



Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
September 17, 2008
Hearing and Speech Agency – Baltimore, MD

Attendees: Alexis Allenback (DLLR), Carl Bailey (DHR), Marian Bland (DHMH), Benjamin Dubin, Ethelette Ennis, Sue Greibler (MSDE), Julie Moyer (MDOT), George Kosovich, Robert Padden (MSD Rep), and Yolanda Winkler (Governor's Office).

Guests: Amy Bopp (HASA), Easter Dubin, Connie Freedman, Rabbi Fred Friedman, Mike Greibler (Police Dept), Lisa Hamlin (HLAA), Shlomo Nusbaum, Ellyn Sheffield (TU), Alfred Sonnenstrahl, Dan Swabb (NPR), Christopher Watters (SSA), and Jennifer Whitcomb (DILA).

Staff: Lisa Kornberg, Denise Perdue, and Laura Quinn.

Interpreters: Nancy Bender and Erin Harrison

CART: Darian Elliott

The Advisory Council meeting began at 6:20 p.m.

Council members, staff and guests introduced themselves.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 24, 2008

Corrections: On page 5 the heading should be Human Relations Commission and on page 4 (2a) the heading should be Office of Mental Health Transformation.

Moved to accept: Julie Moyer

Seconded: Carl Bailey

Vote: Unanimous to accept with corrections

CHAIRPERSON REPORT – BEN DUBIN

ODHH staff held and participated in many activities over the summer months including an exhibit booth at the State Fair on Volunteer Day, August 24th. Mr. Dubin surveyed other state agency exhibits to see if their audio material was accessible or not. He spoke to the Port Authority about adding captioning to their media. Lisa Kornberg had been invited to present at the Baltimore County Commission on Disabilities monthly meeting recently, which was well received

Letters will go out from the Governor's Appointments Office this week to new appointees serving on the Advisory Council.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION – Captioned Radio

Ellyn Sheffield from Towson University gave a presentation about captioned radio.

There are different kinds of digital radio services envisioned over the next couple of years. Towson University and NPR have been working with several funders to develop captioned radio. The captioned radio project is supported by NIDRR, NPR, Harris Corp and Towson University. Consumer testing has been a big part of the project and with additional funding commence soon.

Why accessible radio? According to Ellyn Sheffield and NPR, it is the good thing to do, but also:

- 1) Of the global population 10% (about 2 billions people) have a sensory loss, and there needs to be big numbers to get the industry onboard.

- 2) Radio is available during emergencies when power is down.
- 3) There are hundreds of programs on radio that are not on TV or the web.
- 4) Baby boomers are used to wide range of communication and their senses are often diminishing. The UN Convention on Serving People with Disabilities has now been signed by 126 countries, but not by US for many reasons.

Captioned radio is currently in the consumer-testing phase. In January 2008 there was a demonstration of captioned radio at CES in Las Vegas. The accessibility capitalizes on the flexibility of digital radio. Digital radio has the capability to do multi casting, which will broadcast the program on multiple channels (2 additional channels per station) in different formats, such as captioning or another language. It will provide critical services, such as emergency notification, radio reading for the blind, captioning, Braille for deaf-blind and over-sized display for older consumers and the ability to export to a larger screen is in the works.

For a blind person to access the reading service they will get the same digital radio, get serial # and access #, and they will have the radio reading services. This is a free service, underwritten by large corporations. It will have a voice menu and station finder.

There is a wake up alert that turns the radio on at night when broadcasting emergency announcements. This can work with either a loud sound or bed shakers. It will automatically turn itself off. The radio is adjustable for different people. Users will be able to adjust the display, such as the text size, speed and color.

There are two possible ways to do the captioning. The program is looking into IBM's "audio to text" software to see if it will work well enough to meet the needs. With a 6 second delay it leaves a few seconds to correct errors in text. The other option is to do what the BBC is already doing, which is to use a hybrid system. Using this system someone repeats everything into equipment trained to their voice and an editor makes corrections.

On election day NPR will conduct live broadcasts in 6 US cities to gather feedback from consumers to determine which is preferred, captioning done by a transcriber or the algorithm technology. WGBH in Boston will be doing the captioning on November 4, 2008. NPR radio continuous captioning is targeted to begin late 2009.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Lisa Kornberg

It is difficult for a small office to represent all of the diverse areas that it serves. ODHH is a resource for all of the other state agencies. As a coordinating office, ODHH tries to reduce duplication of efforts within state government. The Office wants to be the central repository and build bridges between different agencies and services. It is vital for Advisory Council members to bring information to this committee about what their agency is doing and to then bring information from here back up the chain to their Secretaries to help your agency understand what is happening throughout state government. We are working with several agencies already.

