



MONTHLY BULLETIN

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2009

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

LEGISLATIVE SESSION IS HERE!

On January 14, 2009, The Maryland General Assembly will convene for their 427th Legislative Session. Each year, legislators meet for 90 days to act on over 2,300 bills, including the State's annual budget. The session will end on Monday, April 13, 2009.



Deaf and Hard of Hearing Constituents can fully participate in events of the Maryland General Assembly and meetings with their elected Delegates and Senators. Accommodations for deaf and hard of hearing constituents are made through the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) for legislative hearings and public events of the legislature when requested.

DLS has established procedures for arranging

interpreting or CART services. Legislative Services will provide accommodations (interpreter, CART, etc.) for meetings and appointments you make with your representative (delegate or senator). When

you contact your representative and make an appointment please ask the

member or member's assistant to contact the DLS to arrange accommodations for their meeting with you. If necessary you may provide the member or member's assistant with DLS's contact information. Ask the member or member's assistant to confirm with you once they learn the accommodation has been made.

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER

New years bring new beginnings. It is a time to look with hope to the future, but also to reflect on where we have been.

ODHH has had a year full of change. This has been an exciting time—as the new director I have had the opportunity to represent the Governor and set goals and a mission for the Office that will positively impact the lives of Marylanders with hearing loss. In addition, I have had the chance to meet many of you, and look forward to continuing to get to know you.

However, I would be remiss if I did not also mention that there have been goodbyes over the course of this year as well. Ben Dubin, the Chair of our Advisory Committee, completed his term. We also said goodbye to

several other Advisory Council members (Ethellette Ennis, Michelle Schaefer, Robert Padden, William E. Johnson, Jr., Josh Friedman and Lindsey Dunn). In addition, Denise Gagnon-Perdue resigned as the Assistant Director. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank all of you who have given your time, your creativity and your energy to promote ODHH's mission.

The new year brings challenges but also opportunity. It is with a strong belief in the Governor's view of One Maryland that I look forward to continuing our work together in 2009. Happy New Year!



Lisa

ODHH

PROGRAMS

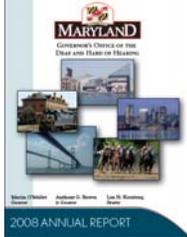
- Awareness Training and Technical Assistance
- Constituent Services
- Community Outreach and Education

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ODHH UPDATES

As the year draws to a close, things have been busy as the Office prepares for legislative session. December was a month of change for ODHH. In addition to welcoming Administrative Assistant Laura Quinn's newest addition to her family, Selena Rose, the Office also said goodbye to its Assistant Director Denise Perdue.



Despite all of the changes, ODHH staffed an Advisory Council meeting on December 3rd. This was our first meeting with the newly appointed members, and set the stage for an active agenda. In addition, the office hosted a town hall meeting on

December 7th in Columbia, MD that drew 17 constituents.

The Office also published and distributed its 2008 Annual Report that reflects the activities of Fiscal Year 2008 (July 1, 2007—June 30, 2008). If you are interested in seeing a copy of the report, it is available on our website at www.odhh.maryland.gov.

The staff of ODHH continues to be available to Marylanders with hearing loss as well. In December we responded to 39 constituent requests for service, attended six (6) specialized Council and subcommittee meetings, presented at a State-wide training for ADA and EEO coordinators held at UMUC in College Park and finalized five of eight requests for exhibits and trainings in 2009.

FAREWELL TO ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PERDUE

Denise Gagnon Perdue has been the Assistant Director of ODHH since February 1, 2006. She also served as interim Director from October 2007—April 2008. She joined ODHH after a 10-year teaching career at Towson University in their Deaf Studies Program.

While Assistant Director, Ms. Perdue was a tireless advocate for deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind Marylanders. She worked to promote ODHH as a viable agency within the State government while responding to individual requests for service from constituents. During her tenure as Interim



Director, Ms. Perdue was able to initiate projects like the ODHH Monthly Bulletin.

Her passion for education and her love of working with students was clear during her time at ODHH. She enthusiastically welcomed interns from area colleges and worked to serve as a mentor to them. This passion for students led her to accept a position in the University of Maryland, Baltimore County's Office of Disabled Student Services. All of the staff at ODHH wish Ms. Perdue the best of luck in her new position.

HOW TO TRACK A BILL ONLINE

The 2008 Legislative Session will soon be underway. You can track the status and search for bills of interest using the Maryland General Assembly website. To track pending legislation that affects deaf and hard of hearing people, do the following:

1. Follow this website www.mlis.state.md.us to the Maryland General Assembly Home page.
2. Click Bill Indexes & Profiles (third on the left).
3. Click One or Two Subjects (second choice).
4. At the first drop down menu, you can choose a number of options to look for bills that may affect deaf and hard of hearing people, including "Audiologists and Speech Pathologists"; "Communications"; "Deaf Persons"; "Disabilities. Department of"; "Disabilities"; "Hearing Aids"; and "Telecommunications." Be sure to scan the index for other areas of interest. For example, the Department of Transportation or the Department of Health and Mental Hy-

giene may have bills that will impact people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

5. At the second drop down menu, you can choose another of the options listed above.
6. Click Select .
7. Current bills pending will appear.

If you have any questions about tracking legislation, feel free to contact our office.



TOWN HALL MEETING RECAP

On Sunday, December 7, 2008, ODHH held a town hall meeting at the Columbia Central Library in Howard County. ODHH Staff, as well as three Advisory Council members (Thomas Brett, George Kosovich, and Laurie Yaffe) were present to listen to the concerns of 17 constituents.

