



**Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
March 30, 2009  
Maryland Department of Transportation – Hanover, MD**

**Attendees:** Dirk Albrecht (MSD), Alexis Allenback (DLLR), Amy Bopp (HASA), Cheri Dowling, Alicia Epstein, Paul Farrell (MSDE), Annette Jones-Wilson (Governor's Office), George Kosovich, Gary Monroe (MCHR), Julie Moyer (MDOT), Jack Rouse (MDHCD), and Judy Stout.

**Guests:** Richard Cohen (HCAD),

**Staff:** Lisa Kornberg and Laura Quinn

**Interpreters:** Ronit Fix and Naomi Gotlib

**CART:** Sherry Knox

The Advisory Council meeting began at 9:15 a.m.

**INTRODUCTIONS:**

Council members, staff and guests introduced themselves. Laurie Yaffe's was unable to attend, so Dirk Albrecht, the Council co-chair, led the meeting. Marian Bland was unable attend the meeting as well.

It was Paul Farrell's last meeting on the Advisory Council. He is leaving his job with the State and is starting his new position as Associate Director of Audiology with the American Speech and Hearing Association.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Lisa H. Kornberg**

**Advisory Council Changes:**

Lisa Kornberg thanked Alexis Allenback and Tom Brett for their work on the nominating committee. As a result of their work, Laurie Yaffe is the new Chairperson, and Dirk Albrecht is the new Vice Chairperson. Also, Karen Sheffer has resigned and was replaced by Jennifer Whitcomb, Executive Director of the Deaf Independent Living Association (DILA) in Salisbury, MD.

**Town Hall Meetings:**

ODHH is mandated to hold a minimum of two Town Hall Meetings each fiscal year. This year there have been three, with a fourth scheduled to take place on April 1, 2009.

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|----|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1) | June 2008     | Anne Arundel County | Community Members |
| 2) | November 2008 | Baltimore County    | Professionals     |
| 3) | December 2008 | Howard County       | Community Members |
| 4) | April 2009    | Montgomery County   | Community Members |

The Office was contacted by a community member who attended the meeting in Howard County asking what is being done with the information gathered at the Town Hall Meeting. The Council should determine how to include the information that is gathered into the Strategic Plan and incorporate it into the Office's ongoing work.

The first Town Hall Meeting of Fiscal Year 2010 will take place at the biennial MDAD Conference in July at Hood College. The Office is selecting locations around the State to determine the needs of all Marylanders.

**Brown Bag Lunch for Professionals:**

As a follow up to the November Brown Bag Lunch for Professionals, ODHH conducted a training session at the February gathering that focused on filing an ADA complaint with the Department of Justice (DOJ).

**Project Updates:**

- 2008 ODHH Annual Report – Completed On Time
- New ODHH Web Site – Test site now available at [www.odhh.maryland.gov/test](http://www.odhh.maryland.gov/test).
- New ODHH Brochure – Delayed due to relocation of DBED offices

**Managing For Results (MFR):**

**Constituent Contacts:**

The Office is on track to exceed the number of constituent contact from last year.

**Outreach:**

Due to a renewed emphasis on reaching out to other State Agencies to make sure that services are accessible to the deaf and hard of hearing populations, ODHH has seen an increase in presentations and trainings for State and Local Agencies.

There was an article in the Baltimore Sun a few weeks ago about an incident between the police in Anne Arundel County a deaf, long-time resident of Pasadena, MD. As a result, law enforcement agencies in Maryland have been very receptive to doing Sensitivity and Awareness Training for their officers. The Office has been in contact with the following agencies:

- Department of General Services (DGS) – Police for State Office Buildings
- Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
- Department of Natural Resources (DNS)
- State Police
- Local Police
- Sheriff's Offices
- Police Academy
- Department of Police, Safety, and Corrections

In addition, Maryland School for the Deaf has done a pilot training of 138 police officers in the Frederick area. ODHH is incorporating their curriculum with the current sensitivity and awareness trainings, with hope of getting students who need community service volunteer hours to work with the Office so that it may give officers the opportunity to role play and get hands on experience working with people with hearing loss.

Another agency the Office has reached out to is the Department of Aging. ODHH has done several training so far and has more scheduled. As the baby boomers get older there will be an increase in the number of individuals who are hard of hearing.