What have we been doing?

1. Helped MDOD develop items for the State Disability Plan by getting participation from the deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind communities.
2. Denise Perdue was asked to serve on MSDE's team that was created to develop a state plan for deaf and hard of hearing students.

3. Lisa Kornberg has met with the Department of Aging. Baby boomers will increase to up to 45% of population. ODHH has begun working with the Area Association of Aging Director to assist them in developing Maryland access points to services.
4. Lisa Kornberg has begun planning with the Maryland Hospital Association to begin Sensitivity and Awareness Training. There are 69 acute care hospitals in the state and MHA is sponsoring a training on November 5 for administrators of Patient Care for those hospitals about policies and training. ODHH staff is too small to train all hospital staff and is working on a train-the-trainer program. ODHH will provide a stipend to anyone who is able to assist us in making that happen.
5. Denise Perdue has attended meetings focused on emergency preparedness and Pan Flu. ODHH is talking to the Governor's press office to make sure they are sensitive to the needs of our constituents.
6. The Governor's web site now provides text for all audio/video presentations on the web site, but now need to work on getting visual translations, not just text.
7. This year the Governor's Volunteer Service Award was presented to the Deaf Shalom Zone based on a nomination submitted by ODHH.

MFR Objectives

Managing for Results (MFR) objectives are how agencies show accountability for what they are doing. There are currently three areas that ODHH has here to for focused on but has proposed to broaden that to four areas to reflect relationships forged with other agencies.

Constituent Contacts

To date this fiscal year the Office has handled 120 constituent contacts. Currently we receive more requests from individuals than from State agencies; however, that is expected to balance out over time to 50/50.

Technical Assistance

One example of ODHH providing technical assistance is the Mental Health Transformation Plan – on a plan that's called Mental Health First Aid which is a plan to help everyday people in the community deal with mental health crises. Currently the plan makes no provisions to meet the needs of people who are deaf and hard of hearing. They will be submitting the plan to ODHH for review and comment.

Meetings and Exhibits

ODHH staff attends many meetings throughout the state, such as the State Steering Committee for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students, Alliance and the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Committee. In addition the staff exhibits at events like Deaf Awareness Day at the National Aquarium in Baltimore, community health fairs, and most recently at the Maryland Disability Law Center four statewide voter forums.

Priorities for FY09

- Legislative
- Trainings for State Agencies, Hospitals and Private companies
- Technical assistance
- ODHH website updates
- ODHH brochure updates

Role of the Advisory Council

Each Advisory Council member has been given a survey to complete. It will also send out electronically and once completed can send back electronically.

The plan is to highlight each Advisory Council member in an upcoming issue of the ODHH Monthly Bulletins with an accompanying picture.

- What do you do to prepare for meeting?
- What do you do to participate when you are here?
- What do when you leave the meeting?

The Governor's Office is encouraging each departmental Secretary to have a more active role and likewise for you to be more active. It is important for the information shared at Advisory Council meetings be shared with the Administrator you represent. The Governor's Office appreciates the service of those who come and do not leave early. They also know who is not coming. Those who are not able to come must send a replacement in your absence. All vacant positions on the Council will be filled by the next meeting.

ACTION ITEM: Alexis Allenback will invite the new Deputy Secretary of DLLR to the next meeting.

Please advise office staff of what it needs to do and what the needs are for your agency. ODHH is a clearinghouse of information related to deaf and hard of hearing people.

Self Advocacy

The Mental Health Subcommittee has been meeting for some time, but there has been no deaf consumer representation at the meetings. People don't come and testify when legislation is needed. To combat the lack of active self advocacy ODHH has written several articles on how to become an advocate and outlined steps on how to get involved in the ODHH Monthly Bulletin.

DORS Position

The DORS position for a Staff Specialist for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals is now longer "frozen" and has been advertised. There are 14 applicants so far.

