over 40 participants from across the State. The event began with a training by Director Lisa Kornberg, which explained the legislative process and tips for effective advocacy in Annapolis. The training was followed by a tour of the State House, which described the history of Maryland's capital and about the importance Maryland played in the development of this country.

The highlight of the evening was the Welcome Ceremony and Awards Presentation, with keynote remarks by Lt. Governor Anthony Brown. Beginning



the presentation by signing "Hello," (pictured center) Lt. Governor Brown spoke of the O'Malley/Brown Administration's commitment to Marylanders with hearing loss. He also commented on SB 68—Closed Captioning Activation Required, saying "We think it is the right thing to do. It's long overdue & we need your help to get that passed."

During the Awards presentation, ODHH honored Sherry Little from the Department of Legislative Services, as well as Senators Mooney and Stone, for their outstanding commitment to ensuring communication access for Marylanders with hearing loss. After the Awards Presentation, participants were able to meet with their legislators and view the general session in the House.

Thank you to everyone who made this event possible! We look forward to seeing you at Legislative Awareness Day next year!

## Legislative Updates

Legislative Session is at the "halfway mark" and there are a number of legislative initiatives that directly impact Marylanders with hearing loss.

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

Initially, this legislation required 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. During committee, it was amended to require that captions be activated upon request.

The bill can be found at <http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/bills/sb/sb0068f.pdf>.

SB 68 has worked its way through the Senate and is now waiting a committee assignment in the House.

### **HB 1463—Rachel's Law—Closed Captioning in Movie Theatres**

This legislation, if passed, would require movie theatres to provide access to closed-captioning technology for deaf and hard of hearing individuals and set the minimum

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# ODHH Updates and Director's Corner



**ODHH Director  
Lisa H. Kornberg**

There I so much to talk about this month that I am not sure where to begin! On February 2nd, I was honored to attend Governor O'Malley's State of the State address. I now have the pleasure of sharing his words with each of you – through the captioned and ASL interpreted video that is now available on our website at [http://www.odhh.maryland.gov/sos\\_video.html](http://www.odhh.maryland.gov/sos_video.html)

In addition, ODHH hosted its first Legislative Awareness Day (page 1). Lt. Governor Brown made the opening remarks and Delegates Rice and Morhaim also made comments. Participants were assisted in meeting with their Senators and Delegates about issues of importance – and CART and interpreters were provided in the House Chambers for General Session.

It was really wonderful to see such a presence of Marylanders with hearing loss in Annapolis – as is also reflected by the fact that three bills addressing access to captioning have been introduced. (Legislative Updates, page 1) This is happening at the same time that the FCC has provided an easier way for constituents to file complaints about existing captioning (page 3).

This does not include the day to day work Julie and Laura have been doing to keep all of us aware of the critical issues happening in the 2010 Legislative Session. Without their diligent attention to detail and their commitment to staying informed during a fast-paced session, ODHH would not be able to keep Marylanders with hearing loss informed. Please join me in thanking them for a job well done. *Lisa*

## Celebrating a Month of Triumph

March and April are very significant months in the deaf community. It is when we celebrate Deaf History Month, which is a celebration of three very important events that occurred from March 13-April 15 throughout history. We celebrate this month to bring awareness to the deaf community's struggles and triumphs.

On March 13, 1988, the Deaf President Now movement successfully achieved its goal of having a deaf president appointed at Gallaudet University. I. King Jordan became President following a week of protests and rallies held by students and faculty. This

was the first time in history for a protest of this nature.

On April 8, we celebrate the signing of the Gallaudet Charter by Abraham Lincoln (1864). The institution was authorized by Congress to confer degrees in liberal arts and sciences. April 15, the last day of the celebration, marks the date the American School for the Deaf was founded (1817) by Mason Cogswell, Edward H. Gallaudet, and Laurent Clerc.

These events are significant in deaf history and that is why we celebrate them.

## 2010 Conference Round-Up

This summer, support your favorite national advocacy organization by attending a conference.

### HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

June 17-20 at the Hilton Milwaukee City Center & Midwest Airlines Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Conference website: [www.hearingloss.org/Convention/](http://www.hearingloss.org/Convention/)

- Conference will feature workshops, exhibits, and a Harley Davidson Museum Tour

### ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL

June 25-28 at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek in

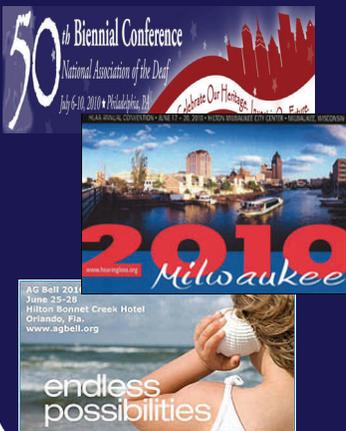
Orlando, Florida. Conference website: [www.agbell2010convention.org](http://www.agbell2010convention.org)

- Conference will feature intensive sessions, concurrent sessions, exhibitors, and programming for children and teens.

### NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF

July 7-10 at the Philadelphia Marriott in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Conference website: <http://www.nad.org/philly>

- Conference will feature workshops, exhibits, and Miss Deaf America. The theme of this year's conference is "Celebrate Our Heritage, Invest in Our Future."



# Legislative Updates (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

number of showings in which closed-captioning technology is required at a movie theater.

The bill can be found at <http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/bills/hb/hb1463f.pdf>

A hearing has not been scheduled as of the publication of this newsletter.

## **SB 102 and HB 1086 - Election Law – Campaign Advertisements – Closed Captioning**

This legislation will require captioning on campaign advertisements distributed via broadcast TV, cable TV, and on the Internet. It was cross-filed in the House.

The bills can be found at: <http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/bills/sb/sb0102f.pdf>. (Senate) and <http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/bills/hb/hb1086f.pdf> (House).

The hearing in the House is scheduled for March 16, 2010 at 1 PM in the Ways and Means Committee. The hearing in the Senate was on February 4, 2010 in front of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

## **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).

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.

## **Keep the Momentum**

This has indeed been an exciting session for Marylanders with hearing loss. ODHH had its first Legislative Awareness Day and **three** bills addressing access to captioning have been introduced. But our work is not done! Continue to call, e-mail, and meet with your legislators and let them know what bills are important to you.

## New TV Captioning Complaint Rules in Effect

Have you ever experienced a problem with television captions while you are watching a program? Or perhaps a program you really wanted to watch did not have captions. Many people have experienced these or other problems.

### **NEW RULES IN EFFECT**

At a February 19th meeting, the FCC announced that new rules for filing a captioning complaint are in effect. “We believe these new rules will help consumers get their captioning problems solved much more quickly than the old rules and allow the FCC and industry to better understand the kind of problems we are seeing and where we are seeing those problems,” said Lise Hamlin, Director of Public Policy & State Development at the Hearing Loss Association of America

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

Under the new rules:

- You can contact the program distributor directly. The program distributor is the broadcaster, the cable

company, the satellite company or whoever is sending you the television signal.

- You can contact the FCC. The new rules say you can bring your complaint to the attention of the FCC first.
- The rules say you must send in a complaint within 60 days of the captioning problem. And the program distributor will have 30 days to respond after they received the complaint from you or the FCC.
- You can file your written complaint with the FCC by using the on-line complaint form found at [esupport.fcc.gov/complaints.htm?sid=&id=d1e3](http://esupport.fcc.gov/complaints.htm?sid=&id=d1e3).

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For more information about captioning complaints, you can visit the FCC’s website by going here <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/closedcaption.html>. For more information about the new filing rules, visit <http://hlaa-advocacy.blogspot.com/>.



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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

## 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

*Deaf Awareness Day at the Aquarium*  
Saturday, March 13, 9 AM-3:30 PM  
National Aquarium in Baltimore  
Baltimore, MD



## April 2010

*Sine Die (Last Day of Session)*  
Monday, April 12, 11:59 PM  
State House  
Annapolis, MD

*Deaf Professional Brown Bag Lunch*  
Friday, April 16, 12 PM-2 PM  
Arundel Lodge  
Edgewater, MD



## ODHH Advisory Council Seeks New Members

The Advisory Council for the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing was established in October of 2001. The Council has 16 members. Eight of the members represent state agencies and 8 of the members are from the general public.

The Advisory Council has the responsibility to: advise ODHH in carrying out its duties; review statewide activities for deaf and hard of hearing individuals; foster the coordination of and support for programs for the deaf and hard of hearing; study ways to maximize the use of facilities and services available to deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

In the past, the Council studied the issue of driver's education programs for deaf and hard of hearing individuals and worked to facilitate a resolution of the issue with the Maryland Department of Transportation's Motor Vehicle Administration. The Council has held meetings in different parts of the State to learn about the issues facing individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. The Council has also advised the office

on many issues from web site development, to accessibility issues, to constituent services.

Individuals interested in being considered for appointment to the Council should send a cover letter with their resume and a completed biographical information form (<http://www.odhh.maryland.gov/pdfs/CVFormAppointmentApplication.pdf>) to:

Honorable Martin O'Malley  
Governor's Appointments Office  
State House  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The next ODHH Advisory Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 2, 2010 at the Maryland Department of Transportation Headquarters in Hanover, MD. Please stay tuned to the Monthly Bulletin and the ODHH website for further details.



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. You can view the videos on the IRS' YouTube ASL Channel at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/IRSVideosASL>.