



**Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
March 18, 2008
West County Area Library - Odenton**

Attendees: Ben Dubin, Michelle Schaefer, Julie Moyer, Dirk Albrecht, Paul Ferrell, Marian Bland, Carl, Tom Brett, Jack Rouse, Gary Monroe, Alexis Allenback, Will Johnson

Guests: Gaylene Beard, Laurie Yaffe, Lisa Kornberg

ODHH Staff: Denise Perdue, Laura Quinn

Meeting convened at 2:20 p.m.

GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTIONS:

- Member and visitor introductions
- Introduction of Lisa H. Kornberg as the new Director of the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH). Her appointment will begin April 9.

LISA KORNBERG:

Ms. Kornberg thanked everyone and briefly explained her background prior to her appointment to ODHH. She is looking forward to being an advocate and representing the Governor in promoting a better Maryland for deaf and hard of hearing citizens.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Changes: Laurie Yaffe's name was missing as an attendee of the last meeting.

A motion was made that the minutes be accepted with the above changes. The motion was seconded and passed.

CHANGES IN AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES:

Will Johnson's position at the Department of Human Resources has changed. He is now the Inspector General for the department. Carl Bailey has been appointed his replacement.

John Rouse will be representing the Department of Housing & Community Development, replacing Linda Webb.

Reminder: Heads of agencies, the Secretary or Director, needs to send a letter to the Governor's Appointment's Office when the designee representative changes.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – BEN DUBIN

ODHH Director Appointment

After careful consideration, the search committee recommended Lisa H. Kornberg to the Governor for the Director's position. The Governor concurred with the recommendation and the committee is pleased with her appointment.

General Assembly

Mr. Dubin provided written and oral testimony on several bills including the Tax Credit for Visual Smoke Alarms and Hearing and Vision Screenings in Public Schools. Delegate Sossi, who served on the Task Force for Visual Smoke and Evacuation Alarms, proposed the tax credit bill again this year. No action has been taken and it appears it will not be voted on in committee before the session concludes.

Other

Several weeks ago there was an apartment fire in Baltimore County resulting in the unfortunate death of an infant. The baby lived with its deaf mother and hearing grandmother. The smoke detector in the apartment was operable. However, the State must do more to ensure that people living in any type of housing has access to adequate information about alarms.

INTERIM DIRECTOR'S REPORT – DENISE PERDUE

Announcements

- Elizabeth Weiblen, who was liaison from the Deputy Chief of Staff's office to ODHH, recently resigned.
- As Mr. Dubin mentioned, Lisa H. Kornberg has been appointed Director of ODHH. Her confirmation hearing is will be March 24 and her first day in the office is April 9.

Budget

Since ODHH is a small agency, the General Assembly requires budget hearings only every other year. No hearings are required this year. In lieu of hearings I met with the legislative liaison and the Department of Management and Budget's analyst. We also discussed the Management for Results (MFR) to compare prior performance with current performance. They have submitted their recommended changes or approval of the Governor's budget request to the General Assembly.

A copy of the current operating budget report has been distributed to everyone. The report shows the actual dollars spent through February, and the numbers for the remaining months are projections. A possible surplus, or what they call a cost savings, of about \$7,000 is expected. There may be some additional money left due to the delay of hiring Laura Quinn and Julie Schafer.

Technical Assistance

The Advisory Council identified the problem that many museums are not accessible to deaf and hard of hearing people. Some museums provide patrons with PDA's or headphones to listen to narration as they walk through the museum, but sometimes no written transcript of the tour is provided. Some museums have video monitors that have displays with sound, but they are not captioned. ODHH Developed a technical assistance letter and sent it to all of Maryland's 79 museums. The letter made museums aware of the problem and offered the guidance of the Smithsonian Museum's ADA Guide. A summer or fall intern will follow up with a phone survey asking if they received the materials and whether they felt it was helpful.

Outreach

ODHH's outreach activities include:

- Exhibits and presentations at conferences, awareness days, Town Hall meeting
- The ODHH Monthly Bulletin is distributed by e-mail and posted on the website
- Brochures were mailed to all 190 county public library branches throughout Maryland to be placed in their public information racks.

Training

ODHH staff provides Sensitivity and Awareness Training to government agencies, private organizations, and businesses upon request. On average ODHH does about two trainings per month. Sensitivity and Awareness Training can be general or customized, based on the needs of the audience. For example, we recently did an all day training for Administrative Law Judges (ALJ) that was customized to fit court proceedings. More than 67 ALJ's participated in that training.

Collaboration with Other Agencies

ODHH is co-located with the Department of Disabilities, and we often work together on projects and initiatives. MDOD is holding a series of Stakeholder meetings to gather data to assist in writing the Maryland State Disabilities Plan. ODHH will attend all four meetings and will lead an effort to gather input and data on issues that affect deaf and hard of hearing people to be included in the plan.

Other agencies also hold public meetings and comment periods. ODHH publicizes these opportunities to the community, giving our constituents the opportunity to attend. Recently the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) held a series of public meetings to gather input on their draft 2009 State Plan. ODHH attended the March 13 meeting in Prince George's County. There were about six deaf people in attendance. They did not offer any public comment, but their presence showed that the community was interested to see what services DORS is providing to deaf and hard of hearing people.

