



Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
June 24, 2008
West County Area Library - Odenton

Attendees: Alexis Allenback (DLLR), Carl Bailey (DHR), Marian Bland (DHMH), Tom Brett, Benjamin Dubin, Ethelette Ennis, Paul Farrell (MSDE), John Gaver (MDOT), Gary Monroe (MCHR), Julie Moyer (MDOT), Robert Padden (MSD-for James Tucker), Jack Rouse (DHCD), Michelle Schaefer, and Yolanda Winkler (Governor's Office).

Guests: Timothy Creagan (US Access Board), Michael Gallagher (IHDC), Ondora Harman (MTA), Vernon Hartsock (MTA), Crystal Martin (DLLR), and Felisa McCall-Smith (DHMH).

Staff: Lisa Kornberg, Denise Perdue, and Laura Quinn

Interpreters: Nancy Bender and Erin Harrison

CART: Sherry Knox

The Advisory Council meeting convened at 2:20 p.m.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 18, 2008

The Council liked the new format of the minutes. It is not verbatim, but captures the essence of the meeting.

Additions: none offered

Corrections: none offered

Moved to accept: Carl Bailey

Seconded: Julie Moyer

Vote: Unanimous

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – BEN DUBIN

Lisa Kornberg is now the director of ODHH and has set an aggressive agenda for herself. She has already met with several state agencies, and has now started on working with the hospitals and health care providers in Maryland to discuss providing sensitivity and awareness training.

Communication is a priority when going to a hospital or a health care provider. There is a need for adequate interpreters in the healthcare setting. Some individuals have been communicating for themselves and are poorly informed due to inadequate communication from doctors. The deaf and hard of hearing population is also not getting information that is made available to the public.

The Governor's Office is currently looking at resumes to make new appointments to the Advisory Council. If an individual's term has expired, they are to remain in place until a replacement appointed.

PRESENTATION BY THE MARYLAND TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY – Vernon Harstock and Ondora Harmon

Maryland Rail Systems

Issues have come up about the LED displays on Marc trains, Light Rail and sometimes on the Subway. This falls under the ADA for transportation.

There will be a major overhaul to the Light Rail system, which is currently in the development stage and includes the LED signs. Within the next year that contract will be awarded and the work will begin. Metro has experienced an overhaul, including installation of signs on the trains. These signs are under the care of maintenance.

There will be system wide improvements made to the Maryland transit system. This will include: 1) LEDs will be synced with the public address system, 2) new LED systems on MARC and Light Rail. The construction will begin within a year. During the interim MVA has been meeting with committees on accessibility issues to learn how to meet the needs of public. There is a Citizens Advisory meeting on every third Thursday at St. Paul Street.

The Council is disappointed that even though the ADA has been in place for a long time, Maryland is just now planning to make these changes to improve access.

ACTION ITEM: Ben Dubin requested MTA provide the Council with a timeline for the improvements to see what can be pushed forward.

ACTION ITEM: Ondora Harmon will find out if Disability cards from other states are accepted in Maryland.

Problems

There are no signs letting riders know who to contact if the LEDs are not working properly on the subway system.

Rider may call the Transit Call Center at 410-539-5000, visit the web site www.mtmaryland.com, or go to MTA Customer Service at 6 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, MD 21202.

ACTION ITEM: Ondora Harmon will find out about TTY or Video Phone in the customer service call center.

ACTION ITEM: Lisa Kornberg requested that MTA provide a contact list to ODHH to put in the ODHH Monthly Bulletin sent to constituents.

Maryland Airports

Recommend from the Council to improve MD airports:

- The LEDs should follow the announcements being made on the public address system.
- Some of the TTYs should be changed to video phones.

DC Metro

A significant portion of DC's Metro comes into Maryland. The MTA does not oversee Metro, it would come under WMATA. WMATA is a partnership between MD, DC, and VA. There will be a meeting in the fall to share information and ideas. MTA will share the Council's concerns with the group. WMATA also has a citizen's council.

The number for Customer Information for Metro is 202-637-7000. For more information and contact numbers go to: <http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/ombudsman.cfm>.

Technology Requirements

Tim Creagan, from the U.S. Access Board informed the Council that The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) contain technical standards that the U.S. Access Board has developed. These guidelines include transportation. Check the requirement to see if it still lists TTY.

GUIDELINES FOR ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY – TOM BRETT

The U.S. Access Board had published a notice that they wish to refresh Section 508 standards that the federal government uses. Section 508 standards cover electronic and information technology. There were 40 organizations chosen to participate in a program, IBM, NASEO, and companies from Australia, Japan, Europe, TIA, and the communication systems for the deaf and three federal agencies. The goal of the committee was to harmonize the standards with other countries and the international standards. They tried to merge the standards from the Telecommunications Act with the Accessibility Act. One thing that has been done by this process is a lot of ambiguity that existed in the current standards was removed. It also provided a means for testing the products.

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act applies to all federal agencies. Some states have adopted some of the provisions of Section 508. Maryland has only adopted the ones for low vision.

With regard to the media, it has to be a federal government product. If a federal website puts multimedia out, that's moving pictures and sound, then it's the furtherance of an agency mission, and has to caption the video. It doesn't apply to state or the private sector. Private sector captioning on TV is a separate law that's under the jurisdiction of the FCC, which is the TV Decoder Captioning Circuitry Act. Unless the deaf and hard of hearing community in Maryland does more lobbying and pushing to incorporate some of the federal standards in our state there is little benefit to the citizens of Maryland.

