



FOUNDED 1634

MARYLAND

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE
DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING -

MARTIN O'MALLEY
Governor

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Lt. Governor

LISA H. KORNBERG
Director

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

December 2009

Dear Friends:

In our *One Maryland*, we are united by our belief in the dignity of every individual, and by the belief that there is no such thing as a spare Marylander. Our efforts in promoting equal access for people with hearing loss are connected inherently with our shared priorities – to strengthen and grow the ranks of our increasingly diverse middle class; to improve public safety and public education in every part of our State; and to expand opportunity throughout our State. This means the opportunity to learn, to earn, and to enjoy the health of the people we love and the environment we love.

ODHH is at the forefront of ensuring that Marylanders with hearing loss remain part of the vision of One Maryland. Despite tough economic times, ODHH has continued its hard work to improve the quality of life for individuals with hearing loss here in Maryland. Together, we have expanded opportunity for people with hearing loss by delivering training on communication access to all levels of government, focusing on employment, public safety, and emergency preparedness.

In the last year, 694 constituents, stakeholders, and State workers reached out to ODHH, looking for information, assistance or training on a variety of topics, including access to interpreters and resources for hearing aids. These issues affect the everyday lives of Marylanders with hearing loss and we are committed to the continued provision of timely responses to such requests so that all of our citizens have equal and full access to resources, services, and opportunity.

I want to thank all of the people in our State who are working to promote equal access for all Marylanders and to enhance the general welfare of Maryland’s deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind residents. I stand committed to an ODHH that brings relevance to both government agencies and to the communities we serve.

Together, we are making progress, united in our belief that each of us has a responsibility to advance the common good.



Sincerely,

Martin O'Malley
Governor

December 2009

Dear Governor O'Malley, Lt. Governor Brown, and Citizens of Maryland:

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) is pleased to present our Fiscal Year 2009 (FY 2009) Annual Report, which incorporates the accomplishments of both ODHH and the Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MACDHH). This annual report covers the activities of ODHH and MACDHH from July 1, 2008 until June 30, 2009.

This past year was marked by many highlights and accomplishments. Although these are difficult fiscal times, the ODHH staff has remained dedicated to advancing the O'Malley-Brown Administration's goal of promoting equal access for all Marylanders. Our new staffing pattern of a Director, Assistant Director and Administrative Assistant has allowed us to keep abreast of issues affecting Maryland's deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind residents and provided us the ability to reach out to Federal, State, and local agencies to provide training about the communication access needs of people with hearing loss.

In FY 2009, MACDHH elected a Laurie Corcoran to be its new Chair. In coordination with ODHH, MACDHH also had its first-ever orientation meeting for new members to share information and answer questions about the role of the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council also maintained its role in overseeing the activities and projects of the Office, including ongoing review of ODHH programs and services.

ODHH remains a steadfast contributor to the O'Malley-Brown Administration's vision of *One Maryland* by working to improve the quality of life for Marylanders with hearing loss. Despite the economic challenges we are facing, we share the Administration's belief in making and creating progress. To that end, this Office has increased its efficiency by utilizing the strengths and skills of our staff to increase training and outreach while responding to an unprecedented number of constituent requests for information.

ODHH is thankful for the leadership and vision of the O'Malley-Brown Administration and for their continued support of the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the communities we serve.

Respectfully,



Lisa H. Kornberg
Director, ODHH



Laurie Corcoran
*Chair, Maryland Advisory
Council for the Deaf and
Hard of Hearing*

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

The Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) was established in October 2001 as a Coordinating Office of the Governor.

Our Mission

ODHH represents the Governor and his goal of promoting equal access for all Marylanders by providing expertise that enhances the general welfare of Maryland's deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind residents.

Our Vision

All Maryland citizens who are deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind will have equal and full access to resources, services and opportunities for participation in all aspects of community life.