After a short presentation about ODHH, the floor was open to questions and comments from the community. One constituent expressed a need to receive emergency notifications via email since individuals with hearing loss often miss important information.

At least two individuals brought up concerns about the cost of interpreters in these uncertain economic times. The concern

is that organizations are less willing to provide interpreters because of the high cost. ODHH continues to work to ensure that state services in particular, but also services in general, are accessible to deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders.

Questions were also asked about who is on the Advisory Council, what roles they served and how decisions were made. In response, ODHH has decided to include information on the Council members in our monthly bulletin (see below).

These meetings are important to ODHH since they provide us the opportunity to respond to your questions. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting in the spring.

MEET THE MARYLAND ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

The Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing consists of 16 members – eight (8) members represent state agencies and eight (8) members represent the general public. The Advisory Council is responsible to advise ODHH in carrying out its duties; review statewide activities; foster the coordination of and support for programs and to study ways to maximize the use of facilities and services available to individuals with hearing loss.

This month, the Bulletin introduces a new column, “Meet the Advisory Council,” to introduce you to the members who make up this important council. The first councilmember we would like to introduce you to is Thomas Brett of Charles

County. Mr. Brett came to the Council in September 2007 as a private citizen interested in improving the quality of life for deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders.

As a councilmember, Mr. Brett feels that the most pressing issues for deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders includes captioning, financial assistance for hearing aids, and access to information. He envisions ODHH as a conduit between this information and the community at large.

Mr. Brett can be contacted by email at tombrett@comcast.net if you have further questions or concerns.



SORENSEN VIDEO PHONE AT DORCHESTER LIBRARY

Deaf Independent Living Association, Inc. (DILA) announces the opening of a Sorenson Videophone located at the Dorchester Library in Cambridge, Maryland.

Sponsored and funded by the Quota Club of Cambridge, the Videophone enables deaf and hard of hearing individuals to access DILA services without having to travel to the Salisbury Office.

A Videophone is modern technology consisting of a video camera, internet connection and a standard TV. When turned on, the person can see a live staff member sitting at the other end of the TV. Services can be provided in sign language or by using voice.



“It is an innovative way of making services accessible to deaf and hard of hearing individuals who live in other counties on the Eastern Shore without having them travel to Salisbury.

The Dorchester Library is the first to launch this project,” says Jennifer Whitcomb, DILA’s Executive Director.

The Quota Club of Cambridge is a membership organization who has sponsored many programs and services for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. For more information, please visit the website at www.dila.org or call 410-742-5052 or stop by the Dorchester Library located

at 303 Gay Street, Cambridge, MD.

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DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

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Lieutenant Governor

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Director

Julie Anne Schafer
Editor

WWW.ODHH.MD.GOV

ODHH ON THE MOVE

January 2009

Presentation to MSD Parent Group
Monday, January 12, 10 AM—11:30 AM
Maryland School for the Deaf
Frederick, MD

First Day of Legislative Session
Wednesday, January 14, 12 PM
Miller Senate Building/House of Delegates
Building
Annapolis, MD

Please note that ODHH will be closed on Thursday, January 1, 2009 and Friday January 2, 2009 in observance of New Year's Day and on Monday, January 19, 2009 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.



February 2009

House Budget Hearings Scheduled
Wednesday, February 11, 1:00 PM
Room 142 House of Delegates Building

Senate Budget Hearing Scheduled
Friday, February 13, 1:00 PM
3 West, Miller Senate Building

Please note that ODHH will be closed on Monday, February 16, 2009 in observance of President's Day.



Governor Martin O'Malley and the Maryland Congressional Delegation announced that \$2,397,663 has been awarded to Maryland by the Emergency Food and Shelter (EFS) Program. The funds will be used to help individuals and families in Maryland with non-disaster, temporary emergency needs.

The Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program is a Federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency to supplement and expand ongoing efforts to provide shelter, food and supportive services for the nation's hungry, homeless, and people in economic crisis.

For a listing of the Emergency Food and Shelter (EFS) Program Local Board contacts in particular jurisdictions or for more information, please call the EFS Program National Board staff at (703) 706-9660, or FEMA's Office of Legislative Affairs at (202) 646-4500.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION IS HERE (CONT.)

(cont. from page 1)

If your representative is holding a public event in your district or in Annapolis and you would like to attend, accommodations will be provided if you request them in advance. Contact the hosting member or office and ask them to arrange services through Legislative Services. If necessary you may provide the member or member's assistant with DLS's contact information.

If you would like to present or participate in public hearings of the legislature on a particular bill you are following, you must contact the Department of Legislative Services with the bill number, date, time and room of the hearing. Your request should state your desired accommodation.

The Department of Legislative Services

coordinator for interpreting and accommodations services is Sherry Little. She can be reached in any of the following ways:

- TTY: 410-946-5401 -or- 301-970-5401
- Through Maryland Relay to any of these voice numbers: 410-946-5413, 946-5400 or -800-492-7122, x5400/5410
- Email: sherry.little@mlis.state.md.us

The Department of Legislative Services is committed to making the legislative process accessible to deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders. ODHH encourages you to utilize the services they provide in order to become more involved in the legislative process. If our office can be of any assistance to you during session, please do not hesitate to contact Lisa Kornberg (lkornberg@gov.state.md.us).