Other trainings past, present and future include:

- Area Agencies on Aging
- Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD)
- Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)
- Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulations (DLLR) – One Stop Centers

The Office consists of a very small staff. During the time after Denise Perdue’s resignation and while Laura Quinn was on maternity leave Lisa Kornberg was reaching out and contacting these agencies. Now they are responding and we need to follow through. Judy Stout stated that the Council can support ODHH.

**Council/Task Force Meetings:**

The Office also participates in a number of other monthly council and task force meetings with other agencies that focus on different areas, such as the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening, Emergency Preparedness, Education, and Mental Health.

Looking at the MFR numbers for Fiscal Year 2009, an increase over last year’s results is expected in all areas.

**Legislative Update:**

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) proposed cuts to the Governor’s budget for Fiscal Year 2010. These proposed cuts included recommendations to, 1) abolish ODHH and re-establish the assistant position within the Maryland Department of Disabilities, 2) eliminate the Assistant Director position, or 3) reduce funding.

Thank you to everyone who showed up and testified from the community and showed your support for ODHH.

Alicia Epstein and the Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) were instrumental in letting the legislature know that the recommended changes to the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing were not in the best interest of the community. She and others from the deaf and hard of hearing communities testified in front of the committee and got the word out to the community, encouraging them to get involved by contacting their congressional representatives and key committee members.

So far the recommendations to abolish ODHH have failed to pass in the committees and must now be voted on by the full Senate. All indications are that ODHH is safe.

**Other Bills:**

	<u>Status</u>
Bill Captioning for Political Advertisements	Committee
Bill to add DeafBlind to Advisory Council and remove Visual Alarms Distribution from the ODHH statute	Withdrawn
Bill to add ODHH and Veterans Affairs to Interagency Department of Aging	Passed
Bill for Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Competency	Committee

The Office has made it a priority to provide technical assistance to the legislature on issues where its expertise would benefit policy makers and the community. ODHH has provided financial information, testified, written letters of support, or letters to object where appropriate.

Alicia Epstein commended Lisa Kornberg for all of her hard work and for bringing ODHH to the front line of the State. Also, the feedback that she is getting, regarding the testimony given on the behalf of ODHH has indicated that ODHH is in a good position now.

Judy Stout met with a number of the legislators about the bill effecting the funding for ODHH. The people she met with thought that Lisa Kornberg was doing a wonderful job. They had a lot of compliments for her and for ODHH and Ms. Stout agreed. She has been very impressed how quickly ODHH has been moving. There has been an effort to have ASL included on the Cultural Competency bill. Lisa Kornberg submitted written testimony and ODHH is waiting to see the outcome. Judy Stout offered to visit with legislature before the session is over.

### **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 17, 2008**

**Corrections:** Add an E at the end of Hygiene

**Moved to accept:** Judy Moyer      **Seconded:** Alicia Epstein

**Vote:** Unanimous to accept with corrections

## **AGENCY REPORTS**

### **MARYLAND COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS - Gary Monroe**

#### **Coalition Opposed to Violence and Extremism – COVE:**

Gary Monroe is a member of COVE, The Coalition Opposed to Violence and Extremism, a Maryland task force responsible for monitoring all of the crime in the State. If an individual is a victim of a hate crime they can file a complaint with MCHR. Incidents may also be reported to any police agency. He has checked the statistics for the past two years and did not see any complaints filed relating to hate crimes towards deaf and hard of hearing persons. The task force meets the first Tuesday of every month and the Council members were invited to attend if interested.

#### **Training:**

Also, Gary Monroe has been talking to Lisa Kornberg about ODHH doing training for COVE at the Howard County Gateway Center, and also for MCHR as a whole. He is waiting for feedback from the Director of MCHR on the recommendation.

#### **ADA Complaints:**

ODHH has provided training to community members and services agencies about filing a discrimination complaint with the Department of Justice (DOJ), but they can also file a complaint with MCHR, which also handles ADA-related complaints. Information on how to file a complaint is available on their web site and he will bring some brochures over to the ODHH office. The Commission also has a TTY.

Laura Quinn noted that she brought some mediation brochures she printed from the MCHR web site to a recent ADA workshop that ODHH co-sponsored with DILA in Elkton, MD. She also shared with attendees information about filing a complaint with MCHR, not just DOJ. However, she was informed by one of the advocates from DILA that when they contacted the MCHR office in Salisbury, they told her that they could not help her.