Our Services

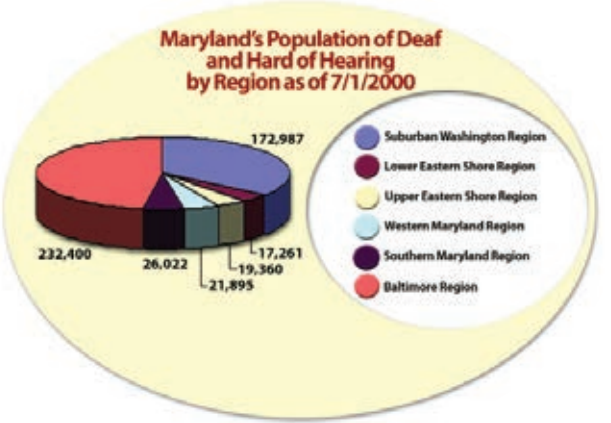
ODHH was created to:

- Promote the general welfare of deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing individuals in Maryland;
- Serve as a coordinating agency that reports directly to the Governor's Office;
- Work with various State and private agencies to ensure appropriate delivery of services to all of Maryland's diverse citizens;
- Support the development of public policies, regulations and programs that will benefit the community;
- Improve communication access to existing services and programs;
- Advise State government and the General Assembly on the needs of deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing individuals; and
- Coordinate with other units of the State and the federal governments about the services provided to deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing Marylanders.

Our Service Population

The Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) has a three-part mission:

- to provide information and support to the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind community;
- to serve as a resource for state and local government agencies; and
- to assist in the development of policies that improve the lives of Marylanders who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing.



Staff of ODHH

Lisa H. Kornberg
Director

Julie Anne Schafer
Assistant Director
(May 27, 2009 – Present)
Communications and Special Projects Coordinator
(July 1, 2008 – May 27, 2009)

Denise Gagnon Perdue
Assistant Director
(July 1, 2008 – December 18, 2008)

Laura Quinn
Special Assistant
(May 13, 2009 – Present)
Administrative Assistant
(July 1, 2008 – May 13, 2009)



AWARENESS TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

It is through the ongoing provision of information, training and technical assistance that ODDH is able to increase the awareness and sensitivity of government agencies about the accessibility needs of the Marylanders we serve.



Awareness Training

The Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing conducts trainings on a number of topics, including:

- ADA Compliance
- Assistive and Adaptive Technologies
- Communication Access Sensitivity and Awareness Training

These trainings allow ODDH to reach all levels of government, facilitating an increased awareness about the communication access needs of the Marylanders we serve.

Last year, ODDH staff took a serious look at its training and technical assistance priorities and determined that more focus should be given to government entities and employees. In consultation with leaders from the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind communities, we developed a marketing strategy for an intensive sensitivity and awareness training program for State and local governments that was rolled out in FY 2009.

As a result, in FY 2009, ODDH staff prepared and presented twenty-one (21) trainings to State and local government agencies, as compared to four (4) trainings to government agencies in FY 2008. We also presented a training to a Federal Agency in FY 2009.



Technical Assistance

ODDH provides technical assistance to government agencies. Technical assistance includes communication accessibility assessments and review of policies, procedures and practices in relation to effective services for deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind individuals. Technical assistance also includes individualized responses to inquiries received in person, via email, telephone or fax.

Many agencies contact the Office with questions about communication access for their employees and constituents, but ODDH is proactive as well. When the Office is made aware of a potential communication access issue, we will initiate contact with an agency and offer assistance. Technical assistance is also provided, when necessary, to non-governmental entities.



Technical Assistance Highlights for FY 2009:

- Met with MSDE personnel to review strategies for ongoing development of the State Plan for the Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children. Developed a series of questions related to sensitivity and awareness training that MSDE used to survey state Directors of Special Education.
- Provided technical assistance to Maryland's Olympic Heroes Homecoming Celebration at Fort McHenry to ensure accessibility for deaf and hard of hearing participants.
- Initiated contact with Governor's Press Office to explore accessibility issues for deaf and hard of hearing constituents during recent weather related incidents and to discuss the provision of communication access for Governor O'Malley's Capital for a Day events and for his Town Hall meetings.
- Provided technical assistance to the Maryland Disability Law Center (MDLC) for Voter Forums held in Salisbury, Frederick, Greenbelt and Baltimore.
- Attended and testified at the Bill Hearings for Senate Bill 97 during the 2009 Legislative Session and received a request for additional statistics, which ODDH sent to the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee.
- Submitted comments to the Interagency Committee on Disability Research to assist in developing a federal disability and rehabilitation research agenda for 2010. ODDH provided suggestions regarding interagency research coordination, health information technology and electronic health records, health disparities, health promotion in the workforce, employment and health, and other critical research issues.
- Reviewed program proposal for Partnership Development Group Rehabilitation, Inc. and provided input on psycho-social/developmental needs of deaf high school students, roles of job coaches and interpreters, and funding sources.



