



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

# Monthly Bulletin

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## Legislative Session Wrap-up

Legislative Session is over and there were an unprecedented number of bills considered that directly impact Marylanders with hearing loss. Because of the leadership and vision of the O'Malley/Brown Administration, this was an incredibly exciting and successful Session for ODHH and for the communities we serve. From ODHH's first-ever Legislative Awareness Day to the successful passage of two departmental bills, Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown have sustained their commitment to equal access for all Marylanders.

### SB 79 – Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing - Responsibilities

ODHH proposed this legislation to amend the definition of "deaf and hard of hearing individuals" within our statute to include individuals who are deafblind. The bill would 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).

**Outcome:** This bill passed both the House and the Senate and will be signed by the Governor in May.

### SB 68/HB1501 – State Government - Human Relations - Closed-Captioning Activation Required

SB 68 was proposed by ODHH. 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. While in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, it was amended to require that captions be activated upon request.

Delegate Craig Rice cross-filed SB 68 in the House –

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## May is Better Hearing and Speech Month

Since 1927, the American Speech- Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) celebrates Better Hearing and Speech Month each May. This annual event provides opportunities to raise awareness about communication disorders and to promote treatment that can improve the quality of life for those who experience problems with speaking, understanding, or hearing.

This month of awareness is also a good time to analyze your own hearing and determine if you are one of the estimated 28 million Americans who have a hearing

loss that can be treated. An annual hearing checkup is a good idea for people age 45 and up, according to audiologists, the professionals who specialize in



preventing, identifying, assessing, and treating hearing disorders. Even a very slight hearing loss can have an impact on your daily life.

Speech and language disorders can take many forms and can limit academic achievement, social adjustment, and career advancement.

For more information, visit <http://www.asha.org/bhsm/>.

# ODHH Updates and Director's Corner



**ODHH Director  
Lisa H. Kornberg**

What an exciting legislative session this has been—and Maryland's deaf and hard of hearing community has really come together and showed its collaboration in passing landmark legislation that recognizes the importance of closed captioning access in places of public accommodations. I am proud to represent the O'Malley-Brown administration in its support of a number of bills that represent and/or impact Marylanders with hearing loss. (page 1)

At the same time, ODHH continues to reach out to Marylanders across the State using social media, the Monthly Bulletin and our website to ensure that information is timely and accurate (page 2). We are pleased to be able to highlight and share the work of

the O'Malley Brown Administration, as well as other Maryland businesses that are serving our constituent population.

With so much happening, ODHH has decided to increase the number of Town Hall meetings we will be hosting across the State. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to meet us, and for us to meet you. We look forward to seeing you in Cecil County, Washington County, St. Mary's County, and other counties in the months ahead.

Again—thanks for all of your support!

*Lisa*

## ODHH is now on Facebook

ODHH is now on Facebook. Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. Millions of people use Facebook everyday to keep up with friends, upload an unlimited number of photos, share links and videos, and learn more about the people they meet.

to the communities and stakeholders we serve. Become a Fan of ODHH today! Why should you become a fan?

- Find out what ODHH is up to;
- Learn about ODHH and Community Events;
- View pictures of ODHH in action; and
- Receive updates on hearing loss related issues.

To view our page and become a fan, visit <http://bit.ly/8ZubEq>.



ODHH will be using its Facebook page to disseminate important information

## Study About Attitudes Toward Hearing Dog Use

Cara Miller, a graduate student in Clinical Psychology at Gallaudet University is doing a study for her dissertation relating to deaf and hard of hearing individuals' attitudes toward hearing dog use. The purpose of Cara's study is to learn more about how hearing dog use is acknowledged, perceived, and understood by individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Cara is seeking volunteers for her study who identify as a person with hearing loss and are eighteen years of age or older.

She welcomes volunteers who do not have hearing dogs as well as those who currently are partnered

with a hearing dog, or were previously partnered with a hearing dog.

If you're willing to volunteer, the link below will direct you to a short Informed Consent letter, which must be read before completing the survey.

To thank volunteers for participating, they will be offered the opportunity to select a charity to which Cara will make a donation.

Please share the following link which other volunteers and encourage them to participate in the survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8VSTQ9W> If you'd like to contact Cara directly, you can email her at [hearingdogstudy@gmail.com](mailto:hearingdogstudy@gmail.com).

# Legislative Wrap-Up (cont.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

HB 1501 - State Government - Human Relations - Closed-Captioning Activation Required. HB 1501 was submitted WITHOUT the Senate's amendments. Despite the advocacy efforts of ODHH and many constituents and stakeholders, the members of the committee agreed with the Senate and amended the bill to require that captions be activated upon request.

Even with the amendment, this legislation is a step to ensure access for people with hearing loss in Maryland. For the first time in Maryland, if a place of public accommodation does not activate the captions on a television upon request, they have broken the law. This means that the deaf or hard of hearing person can file a complaint with the Maryland Commission on Human Relations and the business may receive a fine of \$500.

