

§ 9-2404. Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (March 23, 2018)

Third Quarterly Meeting
March 23, 2018

Present:

Council Members: Chair Stephanie Summers, Vice Chair Erin Buck-Skees, Interim Secretary Vikki Porter, Janet Moye Cornick, Jason Corning, Lisalee Egbert, Larry Gray, Tanya Green, Marny Helfrich, Greg James, Eddy Laird, Mary Lynn Lally, Tayler Mayer, Gordon Outlaw, Karunya Samuel, & Victoria Wilkins

ODHH Staff: Kelby Brick, Jacob Salem, Katherine Millios, LaToya Plummer and Elke Pieters

Absent: Spencer Dove

Call to Order: 2:08 PM

Meeting Minutes:

Minutes from December 2017 read and accepted as corrected.

MACDHH Chair Summers's Report:

Shared about three legislative bills: HB-482 and HB1061 regarding to NFB (National Federation of the Blind) proposing a technology which was not appropriate for the Deaf Blind community. The third one was HB-1021 regarding to college and universities with 4-year programs. They did not want to see community colleges be allowed to create 4-year baccalaureate degrees. CCBC was concerned however does not stop them from creating a 4-year interpreting baccalaureate program because no other colleges or universities in MD offers it.

ODHH Director's report: See attached.

General Discussion:

Council Member Gray shared a concern about the need to have a Trilingual Center for Latino Deaf Children and their Families. Feels should have a center established, but there is none at this point. People are screaming for these kind of services. It would be nice if Maryland could be a warehouse for all these resources, to gather all of these resources. There are some in D.C., but not comprehensive services, for example, language acquisition. And people are screaming for more of those services. So I did want to talk about how we could establish a resource center. Maybe at the Maryland school for the Deaf in Frederick and Columbia. But we need something to provide those Latino families so that the children have adequate language acquisition. At the end of the discussion it was agreed that ODHH will develop some kind of survey or assessment to see how greatly the need for this will be.

Council Member Gray shared an idea of a one-stop shop where there is a form developed or checked boxes and once you hit enter, it sends you to the correct agency instead of navigating the system and come to a dead end. Want the concept of reducing so much time in searching for Deaf services statewide. Council member James shared what his department has been doing through a program. The name of that system is MD Think, Maryland Think. We received approval from our federal partners for funding for that program last year, in January. It's a \$200 million program. The procurement and planning all took place in the last year, and we started developing the infrastructure. And we anticipate launching our first service this summer, within that. Part of the goal of that system is to create a way for citizens in the state to go to one place to apply for a variety of different programs and access different services. Rolling that out and bringing on other state agencies will be a multi-year process. But we're looking at this very much as a modern data system where it's not just build it today and that's going to be the system for 10 years. It will be much more like the apps on your phone, where they're constantly evolving, constantly improving, constantly keeping up with technology and changes. So we're very excited about that. And certainly one of our key goals in that project is accessibility and ensuring that the system we're developing is compliant, is 508 compliant as well as going above and beyond that and looking for ways that we can, where possible, incorporate sign assistance for clients because we know the language is different, so helping them understand that and going through that. We anticipate having the first phase of that system completed roughly 2021. That will be all of the department of human services, all of our programs will then be on that platform, as well as department of juvenile services and some of our other state partners. It's not just limited to that. Department of taxation is talking to us about coming on the platform. I am not saying that this system is exactly what you were referring to, and certainly portals can be great tools but they're also very challenging to do properly and do well. So we want to make sure that

you have the infrastructure to support it and maintain it once it's built and put together. But this platform, the full goal of it is to make this technology accessible for other state agencies and for projects just like this, to be able to move them over quickly. And we've been able to do some much smaller applications very, very rapidly over the past couple of years because we've shifted how we're approaching it. So I think the MD Think project could be a good partner if we decide to move forward with the portal as a state. We would be more than happy to work with you on that and explore how we do that.

Council had a discussion about how ODHH can improve and/or develop new ways to spread awareness to our citizen of MD about the office like their annual reports, new changes with policies or staff updates. Other suggestions was to have booth at different events to hand out information and sharing information with other organizations to help them spread the news.

Council member Gray asked about resources for LBGT population like what services are available to them. Gray had several questions regarding to Department of Health. Council member Green would take those questions and ask her director to get specific information. Green asked Gray to send her specific questions then she can pass it on.

Council member Lally shared what she learned from Vanessa Luther an executive in the Department of Health responsible for licensing for nursing homes, etc. She sent me a letter detailing out individual patients who could file complaints if those complaints were such that they felt their needs were not being met or that they didn't have access to socialization, exercise, etc. So when we went to the nursing homes, a lot of times people are left to their own devices. No communication tools, no socialization. That gave me some thought. It means that that individual has to actually fill out a complaint and they have to detail their experience. These people are senior citizens. They might depend on relatives or children to file for them. And then it takes time to process all of that. During that time, they may pass. Or their issues might advance and their health may decline. So obviously their needs are not being met in those long term healthcare facilities. So I'm willing to contact these individual people, but I'm not a lawyer and I'm not an advocate. I am left in this place just feeling like, it's just not a good situation for those Deaf and hard of hearing people in that age group. So what do we do? That's where I'm at right now. Before there were seven, and now there's five. One passed away and one was released. So there are five individuals left in that facility. They visit each other in their own rooms. They eat together. Other people who can hear are going to bingo and are getting to partake in different events in the facility. But Deaf folks are left out of things, and it's bad. We recognize this is an ongoing issue and numbers may be small now but will rise as the aging population will increase.

ODHH Director provided additional reports on a variety of issues being addressed by the Office: NONE

Old Business: NONE

New Business: NONE

Announcements:

Council Member Corning shared MWADB is hosting a spring hugging gala.

Vice Chair Buck-Skees shared several events: Annual open house – Columbia on May 11 and Frederick on May 18. MSD will have their first ever open house for professionals and ASL classes on Columbia campus on June 1.

Chair Summers introduced Maryland Association of the Deaf new president, Richard Jefferies. He said a few words.

Meeting adjourned at 3:42 pm