**ACTION ITEM: Laura Quinn will send details of the incident to Gary Monroe.**

## **MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – Paul Farrell**

### **State Leaders Summit**

The State Leaders Summit will be April 30 – May 2, 2009 in Santa Fe, NM. However, all travel is being evaluated carefully and requests are being denied. They are looking into the possibility of a group meeting at MSDE and participating remotely.

### **DORS Position Filled:**

The Department of Rehabilitative Services (DORS) Statewide Coordinator for Deaf and Hard of Hearing position has been filled by Hank Passi. He has an excellent background in deaf services and Deaf culture. Lisa Kornberg will be meeting with him in a few days. She will also be asking him to present at the next Advisory Council meeting in June.

### **Pilot Program for Emotional Disturbance:**

The pilot program at MSD for deaf children with emotional disturbance is up and running well. The State is moving forward in planning for Phase II, which will involve incorporating students being served out of state and moving them back to MD to the Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents (RICA) in Rockville. RICA is a 24-hour school for kids with emotional disturbances. The closure of some RICA locations did not affect the Rockville location.

## **MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - Julie Moyer**

### **Updates:**

Julie Moyer has been checking with MTA to get a new update on stop announcements for various transportation modes and she will be following up with them shortly.

### **Gas Pump Program:**

MDOT has a new web site. [www.mdot.state.md.us](http://www.mdot.state.md.us). She manages the part of the web site about ADA and Senior Citizens. The State has a gas pump program, which includes a list of gas stations around the State where area seniors and individuals with disabilities can go to during certain times of the day for service pumping gas if they can not do it themselves.

### **Training:**

Julie Moyer has spoken to Lisa Kornberg about ODHH providing training for MDOT police officers. This would include:

- Maryland Port Administration
- Maryland Transit Administration
- Maryland Transportation Authority

MDOT is currently recruiting for a new Program Manager for the Office of ADA to replace John Gaver and a Title VI coordinator. Once those positions are filled she will have more time to devote to other things.

### **Upcoming Events:**

- The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Secretary's Conference on Accessible Transportation  
MDOT would like ODHH and MDOD to help in planning this program for September or October.

➤ Maryland Youth Leadership Forum

A program offered to students with disabilities to spend a week at Bowie State University, to experience dorm life, and participate in a legislative day that includes a mock legislative activity. Deaf students participate in this program. The Council members are welcome to stop by during the legislative activity.

**ACTION ITEM: Julie Moyer will get an update from Neil Heaton about video phones in the airport.**

**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – Jack Rouse**

**Mortgage Funding:**

DHCD is currently in a refunding process. They had a really active first half of the year, and funded over \$6 million in mortgages. Because of that some of the funding has been exhausted. DHCD is currently trying to work out a way to find more funding to keep that program running to the end of the fiscal year.

**Rehabilitation and Weatherization:**

The other component is rehabilitation and weatherization. Jack Rouse distributed a contact sheet of the person they need to contact first if an individual wants to have work done on their house. The various local agencies act as the intake, get the initial information, and send it to DHCD. It is then reviewed by DHCD and a staff member goes out and coordinates with the owner and contractors. It is a simple process. However, the process does require that the home owner initiate contact through their local agency. There are a few areas on the list that do not have a contact for that area. In that case the individual would need to contact the State at 1-800-638-7741 and speak to Eileen Hagan.

The minimum requirement is about \$1,000. It can be done as a repayment, deferred loans or grants. Repayment is based on income. If it is a minimum income household the emphasis is not on repayment. So, affordability should not be the major concern for an individual who needs the work done. DHCD is there to make it affordable. If someone in Section 8 housing would like to have work done it would need to go through the home owner.

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGEINE – Lisa Kornberg on behalf of Marion Bland**

**Restructuring:**

DHMH has restructured and has assigned a new Deputy Secretary, Renata Henry. She is responsible for behavioral health, which includes mental health, addiction programs and developmental disability programs.

Marian Bland plans to talk about the Advisory Council's Mental Health Subcommittee at the next Secretary's meeting to see how to ensure that information related to deaf and hard of hearing populations gets out to all of DHMH and not just the mental health component.