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – Julie Moyer

Captioning

Ms. Moyer has inquired on closed captions and captioned media. She has talked to the departments to get their feedback. All agencies do not have media budget for captioning, but MPA is currently captioning their video that was used for state fair and also their new video. Also, the State Highway Administration has a public service announcement that they plan to have captioned before it airs.

TTY at BWI

Arrangements are being made for Julie Moyer, Ben Dubin, and Lisa Kornberg to do a tour of BWI Airport's terminal building to see where TTYs are located in the building. Neil Heaton at MAA is working on coordinating information about the TTYs and keeping track of what is working and what is not. There are three portable TTY units which are available in three different locations at the airport.

Neil Heaton will also be attending a meeting about universal access in airports, which will include visual paging and video phones. Hopefully he will attend the next Council next meeting to give an update.

Follow Up to Last Meeting

- The Light Rail signage project will comply with font size and placement, starting this fall.
- MARC train signage project is scheduled for construction late this year

Upcoming Event

The MDOT Secretary's Conference on Accessible Transportation is coming up. Advisory Council members and guest are welcome to attend. The Keynote speaker will be Juliette Rizzo, Ms. Wheelchair America 2005.

MENTAL HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE – Marian Bland

Needs Assessment

MHA has money through the Mid-Shore Mental Health System for the needs assessment. The assessment will use population estimates, and will also look into what providers are available. The committee will be working with Dr. Pallard, who worked on a similar project in Rochester, NY and will help to design the needs assessment. He will help the committee to conduct a two day forum.

Cultural competency

Cultural competency training will be taking place at Gallaudet University. Trainings will be video recorded, interpreted and captioned and made available on the web as a refresher for those who are unable to attend.

Network of Care

Network of Care hopes to make the Cultural Competency training available as an e-learning class on this site for CEUs. Marion Bland also met with the Office of Transformation consultant, Oscar Morgan, about including cultural competency for deaf and hard of hearing people. The committee is trying to identify other experts in the country to help work with Maryland and provide technical assistance.

Springfield Hospital

There has been some resistance from Springfield Hospital on the committee's DRAFT proposal. Marion Bland and the Office of Transformation will meet with them to hear their concerns. Also, a group of graduate students at Gallaudet University is helping to do an assessment of the patients currently at Springfield Hospital. They will talk to patients and find out what there needs are to see if it is the appropriate placement. However, outpatient services are definitely lacking in Maryland.

Wrap Up

The committee will continue to look at grant opportunities to assist with needs assessment. The goal is to develop a proposal that uses existing resources to make services accessible by incorporating both centralized services and some remote offices.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – Susan Greibler

Ms. Greibler sat in for Paul Farrell. The survey the Department had been working on has gone out to Directors of Special Education including questions for a program to be presented in late spring next year.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING AND REGULATIONS – Alexis Allenback

Ms. Allenback is with the Division of Workforce Development, which is a local one-stop career center. She also participates in the Frederick County Emergency Management Policy Advisory Council. In addition she is involved with local emergency preparedness and responders, including the Health Department in all aspects of response and recovery.

Bobby Harris, a student at MSD, assisted the planning committee with one day training course for bridging gap between the deaf community and emergency responders. He assisted the city and county in learning some basic sign language. Also, over the summer Bobby developed a pocket sized hand out for first responders about cultural differences and with some vocabulary. The deaf person can point to pocket size dictionary to be used by first responders on the scene to determine the immediate need of that individual. Ms. Allenback has assisted Bobby, and this information will go out to the community in October.

The Division of Unemployment Services is required by federal law to provide interpreting services. They have also worked with DORS to acquire computers and software for individuals who are blind and have other disabilities.

MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF - Robert Padden

Mr. Padden is now retired from MSD and will speak to Lisa Kornberg about finding a replacement.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

George Kosovich

Mr. Kosovich has retired from the US Department of Education and plans to devote more of his time and energy to the Advisory Committee. He is working with HLAA in various ways and will see what they can do together with the state of Maryland.

Ethelette Ennis

The Inner Harbor Deaf Center, which provided videophones to the deaf community in Baltimore City, was not successful and closed due to lack of funds. There has been some rumor that Viable may take over, but no one is sure what will happen next. The deaf community needs the resources the center provides especially when crisis arise.

NEXT MEETING

Date: December 3, 2008

Time: 2– 5 p.m.

Location: MDOT Headquarters – Hanover, MD

Meeting Adjourned at 9:15 p.m.