Training Highlights for FY 2009:

Federal

- Naval Surface Warfare Systems

State

- Maryland Police Academy Training Directors Association
- Senior Management of the Department of General Services
- Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission
- Maryland Emergency Management Agency's monthly meeting
- The Maryland Department of Disabilities
- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene- Facility Directors, Program Managers, Health Officers, and ADA Coordinators
- Department of Budget and Management
- Statewide ADA and EEO coordinators at their Quarterly meeting

Local

- Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation "One Stop" Centers – Cecil County, Baltimore City
- Area Associations of Aging Directors, and, as a result, to
 - o MAC – Lower Eastern Shore
 - o Calvert County
 - o Southern Maryland Regional Commission on Aging
 - o Charles County
 - o Garrett County



PROGRAM AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

In October 2008, the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), in partnership with the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH), announced the creation of a hearing waiver for individuals who currently hold a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL). The waiver, which applies to intrastate driving only, is the product of a joint effort between the MVA and ODHH to increase the employability and employment of individuals with hearing loss. Constituents were contacting ODHH, concerned because they were losing their hearing and unsure whether they could pass the hearing test to keep their CDL. When ODHH brought this issue to the attention of the MVA, their staff began working on a solution almost immediately. Consequently, the Waiver Program currently applies to experienced CDL holders whose hearing has declined and cannot pass the Federal Department of Transportation hearing requirements and is an example of a policy-level achievement of the Office.

Committees and Task Forces

As a Coordinating Office of the Governor, ODHH provides consultation and follow-up and reviews State programs and services. ODHH staff attends many task force, committee, and council meetings to provide advice and guidance when necessary.

ODHH serves on or attends meetings for the following Committees and Councils:

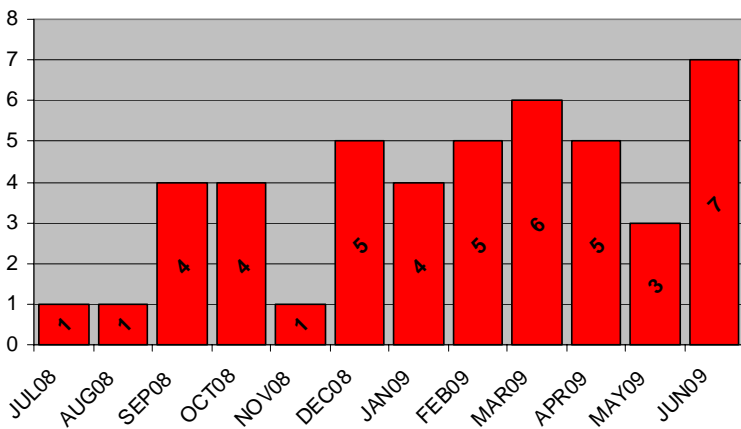
- Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 - Behavioral Health Subcommittee
- Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Advisory Council
- The Alliance
- The Maryland Commission on Disabilities
- The Howard County Commission on Disabilities
- Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant Workgroup
- Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay
- Maryland State Steering Committee for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students
- Interagency Committee on Aging
- State Emergency Preparedness Steering Committee

In FY 2009, ODHH was involved in the coordination of program and policy development to accomplish the following:

- Provided expertise on mental health and deafness to the DHMH Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant Workgroup.
- Attended remotely the State Leaders Summit: Making a Commitment to Improve Results for Children and Youth Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, and subsequently hosted a meeting with stakeholders to discuss the next steps for developing a State Plan for Maryland.
- Provided information for the development of the Department of Disabilities' State Plan.
- Met with Public Information Officers at the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to discuss communication access and notification issues for Marylanders who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind. Provided Sensitivity and Awareness Training to MEMA staff to begin the process of developing a plan to address and promote accessibility.
- Responded to the Maryland Police and Corrections' Training Commission's request for information and training to develop policies and programs to sensitize public safety personnel to the needs of individuals with hearing loss.
- Began coordination with the Department of Budget and Management in developing a statewide contract for visual language communication, including onsite and remote interpreter services and text transcription services.



