



**Maryland Advisory Council of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Meeting Minutes for December 6, 2011 11:15 a.m.
Hosted by: Christ United Methodist Church of the Deaf
1040 S. Beechfield Ave. Baltimore, MD 21229**



Present: (Carl Bailey, Ann Black, Marian Bland, Amy Bopp, **Laurie Corcoran**, Cheri Dowling, Stacey Farone, Sane Feldman, Dr. Kathleen Heck, Nancy Jenkins, Gary Monroe, Sara Muempfer, Jack Rouse, Robin Underwood, Lisa Kornberg, Julie Schafer, Sam Lenox, Lisa Jordan, Jennifer Baker, Blaise Delahoussaye)

Introductions

- Attendees introduced themselves including introduction to the new ODHH Staff Assistant, Sam Lenox.

Review of Minutes

- Meeting Minutes for September 14, 2011 – reviewed. Minutes passed as written.

Subcommittee Break-away

- Break-away time for Subcommittees to meet individually was passed over.
- Permanent omission of “break-away meeting time” during Advisory Council Meetings was discussed – No formal decision was made.

Education Subcommittee Report

- **EVENT** - Saturday, December 17, is our first free event - at Applewood Farms in Harford County from 1:30 to 3:30pm. It's going to be free for families. No RSVP required.

Behavioral Health Subcommittee Report

MEETING - Met with the Deputy Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene in November. As opposed to prior meetings, she really heard and understood our concerns.

RESULTS – The Deputy Director said that she would take those concerns back to the Secretary of the Department. One of the things that she stressed to us was that she can address those concerns to the secretary and, in turn, they can be passed along to the Governor.

TOPIC - The role of State hospitals as changed. They are really focused on the forensic population and the really chronically, uninsured population that has no other treatment options in the State. Because of that, local, private hospitals are beginning to think about opening “deaf units”. We suggested to the State the establishment of standards that would mandate accessibility, communication, and interpretation.

DISCUSSION - Sheppard Pratt will be or has been taking on deaf patients. Dr. Anne Malloy has been hired and has been assigned to research and develop the policies and procedures for opening up a small deaf unit for adults at the Sheppard Pratt Hospital.

Communication Subcommittee Report

MEETING – The subcommittee met together at the One-Stop Center in Maryland. There are 30 One-Stop centers throughout the state. Each will provide various services.

RESULTS – It was a wonderful learning experience having the meeting there. There was the ability to ask several questions about accessibility.

DISCUSSION - There are different kinds of services that the deaf and hard of hearing community may want to access at the One-Stop Centers. They had a computer bank. They could use that. Use the internet to search, to look for opportunities. There were also different workshops and training on how to start job seeking skills.

TOPIC - Deaf and hard of hearing people already have a difficult time finding employment due to the discrimination that they face. Once they find the jobs, their service is responsible to make sure that it's successful and the training is successful to find employment. A lot of deaf people feel like they can't meet their employers or make their needs known. And they don't have the self-confidence to do that.

DISCUSSION - We talked about that issue for a good little while. A way to address that in the career centers is what's called business services teams. This staff interfaces with employers daily to help fulfill their work force needs, their training needs - working with those teams to educate them about deaf and hard of hearing, and how to talk with employers about the community. In the past, Lisa Kornberg has done training for some of the career centers. We are working on a very

comprehensive technical assistance and training calendar for our career center staff and we will advocate that we include that training in that calendar.

TOPIC - Would it be possible to host our next advisory meeting at a One-Stop? The Waldorf One-Stop could accommodate a group this size. And their resource room is pretty awesome. They've have a large center there which could accommodate us. We could incorporate a tour into that.

TOPIC - We need to coordinate and partner with organizations to make sure that we have assistive technology in our career centers and connecting any job seekers or businesses with assistive technology that's needed.

DISCUSSION - The Maryland Technology Assistance program (MDTAP) is trying to pull together a team and talk about what we're calling universal work stations in our career centers. So there are work stations that will have a table that is ergonomic for people that use wheelchairs, it has software on it and hopefully video phone so we'd like to include that on that work station concern was -- a lot of careful planning with this. A concern was privacy. And making sure folks who use video phone have that kind of privacy. So how do we do that? Probably by One-Stop, by One-Stop, by One-Stop. Because every career center looks different.