An upcoming issue of the ODHH Monthly Bulletin will include an article explaining the importance of participating in public comment and hearings.

Legislative Session

During the legislative session, ODHH reviews hundreds of proposed legislation related to people with disabilities and provides weekly legislative updates to our stakeholder community.

Special Thanks

Vice Chairperson, Alexis Allenback, publicly thanked Denise Perdue for continuing the operations of the ODHH office without a miss step without a director. Her dedication is greatly appreciated.

MENTAL HEALTH SUBCOMITTEE – CHAIR, MARIAN BLAND

The most recent subcommittee meeting was on February the 28. The following issues were discussed:

- Mission Statement: "Individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing in Maryland should have access to clinically sound mental health treatment."
- Needs Assessment: MHA approved the use of rollover money to conduct a needs assessment. The Mid-Shore Mental Health System has been working with Gallaudet University to gather information on how many individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing in Maryland are receiving mental services or are in need of mental health services. The assessment will also include an inventory of professionals providing services to deaf and hard of hearing individuals. The last needs assessment was conducted in 1989 by the Family Services Foundation.
- Cultural Competence: Services and service providers need to be culturally competent for the deaf population.
- TeleMental Health Pilot: MHA has been working with the University of Maryland to draft regulations whereby psychiatrists will be able to be reimbursed for services provided through TeleMental Health. This will be another mechanism we can use to improve access to services for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing.
- Mental Health Transformation Grant (TWG) Meeting: Two areas that the TWG looked at impact our community:

1) Network of Care: Is a web site that provides resource information. Information resources on the site are translated in ASL. Ms. Bland met with Daryl Plevy, who is the Director of the Office of Mental Health Transformation, and made her aware of some additional issues and we are going to see how the site can be improved.

2) Cultural Competency: The Office of Transformation has a cultural competency work group. However, they did not address issues pertaining to the deaf and hard of hearing. Ms. Plevy stated that she is going to get the two consultants to contact us so that we can provide feedback to them on what is needed to make services more accessible to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing.

AGENCY REPORTS:

MARYLAND STATE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS – Gaylene Beard

Ms. Beard was recently elected as the Chair of the committee. The committee goal is to maintain an active relationship with ODDH. The Steering Committee meets four times a year, and Denise Perdue attends regularly. The next meeting is in May.

The big initiative this year is to collect accurate data of deaf and hard of hearing students across our state, with the help of Gallaudet's Research Institute. The data from the Maryland Department of Education doesn't accurately reflect these needs because of the way children are coded when the hearing loss is not the primary diagnosis. We will work with the Maryland Department of Education and try to get the counties to complete a survey to develop an accurate database.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – PAUL FARRELL

Mr. Farrell recently attended the Early Detection Infant Hearing Screening Conference. Last year's conference focused on families and children that were lost in follow-up. The State of Maryland has mandated that every child born in a birthing hospital in Maryland be screened for hearing loss prior to discharge from the hospital. If the child does not pass the initial screening, they are referred for follow-up screening before they leave the hospital. If the child does not pass the second screening, they are referred for a diagnostic evaluation to actually define the hearing loss. One issue that is nationwide is that there are families that are lost between that second screening and the diagnostic evaluation. The root of the problem is still unknown. There has been an effort to try to reach families to see why these gaps occur between that last screening and the follow up. The Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Advisory Council is trying to develop a plan that will address the issue.

This year's focus was on supporting families. Families need to be given consistent and unbiased information directing them to the appropriate early intervention programs and linking families with appropriate services and supports so that they are made aware of services that are available following the diagnosis of a hearing loss.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – JULIE MOYER

The LEDs on the MARC trains are not working properly. This is an ADA issue and it is something that needs to be addressed by the MTA. On subway routes, visual displays of announcements are sometimes not made or are wrong. MTA's new equipment has LED's on them. It is a question of somebody programming the LED's.

The mobility buses are schedule three days in advance. A mobility bus takes a passenger to and from their destination. An individual must call the certification office and get certified to become a rider of the

mobility service buses.

ACTION ITEM: Julie Moyer will contact the ADA office and make them aware that there is still a problem with MARC trains and the subway.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - DHCD – JACK ROUSE

The DHCD has a state bonded mortgage program. It's a very active program for people with disabilities to buy houses. There is also a rehabilitation program to help make modification to houses to make them more accessible. Funds are available for people to make modifications like installing visual smoke alarms (hard wired) or for visual door bell alerts. The disability loan program has been expanded to include a home with disabled dependents.

If a renter with a disability makes a request of a landlord for a building accommodation, the landlord is required to make the accommodation under the Fair Housing Act.

ACTION ITEM: We should invite someone from the State Fire Marshal's office to a future meeting to explain the requirements and differences between portable and hardwired visual smoke alarms.

WRAP UP – BEN DUBIN

Information is available from several sources on visual smoke alarms. One such example is the Maryland Technology Assistance Program.

We look forward to Lisa's confirmation. It will be three months until we see her again and we look forward to her report and accomplishments in June.

We do not have any consumers attending our meetings. A better job needs to be done to market and publicize our meetings to the communities we represent.

NEXT MEETING:

Date: June 24, 2008

Time: 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: Maryland Department of Transportation in Hanover, MD (tentative)

The meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m.