Council & Task Force Meeting Attendance Fiscal Year 2009



Data Collection

ODHH collects data so that consolidated information about statewide services to the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind can be reported. Currently, information is collected from several primary State agencies that provide critical services to our constituent population including:

- Telecommunication Access of Maryland, DoIT
- Division of Rehabilitation Services, MSDE
- Maryland Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program, DHMH
- Springfield Hospital Center Deaf Unit, DHMH

The collection of this information assists the Office in identifying trends and gaps in order to facilitate appropriate and efficient delivery of State services in Maryland. In FY 2009, the Office used this data to prioritize the establishment of subcommittees for the Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, to determine attendance at and involvement in various task forces and councils, to guide outreach, and to focus staff resources.

Note: As a Coordinating Office of the Governor, ODHH does not provide direct services.

Consolidated Report of Statewide Services

Telecommunications Access of Maryland, DoIT Telephone Assessments Provided	268
Division of Rehabilitation Services, MSDE Number of deaf and hard of hearing receiving employment and economic self-sufficiency training ¹	1869
Maryland Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program, DHMH Number of infants identified with hearing loss ²	77
Springfield Hospital Center Deaf Unit, DHMH Annual admissions to the deaf unit	27

¹ These numbers are reported by the Federal fiscal year which runs from October 1, 2007 to September 30, 2009.

² This report is done by calendar year and represents 2008.

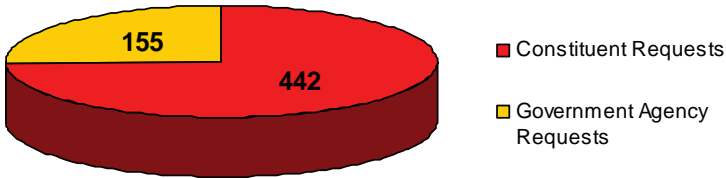
CONSTITUENT SERVICES

Consistent with our mission and vision, the Constituent Services Program directly impacts the community by facilitating equal and full access to information, services, and programs.

The Office serves as a clearinghouse for information and referral to all levels of government, private entities, and to community stakeholders and constituents. The information sought through these contacts range from locating American Sign Language (ASL) classes to finding financial assistance for hearing aids. Often, we answer questions about how to access government support and file a complaint if individuals feel that they have been discriminated against because of their hearing loss.

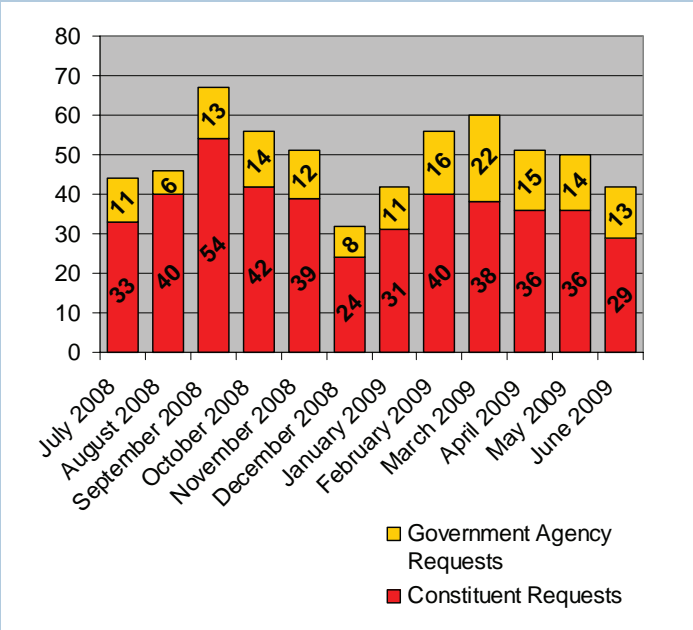
Marketing our office as a community resource is an ongoing process. We are always looking for ways to increase awareness among community stakeholders and constituents, as well as among State and local government entities. Two of the principal means ODHH uses to market itself as a resource is through updates to our website and the dissemination of community service announcements.