**Outcome:** This bill passed both the House and the Senate and will be signed by the Governor in May. Once Governor O'Malley signs the bill, it will go into effect on October 1, 2010. For more information about his bill visit:

[http://www.odhh.maryland.gov/2010\\_updates.html](http://www.odhh.maryland.gov/2010_updates.html).

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

This legislation would require captioning on campaign advertisements distributed via broadcast TV, cable TV, and on the Internet. It was introduced in the Senate in January and was later cross-filed in the House as HB 1086.

The House considered an amended version of HB 1086. As amended, this law would only apply to candidates running for statewide office – Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, and Comptroller. While these amendments significantly reduce the number of candidates who must caption their advertisements, the bill would have made sure that the campaign messages of candidates running for a statewide office are accessible.

**Outcome:** This bill did not pass. The House passed HB 1086 with amendments, but both HB 1086 and SB 102 were stalled in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs committee and never received a vote.

*(Continued on page 4)*



## Professionals Urged to Include Hearing Health

The Better Hearing Institute (BHI) is launching a national effort to urge physicians and nurse practitioners across the country to include hearing health assessments as a routine part of their patients' physical exams.

BHI is sending letters about the importance of hearing health to the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American College of Physicians (ACP), the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AAACE), and the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP). The letters ask the organizations to urge their members to include hearing examinations as a routine part of physical exams.

BHI also is offering an online hearing test ([www.hearingcheck.org](http://www.hearingcheck.org)) where individuals can quickly and confidentially assess if they need a comprehensive hearing check by a hearing professional. BHI urges individuals to

share this information with their healthcare professional and ask that it be included in their medical record.

According to the BHI survey, fewer than 15 percent of those who received a physical exam in the last year said they received a hearing screening by their physician or nurse during that exam, despite the fact that more than 95 percent of those with hearing loss could benefit from hearing aids.

Six out of ten Americans with hearing loss are below retirement age, which demonstrates that hearing loss can affect anyone at any time.

BHI recently published, "Your Guide to Financial Assistance for Hearing Aids," that provides a comprehensive financial resource for people considering a hearing aid.

To read the complete BHI press release go to: [http://www.betterhearing.org/press/news/pr\\_042610.cfm](http://www.betterhearing.org/press/news/pr_042610.cfm)





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Governor

**Anthony G. Brown**  
Lieutenant Governor

**Lisa H. Kornberg**  
Director

**Julie Anne Schafer, Esq.**  
Editor

# ODHH on the Move

## May 2010

*Cecil County Town Hall Meeting*

Thursday, May 6, 6 PM - 8 PM

CCPL - Perryville Branch

Perryville, MD

*Deafnet Deaf Awareness Day*

Friday, May 14, 10 AM - 4 PM

Valley Mall

Hagerstown, MD

*Washington County Town Hall Meeting*

Friday, May 14, 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

Valley Mall

Hagerstown, MD

*MDAD Symposium*

Saturday, May 22, 9 AM - 5 PM

MSD - Frederick

Frederick, MD

\*\* ODHH will be closed on May 28 and May 31 for Service Reduction Days and in observance of Memorial Day\*\*

## June 2010

*Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Quarterly Meeting*

Tuesday, June 8, 11 AM - 2 PM

MDOT Headquarters

Hanover, MD

*St. Mary's County Town Hall Meeting*

Tuesday, June 22, 6 PM - 8 PM

Northern Senior Activity Center

Charlotte Hall, MD



## Legislative Wrap-Up (cont.)

*(Continued from page 3)*

### **HB 1463 - Rachel's Law - Closed Captioning in Movie Theaters**

This legislation would require movie theatres to provide access to closed-captioning technology for deaf and hard of hearing individuals and set the minimum number of showings for which closed-captioning technology is required at a movie theater.

**Outcome:** This bill did not pass. It received an unfavorable report from the committee. This means that the bill did not receive further consideration this session. Delegate Kelly, the sponsor of the bill, has indicated that he may introduce it again next year.

### **HB 59/SB 467 - Task Force to Explore the Incorporation of the Principles of Universal Design for Learning into the Education Systems in Maryland**

This legislation establishes the Task Force to Explore the Incorporation of Principles of Universal Design for Learning into the Educa-

tion Systems in Maryland and provides for the membership, purposes, and staffing of the Task Force. Initially, a representative knowledgeable about the education of children with hearing loss was not included. ODHH successfully advocated for an amendment adding a member knowledgeable about educating children with hearing loss.

**Outcome:** This bill passed both the House and the Senate and will be signed by the Governor in May. For more information about UDL, visit <http://www.udl4maryland.org/>.

We would like to thank everyone who got involved in the legislative process this year. Whether you sent an email, came to Legislative Awareness Day, or testified on a bill, you contributed to improving the quality of life for Maryland's deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind residents.



Do you subscribe to Governor O'Malley's YouTube channel? You should! ODHH is working hard to make sure that the captions on all of the videos are accurate so that everyone has access to the Governor's messages. Visit <http://www.youtube.com/statemaryland> to see the videos and to sign up for updates.