For a copy of Mr. Brett's full presentation or a transcript, please contact the ODHH office.

AGENCY REPORTS

Maryland Department of Transportation – Julie Moyer

On June 9, 2008 John Gaver met with ODHH and provided an overview of MDOT's role along side of ODHH. The topics of the MTA presentation at this meeting were also discussed. In addition, MDOT provided ODHH with a list of agency contacts, and a list of the ADA coordinators. A week later MDOT and ODHH both attended a meeting driver's licenses, CDL drivers and other issues related to MVA.

Driver's education is still an ongoing issue that will continue to be addressed by ODHH. The Council and ODHH need to go back to MVA to continue to work on getting that matter resolved.

John Gaver is retiring after 38 years. His official last day is June 30, 2008. The Council expressed their gratitude to Mr. Gaver for serving the state in the office of ADA and Risk Management at MDOT. He has been a tremendous resource to this Advisory Council, as well as to other disability groups in which he has participated.

ACTION ITEM: Julie Moyer will follow up with the MDOT representative about the airport issues, and may try to get the representative to attend the next Advisory Council meeting.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE (DHMH)

Felisa McCall-Smith – ADA Coordinator

There are 60 ADA coordinators, one for each unit of DHMH, and about 10,000 employees. These coordinators meet quarterly for training, to review problems and for taking proactive measures. The Council members and ODHHS staff are welcome to join DHMH for these trainings.

Items happening at DHMH in regards to ADA:

- 1) Compiling a list of deaf and hard of hearing employees
- 2) Expanded ADA Resources for staff on the DHMH website
- 3) Reestablished ADA Advisory Committee – a deaf individual has been invited to join
- 4) Reviewing emergency evacuation procedures
- 5) Conducting site reviews for Section 504 compliance – A ten page self evaluation form is located on the web site. Go to www.dhmh.state.md.us/oeop, and then go to ADA resources and click on the link for the evaluation report

MENTAL HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE - Marian Bland

Items being addressed by the Mental Health subcommittee:

- 1) Needs Assessment - Mid-Shore has been working hard to get that accomplished.
- 2) Cultural Competency
 - a) The Office of Mental Health Transformation is willing to help with consulting and looking into grant opportunities.
 - b) Mid-Shore has worked with Gallaudet University to plan a series of competency training seminars for the fall. Training will be available on site or through the web.
- 3) Draft proposal to submit to DHMH for centralized mental health services is still in progress.
- 4) Tele-Psychiatry
 - a) UMD was awarded a federal grant to provide tele-psychiatry to 9 counties in rural areas.
- 5) Video conferencing using a statewide crises response team.
- 6) Review patients at Springfield Hospital for appropriate placement.
- 7) Scholarship Program -
To encourage individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing to join the mental health profession.

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – Paul Farrell

The Deaf Education Leadership Summit was held in Great Falls, Montana the end of April. There is a national effort to improved education for deaf and hard of hearing students. This summit was about making a commitment to system change, and seeing how other states do it.

The 8 goals of the National Agenda are:

Goal One: Early Identification and Intervention

Goal Two: Communication, Language and Literacy

Goal Three: Collaborative Partnerships

Goal Four: Accountability, High Stakes Testing and Standards Based Environments

Goal Five: Placement and Programs

Goal Six: Technology

Goal Seven: Professional Standards and Personnel Preparation

Goal Eight: Research

You can view the pdf of this entire document at http://www.ndepnow.org/pdfs/national_agenda.pdf

Maryland's goal is to develop comprehensive statewide plan building on those 8 goals. After the summit, MSDE and NASDSE sponsored a two day workshop for directors of special education and key stakeholders throughout Maryland. There will also be an evening seminar at MSD for health care providers, physicians, audiologist, about working with children with hearing loss.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – Jack Rouse

On the issue of financial assistance for visual smoke detectors, there is currently nothing being offered to buy a portable system. It is difficult to present to DHCD without knowing the need and the cost. If we can put that information together, perhaps the request can be made for this type of program. The recipient must be the owner.

Timothy Creagan suggested also taking a look at the NFPA standards to address any modulation issues for visual smoke alarms at www.access-board.gov.

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION - Gary Monroe

Complaints received by HRC from deaf and hard of hearing residents:

- UPS and FEDEX employees unable to get their CDL due to hearing test requirements
- Hate crimes against people with disabilities
- Problems with communication with law enforcement

The hearing test is part of CDL exam. This is a national and state issue. Maryland's MVA will not issue a CDL if the individual can't pass. Minnesota did an extensive waiver program, that program is being looked at for Maryland.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Lisa Kornberg

It is important for members of the Advisory Council to work together instead of after the meetings going home and then working on the action items a week before the next meeting. We have a huge mission to service a low incident population.

ODHH has contacted budget and management to find out why procurement contract for other languages exist for the State, but not for ASL interpreters. They said it was too low a need. That means these needs aren't being brought up the ladder to the cabinet level.

This Council and ODHH need to help increase awareness and make Maryland an accessible state and to be a role model. At a recent Gallaudet University conference the word was that Maryland is that model, but those who talk to the constituents see the gaps. ODHH has a full curriculum to do awareness and sensitivity training, and just needs opportunity. The Council members represent that opportunity.

NEXT MEETING

The date for the next meeting is September 17, 2008. In order for community members to have the opportunity to attend, that meeting will be held from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. Of the four quarterly meeting there will be two held in the evening and two in the late afternoon, when they have previously been held.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.