**Transformation Working Group:**

Also, the Office of Transformation Working Group is scheduled to meet on April 28<sup>th</sup> in Frederick, Maryland. There was a 5-year transformation grant that they got from the Federal Government to restructure Maryland's mental health programs that is coming to a close.

## **MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF – Dirk Albrecht**

The progress with the pilot program for children with emotional disturbance is going really great. These kids who have struggled in that past are thriving in the program.

### **MSD Budget:**

They are not sure what the impact of legislative session will have on the budget for MSD this year. So far there hasn't been much change, but there will probably be a little less money in the budget next year. No one is sure what to expect, but MSD will be able to continue to provide services. Lisa Kornberg suggested that it may be appropriate for ODHHS and MDAD to send letters of support to the legislature.

Other schools are struggling. The Pennsylvania School for the Deaf may be closing, but it has been delayed for at least one year. On west coast six or seven schools for the deaf may close.

## **DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING AND REGULATIONS – Alexis Allenback**

Within the Department of Unemployment Insurance and the Division Workforce Development, claims tripled due to the economy. Due to the increased volume, people are having trouble getting through to the call center. However, there is a large FAQ section on web site which has been improved dramatically. There has also been a huge increase in claims being filed via the internet. They have hired 40 new people between October and December to process the increased number of claims. Also, Alexis Allenback will be hiring two people to meet the increased need due to the economic downturn. They will assist in filing unemployment claims, and will assist the individuals in getting back into the workforce, either through direct job placement, retraining, or career redirection. Secretary Perez has been tremendously responsive to the needs of the constituents.

The Department has a new improved web site that you can visit at [www.dllr.state.md.us](http://www.dllr.state.md.us).

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **MENTAL HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE – Lisa Kornberg (on behalf of Marian Bland)**

#### **Tele-Psychiatry:**

The Mental Hygiene Administration (MHA) continues to work on tele-psychiatry. Caution needs to be taken, because standard video phones are not encrypted. The equipment used by the University of Maryland School of Medicine uses encryption. That equipment is being set up around the state, in areas where no signing providers are available, specifically in the Eastern Shore and remote areas.

#### **Cultural Competency:**

Mid-Shore Mental Health Systems, a Core Service Agency (CSA) on the Eastern Shore, with the assistance of MHA, has recruited Gallaudet University (GU) to begin a series on cultural competency. The training is taking place at GU. The presentations are being done in ASL, and are being video taped to be posted on the GU web site and to distribute. The video will include the signed presentation along with captions. Participants will be eligible for Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

#### **State Planning Committee:**

The MHA is holding a state planning meeting on April 29 at Oheb Shalom in Pikesville. Sharon MacDougal will be attending. She works at On Our Own, which is a self-advocacy group in Frederick, Maryland. She has been working to increase the representation of deaf individuals.

### **Future Plans for the Subcommittee:**

The intent of the committee when it was established was to work on providing statewide mental health services to the deaf and hard of hearing individuals in Maryland. That hasn't happened. It has been due to fiscal issues, failure to agree on a plan, and in part to the lack of consumer participation. The providers, therapists, and residential programs are all concerned, but the clients themselves are not speaking up, so the State is not focused in that way.

There are questions now about what the best direction is for the Mental Health Subcommittee. Since the State has changed to a broader approach of behavioral health and is no longer looking at mental health separately the committee should reflect the direction the State has taken and restructure. There are only three therapists for the whole state trained in addiction services and that is not sufficient. Also, the developmental disability programs are screaming for help. They are really struggling to provide adequate, comprehensive services to deaf individuals. So the decision needs to be made whether to continue with the Mental Health Subcommittee or to restructure it to become a Behavioral Health Subcommittee.

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE – Judy Stout**

Judy Stout discussed the fact that there had been scheduling problems due to administrative changes at Gallaudet and changes in her job. However, this legislative session has shown the importance of the Council and ODHH.

As part of the strategic plan, one area to be address is what the Council does with the feedback that comes from the Town Hall meeting during each year. How is the information taken from those meeting made into action items? There is a need for an agenda for each Town Hall Meeting, with more focus and direction. Topics may include the Strategic Plan, Emergency Preparedness, and other areas of interest. The upcoming April meeting can be an overview of ODHH and then focus on current legislative issues.