TOPIC - At the end of the meeting, we were talking about consumers that experience discrimination, for which they need to file a grievance.

DISCUSSION - Before it was through "NCHR" that they were sending it to, but now it's "MCCR", the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights. We're trying to find out about the grievance process and what happens, if they file at the State as opposed to Federal, filing lawsuits, and if they file a discrimination grievance and it would be with MCCR.

TOPIC - Some wonderful news to share. Robin Underwood, who has been a wonderful advocate for us in the community in general, has said the Maryland Department of transportation has finally gotten BWI to comply with captioning on all of their TV screens. There's going to be one person to be assigned to make sure they are always compliant with that.

Lunch Break

Director's Report:

TOPIC - Review of Agency Report from our Office

DISCUSSION - To expand on the DeafBlind staff specialist that they're looking at hiring... Currently they've established a subcommittee to look at having a position that is parallel to the position that Hank Passi had. Hank does not supervise anyone directly but is responsible for the oversight services to deaf people across the state. They're looking now at doing a similar kind of position that focus on people who are DeafBlind because they recognize that the time investment and the special skills, needs, and support are very different. They're doing a collaborative kind of program. They've had two meetings now to talk about developing the position, what the job description will look like, where they might recruit for candidates. But it hasn't moved ahead to become final yet.

TOPIC - A question about the DeafBlind - it says TAM decided not to apply for a distribution program? Are there going to be other organizations that can fill that gap?

DISCUSSION - TAM originally started thinking to do that. However, the problem is, the staff is not sufficient. There are not enough people to run the program to do it the 'right way'. It's going to require a lot of attention, a lot of training from that person who is hired. The Government decided that our allocation was about \$178,000 annually... that 15% can be used for administration costs. That means roughly about \$27,000 to pay someone to run the program. Query: Who will work for that \$27,000 a year traveling, training, assessments and so forth for the state? It's not likely possible. An attempt was made to get matching funds from the state, and the answer was no, the budget crisis does not allow it. A letter went out saying we can't do it. We're willing to work as a subcontractor, because we already do equipment distribution programs. So we plan to work with someone else. And right now it seems like the Helen Keller National Center and Perkins are interested in collaborating with each other and then contracting with us for some of the work.

TOPIC - DORS positions and funding is focused specifically on helping people return to work. It is a very narrow part of the care of people with any disability. So there are several initiatives happening in different places around the state. And we have to figure out how to coordinate it.

DISCUSSION - The Department of Aging was not aware of the impact of people who were both visually and hearing "impaired". People who have vision and hearing loss in the older community. We are setting up a meeting with the Department of Aging, long-term care ombudsman organization to help them understand the need for the aging population. DRS is working on the employment part. MDOT will have to get involved on the transportation part. And the Department of Disabilities has a program called ACP.

TOPIC - The Governor's office hasn't released yet which bills it's willing to submit this year. They've just started sending them out so we don't know all the answers to that yet.

DISCUSSION - What happens is, department submits to the Governor's office. They pick and respond. And then we can roll up our sleeves and get going. I do know that there are agencies that are approaching senators, legislators, and committees already trying to find representatives to submit bills. I know that that's happening already also. And we're hoping MDAD will get involved in that also.

MEETING - There is a committee in Maryland called the Alliance. And The Alliance is made up of representatives from each county's commission on disabilities. Lisa K. attended their last meeting.

RESULTS - Each county has a commission made up of volunteers in the community who attend the meeting or with staff support attend the meeting so that they can look at what's happening at the State level and try to have some continuity around priorities across the state. So, why doesn't someone from our council go to these meetings? They meet twice a month on the first Monday of the month, mostly in Columbia. We need a community member who is a volunteer who can go so they can become a voting member.

Agency Reports

TOPIC - For the last year and a half we've tried to collect agency reports from you guys in advance, and it's been very frustrating and very time consuming so can the Advisory Council to make a motion that we go back to agency reports be here at the meeting. That's a request from our office (ODHH).