Constituent Services Requests for Information Fiscal Year 2009



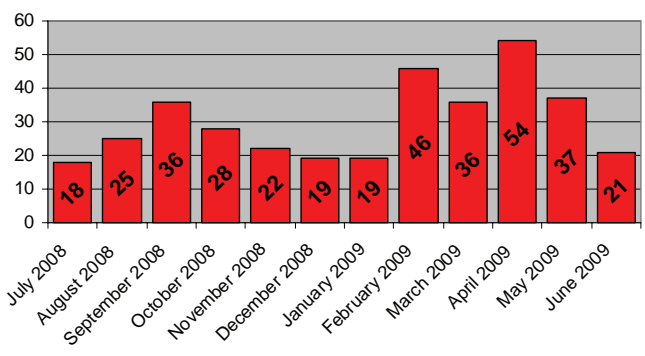
Since ODHH recognizes that the number of individual requests for information and support services it receives is an integral part of the Office’s operation, we are committed to the delivery of timely information and referral. ODHH staff strives to meet or exceed timeliness standards for responding to requests from constituents and stakeholders. In FY 2009, ODHH received 597 requests for information from constituents and stakeholders. We responded to 93% of these requests within two business days.

Constituent Services Requests for Information FY09



Because of our increased visibility, ODHH is better able to address needs and identify gaps within a diverse and geographically dispersed community. The identification of these gaps will help shape future goals for the Office.

Constituent Services Announcements Fiscal Year 2009

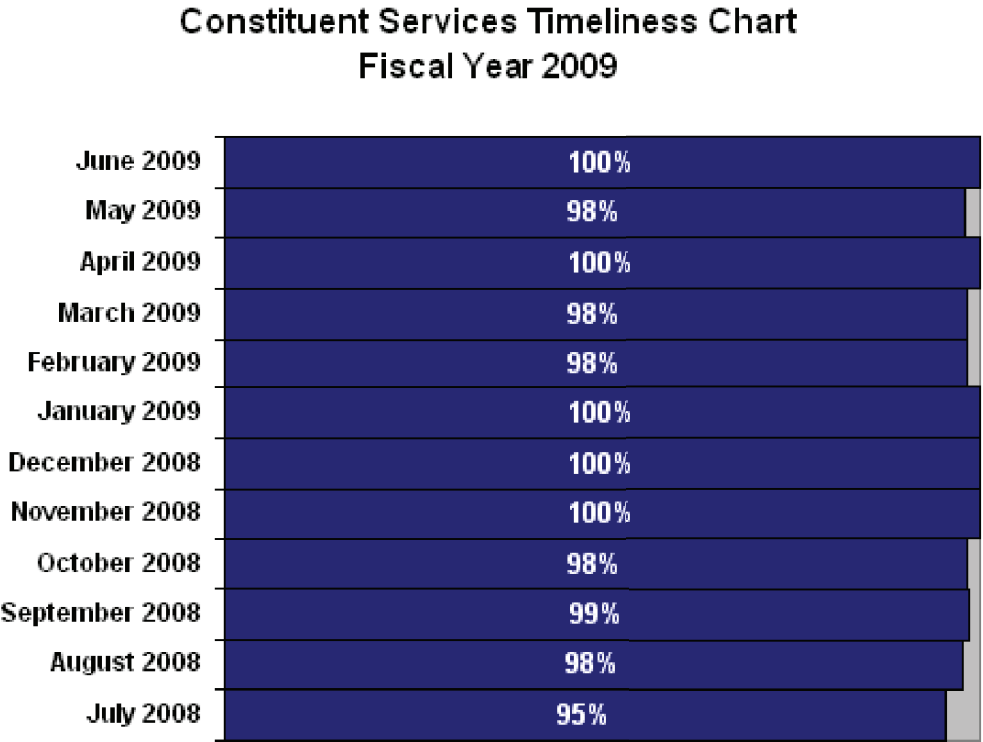


ODHH also circulates pertinent community announcements to several electronic distribution lists as a community service. In FY 2009, ODHH sent out 361 Community Service Announcements reflected in the following table:



Information available on ODHH’s website - www.odhh.maryland.gov - includes lists of resources, data and statistics, announcements, and articles of interest.

Constituent Services Timeliness Chart Fiscal Year 2009



COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

While exhibits are selected to reach the most people possible, it is the individuals who we meet and help that make the Community Outreach Program successful. For example, in late October of 2008, Howard Community College (HCC) sponsored an ASL Symposium to share with students and the community information on topics regarding deafness, American Sign Language (ASL) and new technologies available for individuals who are deaf. Several presenters and vendors joined this event, including Denise Perdue and Lisa Kornberg of the Governor’s Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Ms. Perdue gave a presentation to the students regarding the latest technologies and assistive listening devices (ALDs) that are now available. The presentation included an FM system from the Listen Tech Corporation that was made available through Harris Communications.