Community outreach is also important. Perhaps different groups can be set up by regions to take down contacts and reach out to people in that community and find out what goals need to be discussed and find out what is happening in their area. Perhaps a database could be established. (ODHH is using GoldMine to track constituent contacts.) The Council members need to go to the meetings and take notes and see how the Council can support the Director. Obviously it is difficult for the entire Council to show up at all of the meetings, but perhaps 4 can attend each meeting. Then information from the meeting can be incorporated into the Strategic Plan. This should include the State Agencies representatives to answer any questions or learn about concerns related to their respective Agency.

### **ACTION ITEM: Laura Quinn will send out the list of issues from the previous Town Hall Meeting.**

Another part is providing information to the constituents and making it available so that each person doesn't have to go through the same experience and frustration as the person before them.

It would also be helpful to ODHH if the State Agencies could provide more information to about programs that can be shared with the community. When Agencies hold their own Town Hall meetings they can let ODHH know in order to inform the community members so then can participate and make the Agencies aware of the needs of the community. Interpreters and CART should be provided at the Agency Town Hall meetings so that all members of the community can participate. ODHH is working with the State to establish a state contract for interpreting services to help to control some of the costs. There are currently only contracts in place for spoken language and not for ASL interpreters. It is also cheaper sometimes to work with individual free lance interpreters rather than with a larger interpreting agency.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Written Agency Reports**

A recommendation was made that for future Council meetings, the agency reports may be written and attached to the minutes to review, leaving more time for new business.

### **Restructuring the Mental Health Subcommittee**

The recommendation has been made to restructure the Mental Health Subcommittee to focus Behavioral Health as a whole, taking the committee in the same direction as the State. It would include addiction services and developmental disabilities, not just mental health.

There will be a meeting with Renata Henry, followed by a meeting with the Subcommittee to get their feedback. Since Marian Bland and Laurie Yaffe were not at this meeting to participate in the discussion, the Council decided to hold voting on the matter until next meeting in order to gather more information.

### **Other Committees:**

The other committees have been inactive. Also, the only committee to develop a mission statement was the Education Committee. A mission statement is helpful when committees are established to give them a direction. The Council should have priorities and the committees would then work off of those priorities.

A Legislative Subcommittee was set up to review COMAR, Maryland State Law. A stack of papers was printed from Legislative services, but then what? Also, the Education Subcommittee's mission statement conflicted with the mission statement of ODHH which was established under State law.

Another issue is that everyone is depending on ODHH staff, and that is another area of concern due to the size of the Office. The subcommittees are not ODHH committees; they are subcommittees of the Advisory Council. It was agreed by the Council that they should really be advising and not just let ODHH do all of the work.

### **Legislative Day in Annapolis:**

Kansas setup a Legislative Day so that deaf and hard of hearing constituents could come and meet with legislature and have interpreters available. This kind of thing could be done here in Maryland. It would serve to bring the community together and become more visible. The different segments of the community need to come together in a show of strength. A specific date would allow people to get it on their calendars and work with interpreters. Council members should start contacting the groups now and include the State agencies in the planning. Perhaps transportation from the stadium can be set up with the Department of General Services (DGS).

**ACTION ITEM: George Kosovich will talk to HLAA, and Dirk Albrecht will talk to MSD to find out if they are interested.**

**ACTION ITEM: Annette Wilson-Jones was asked to find out about dates in order to have a real target.**

It was recommended that those involved contact their Senators and Delegates for the various counties and districts to request that they set aside time on that date to meet with constituents.

The Council decided to wait to see what happens during this legislative session, and then depending on what takes place the Council can get a head start for next year's session. There needs to be a planning committee.

**State Agencies:**

There is a lot of discussion on the community side and there needs to be more happening on the State side. The Council should be a partnership between the State and the community.

The Agency representatives requested some direction. The legislation to setup ODHH states that the Agency Secretary or designee is to be a member of the Advisory Council. (A copy of that law is posted on the ODHH web site, if anyone wishes to read it). Information should flow back and forth between the designee and the Secretary. If there is resistance from the Secretary, then Yolanda Winkler of the Governor's Chiefs of Staff Office can help. The designees represent the Secretary who appointed them and that is who they should report back to, not their immediate supervisor.

The community members were interested in making sure information about agency programs available to the community and that it be accessible. State agencies can provide information to be included in the ODHH Monthly Bulletin. In addition links to each agency are being added to the ODHH web site.

**Next Meeting:**

Date: June 2, 2009

Time: 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: TBD