TOPIC - A call from a constituent whom many of you know, Ben Dubin^(sp), the chair of this committee for many years and he has been working really, really hard to get Center Stage in Baltimore to agree to do captioned shows. And somebody who's donated the equipment to Center Stage, and they are now doing captioned shows. And the only one who showed up at the last one was his daughter, and he was really upset that we as a community aren't supporting that and showing up. So he would like me to ask people to tell people who they represent that this is an option.

TOPIC - The Department of Aging has decided that they want to recognize Maryland Deaf Senior Citizens as a unique specialty group and provide advocacy and possibly financial support to help them run their activities across the state. And they have asked to be invited to an MDSC meeting to learn more about the agency. So that is really phenomenal news. MDSC has been looking for that for a while. So we're setting that up.

TOPIC - Nothing to report on behalf of DHS

TOPIC - DHMH: Behavior health integration has completed a draft report of recommendations. It was under review and is now on the website and ready for public comment.

TOPIC - MSD: MSD recently underwent their dual re-accreditation through MSA and CDASD and have been submitted for full re-accreditation from both organizations for the next seven years

TOPIC - MSDE: In October we hosted a fall workshop for educational interpreters. There were 114 interpreters present from all over the state. And the title of the workshop was "Form, Function, and Foundations."

TOPIC - Also, the Division of Special Education hosted their annual leadership conference. At that conference, which was entitled "The Power of Innovative Leadership for Results," we introduced the Maryland learning links website. It's a special education resource for the state. It's an excellent website. Parents can use it. Educators can use it. People within the community can use it. It's got very easy access.

You just have to go online to www.Marylandlearninglinks.org. Get an access user name and password and go into the website.

TOPIC – Housing and Community Development is moving to Annapolis, New Carrollton. It should make the agency a little more accessible to people because it's going to be in the hub from MARC and Metro.

New Business

Item - The Department of Aging has again decided that they want to recognize Maryland Deaf Senior Citizens as a unique specialty group and provide advocacy and possibly financial support to help them run their activities across the state. And they have asked to be invited to an MDSC meeting to learn more about the agency. This is really phenomenal news. MDSC has been looking for that for a while.

Item – Dr. Lin's from Johns Hopkins had an article in the Baltimore Sun. Dr. Lin at Johns Hopkins University is researching hearing loss. He says that the number in older Americans is now up to 20%. He says it's going to become the next public health crisis in Maryland. This may be what we need to get the support to continue the work we do. We're trying to set up a meeting with Dr. Lin and the Department of Aging and follow up on that and see what resources or grant opportunities we can get from that.

Item - Nancy Jenkins pointed out the issues with the robo-calls prior to and after the Hurricane. For the deaf and hard of hearing citizens – these calls were useless. This has led us to look at the many constituent calls coming in to the ODHH office regarding the deaf and hard of hearing individuals particularly in long-term care facilities who are feeling more isolated from important information. Further, the Maryland Department of Disability Commission -- there is a man named Edward McDonough from Maryland Emergency Management Agency, MEMA. He acknowledged problems for people with disabilities in natural disasters and other emergencies. A proposed solution is to have a little charger for your cell phone or PDA or whatever that can work off your car battery so if there's not power, you can keep that charged so that you can get text alerts. So I'll be contacting Mr. McDonough and anybody else who wants to write-in can help us figure out a way to get these alerts accessible statewide before the next emergency comes along.

Old Business

Item - Lisa Jordan has applied to become a permanent member of the Advisory Council. We are waiting for the approval.

Item – ODHH is looking to improve the update process for our online information. This may fall to the new Staff Assistant, Sam Lenox.

Announcements:

Item: Co-sponsor for a trip to Africa want to get the word out on the service learning projects with the deaf schools over there.

Item: ODHH will not have a budget review this year. We are on a two-year cycle. We do have a new analyst from the Department of Legislative Services who is responsible for looking at us and making sure we are not wasting a lot of money.

Item: Next meeting can move to a Wednesday. It may be easier on most people. The One-Stop located in Waldorf is tentatively the site to be confirmed by Sara M. Meeting date is March 21th, 2012 from 11am to 2pm.

Meeting Concluded.