One of the attendees at the Symposium was a deaf international student who attends HCC full-time. Evgeny Bogolyubov, who is from Moscow, was fascinated by the Listen Tech System and asked for Ms. Perdue to help him with a demonstration. He was amazed when he was able to hear speech in English. Even more amazing, an HCC Russian teacher volunteered to speak/voice with him in Russian—his native language. Evgeny was overcome with excitement – he had never heard Russian clearly. Louise Masin Sattler, adjunct faculty at HCC and organizer of the event, decided to contact Harris Communications to share this story and to find more information regarding the Listen Tech System and how to obtain one. Harris Communications contacted Listen Tech’s Director of Marketing Communications, who recounted Evgeny’s amazing story to the Listen Tech Corporation Board. The Board agreed to give him a “gently used” system free of charge.

Laura Quinn (from ODHH) had the honor of presenting the equipment to Evgeny, who was excited to be able to hear all of the English sounds he was trying to master and to be able talk to his mother in Russia. This story is just one example of how the Community Outreach Program enriches the quality of life of Marylanders with hearing loss.

The Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is the State resource on issues affecting deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind individuals. The Community Outreach and Education program supports our mission by educating the community about their rights, accessing programs and services, and locating services if they are available.

Our Community Outreach and Education includes:

- Exhibiting at expos, fairs, and conferences;
- Conducting presentations and trainings;
- Publishing the ODHH Monthly Bulletin; and
- Participating in community events.

Community Outreach Exhibits Fiscal Year 2009		
	Gov	Non-Gov
July 2008	1	1
August 2008	1	1
September 2008		5
October 2008	3	3
November 2008	1	2
February 2009	1	
March 2009	2	1
May 2009	1	3
June 2009	3	1
	13	17

Community Outreach Exhibits Fiscal Year 2009		
Gov	Nov-Gov	TOTAL
13	17	30



Maryland Municipal League 2009 Convention



MSD Homecoming 2008



MDVA Veteran Muster in Anne Arundel County



ODHH at World of Possibilities Expo

Community Outreach

Exhibits at expos, fairs and conferences are one way ODHH connects with its constituents and stakeholders. ODHH exhibited at 30 such events during FY 2009.

Community Outreach Highlights for FY 2009:

- The Department of Disabilities’ ADA Celebration at the Strathmore in Rockville
- Annual Freedom Day at The Freedom Center, Inc. in Frederick
- National Aquarium in Baltimore’s Deaf Awareness Days
- Maryland School for the Deaf 2008 Homecoming in Frederick
- Howard County Public School System Transition Fair
- Disability Awareness Day hosted by the Anne Arundel Commission on Disabilities in Annapolis
- PCRID Conference
- World of Possibilities Expo
- DORS/MRA Conference in Ocean City
- St. Mary’s County Disability Awareness Day
- Deafnet Deaf Awareness Day in Hagerstown
- MDVA Veteran Muster in Anne Arundel County
- MDAD Symposium
- Maryland Municipal League Summer Conference

THE MARYLAND ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

Another prominent feature of Community Outreach and Education Program is the ODHH Monthly Bulletin, a newsletter that provides stakeholders and other entities with pertinent information that affects the community. The newsletter also enables ODHH to give monthly updates and progress reports about the activities and programs undertaken by the Office.

Introduced in 2007, the ODHH Monthly Bulletin has become a vital tool for the Office to achieve its mission in all three areas of programming, as well as to highlight programs and policies of the O’Malley-Brown Administration that positively impact the quality of life for Marylanders with hearing loss. The ODHH Monthly Bulletin is published and distributed electronically. An archive of previous bulletins are posted on the ODHH website.



The Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MACDHH) was established in October 2001. The Council, which is headed by a Chair and Co-Chair, consists of 16 members – eight members represent State agencies and eight members represent the general public.

The State agencies represented are:

- Department of Education
- Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation
- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- Department of Human Resources
- Department of Transportation
- Commission on Human Relations
- Department of Housing and Community Development
- Maryland School for the Deaf

Of the public members, one must be a parent of a deaf child, one must be a private citizen with special knowledge or expertise relating to services to deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing individuals, and one must be from a private agency providing services to deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing individuals.

MACDHH’s responsibilities include:

- advising ODHH in carrying out its duties;
- reviewing statewide activities for deaf and hard of hearing individuals;
- fostering the coordination of and support for programs for the deaf and hard of hearing; and
- studying ways to maximize the use of facilities and services available to deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

The Council meets four times during the year to learn about and discuss the issues facing individuals who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing.

In FY 2009, the MACDHH elected a Laurie Corcoran to be the new Chair of the Advisory Council and Dirk Albrecht to be the new Co-Chair of the Council. ODHH also conducted the first-ever orientation meeting for new members to share information and answer questions about the role of MACDHH.

In FY 2009, MACDHH meetings continued to provide Council members with information on the activities of the Office, updates from the sub-committees, and information and presentations from State and public entities to ensure that the Council members remained current on key issues. Examples of presentations to the Council include:

- Ellen Sheffield from Towson University talked about a captioned radio project supported by National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, National Public Radio (NPR), Harris Corporation, and Towson University;
- Representative from Baltimore Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI) shared the Airport’s research pertaining to plans to install video phones and answered questions from Council members; and
- Craig ‘Hank’ Passi, newly hired Staff Specialist for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services and Statewide Coordinator for the Deaf at the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), introduced himself to the Council and presented his goals and vision for DORS.

The Advisory Council participates in various activities and projects of the Office and provides knowledge based on the various levels of expertise within the Council. Those activities and projects include:

- Reviewing the results of ODHH Town Hall meetings;
- Ongoing review of ODHH programs and services including Technical Assistance, Constituent Services, Training and Outreach; and
- Testifying during legislative session in support of maintaining ODHH as an autonomous agency separate from the Department of Disabilities.

Community Education

In addition to individual requests for information and support services, ODHH provides a number of trainings and presentations based on requests from the community. This program supports our mission by educating the communities we serve about their rights, accessing services and programs, and locating such services if they are available. This includes providing workshops to increase constituents’ and stakeholders’ knowledge of and familiarity with accessibility issues, sensitivity and awareness, ADA requirements, emergency preparedness, voting accessibility and adaptive equipment. In FY 2009, we presented 8 workshops or educational seminars to non-governmental entities.

Community Education Highlights for FY 2009:

- Conducted Sensitivity and Awareness Training through the Maryland Hospital Association to 80 Training Coordinators for hospitals across the State. As a result, ODHH gave additional training to staff at Fort Washington Medical Center and Upper Chesapeake Healthcare.
- Collaborated with the Deaf Independent Living Association to provide four ADA workshops focused on communicating with deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind patients. Workshops were held in Kent County, Cecil County, Queen Anne’s County, and Caroline County.
- Provided self-advocacy training to service providers working with individuals with hearing loss to enhance autonomy and independence among deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf blind consumers.



The Office also provides “About ODHH” presentations to familiarize constituents, community stakeholders, professionals, and all levels of government with ODHH as a resource. In FY 2009, we provided 12 “About ODHH” presentations including presentations to:

- Howard County Commission on Disability Issues
- Hearing Loss Association of America – Montgomery County and Baltimore Chapters
- Baltimore County Commission on Disabilities
- South County Senior Center
- Deafnet’s Deaf Awareness Day in Hagerstown
- Anne Arundel County Commission on Disabilities

Community Education Presentations "About ODHH" Fiscal Year 2009		
	Gov	Non-Gov
July 2008	1	1
August 2008	1	
September 2008	1	1
October 2008	1	1
November 2008	1	2
January 2009	1	
May 2009		1
	6	6



ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP ROSTER FOR FY 2009

State Agencies

Robert Padden, Maryland School for the Deaf, Resigned September 2008

Paul Farrell, Maryland State Department of Education, September 2008-March 2008

Dirk Albrecht, Maryland School for the Deaf, December 2008 - Present

Alexis Allenback, Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, All Year

Carl Bailey, Department of Human Resources, All Year

Marian Bland, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, All Year

Sue Griebler, Maryland State Department of Education, March 2008-Present

Gary Monroe, Maryland Commission on Human Relations, All Year

Julie Moyer, Maryland Department of Transportation, All Year

John (Jack) Rouse, Department of Housing and Community Development, All Year

Public Member

Benjamin J. Dubin, Parent, Term expired September 2008

Ethelette Ennis, Citizen, Term expired September 2008

Michelle Schaefer, Citizen, Term expired September 2008

Karen Sheffer, Private Agency, resigned December 2008

Amy Bopp, Citizen, December 2008 – Present

Thomas Brett, Citizen, All Year

Laurie Corcoran, Citizen with Special Knowledge, December 2008 - Present

Cheri Dowling, Parent, December 2008 – Present

Alicia Epstein, Citizen, All Year

Jennifer Whitcomb, Private Agency, March 2009 - Present

Judy Stout, Citizen, December 2008 – Present

George Kosovich, Citizen, All year

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

ODHH holds at least two public town hall meetings each year to solicit public comment and feedback. Information ODHH hopes to gain from these meetings includes:

- Comments on the quality of State services and programs affecting deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind individuals;
- ODHH related functions and operations; and
- Other issues affecting deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind individuals.

The Office hosted three meetings during FY 2009.

- The first meeting, which was geared toward professionals working in the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind communities, was held on November 20, 2008 at Community Support Services for the Deaf in Baltimore. Thirty-three professionals attended to share their concerns and vision for the Office and the communities we serve.
- The second, held on December 7, 2008, was located at the Howard County Central Library where approximately 10 community representatives provided input to the ODHH staff and Advisory Council.
- The third meeting was held on April 1, 2009 at the Davis Library in Rockville, Maryland. About 17 representatives from the community shared their interest, opinions and needs with the staff and advisory council representatives.



The Office values the input of the community and makes its best effort to address the concerns raised by stakeholders at the Town Hall Meetings we host. During the FY 2008 (July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008), some issues raised by the participants were:

- Lack of captioning of State and local government websites;
- Possible elimination of the Staff Specialist for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services position at the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS);
- Desire for increased open communication between ODHH and constituents;
- Concern that ODHH's focus should be more expansive to include people who are hard of hearing or late deafened; and
- Need for ODHH to partner with the Department of Disabilities to work on emergency preparedness issues.

In response to these concerns, ODHH began working with other divisions of the Governor's Office to establish a contract to caption the videos on the Governor's website. The Office also assisted the Advisory Council Chair in drafting a letter to the Department of Education in support of a hiring freeze exemption for the Staff Specialist for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services position at DORS. The exemption was ultimately granted and Mr. Craig "Hank" Passi joined DORS in the Spring of 2009. In response to requests for increased communication from ODHH, staff continued to produce and informative Monthly Bulletin and rolled out a new, permanent column called "ODHH Updates" to give the community monthly updates about the activities of the Office. The Office also updated its training curriculum to have more intensive discussion about individuals who are hard of hearing or who are late-deafened. Staff also participated in more events to reach out to Marylanders who are hard of hearing. Finally, ODHH participated in the Maryland Association of the Deaf's Biennial Symposium at the Maryland School for the Deaf and encouraged participants to begin discussions within their community about emergency preparedness. ODHH also attends meetings for the Statewide Advisory Committee on Emergency Preparedness (sponsored by MDOD) and attends several of the County Commissions on Emergency Preparedness to provide consultation and expertise on communication access issues during an emergency.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS **cont.**

In addition to the mandated Town Hall meetings, ODHH Staff and/or members of the Advisory Council attended a number of meetings throughout the State to solicit input and feedback on the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing communities. This information is used to develop strategies that will further the Office's mission and vision. Examples of meetings attended include:

- Community Leadership Meetings
- Brown Bag Lunches with Professionals working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Marylanders
- MDOD Stakeholder meetings
- DORS community input meetings
- Community Advocacy and Association Meetings (HLAA, MDAD, MDSC)
- State Steering Committee Meetings



In FY 2010, it is the goal of ODHH to reach out to all members of the communities we serve by hosting more town hall meetings and participating in more events across the State. In 2010, ODHH will endeavor to host town hall meeting in Western Maryland, the Eastern Shore, and Southern Maryland , as well as the Central regions of the State.

www.odhh.maryland.gov

217 E. Redwood Street, Suite 1300
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
Voice 410.767.6290
TTY/VP 410.767.7756
Fax 410.333.1016
VP/IP 167.102.252.44
E-Mail ODHH@gov.state.md.us