

FINAL

§ 9-2404 Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf Hard of Hearing 03.07.25 Meeting
Minutes | 07 March, 2025 / 2:00 PM / 100 Community Place, Crownsville, MD

Council Members present and seen via Zoom:

Present: Chair Norma Moran, Vice Chair Mark Tesoro, Paige Bradford, Lauren Whiteman, Yolanda Dockery, Cleveland L. Horton II, Kristen Patterson, Allegra Hollins, John Serrano, Dianna Yamada, Edwin Martinez Jr., and Bo Byun

Absent: Secretary Allysa Dittmar, Dana Hill, and Veronica Davila Steele.

Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Staff: Usherla DeBerry, Laura Lugar, Diamon Halliburton, and Tanéa Brown.

Meeting Called to Order: 2:20 PM

Meeting Minutes: September 13, 2024 Minutes were approved.

Report from Chair – Norma Moran

- Chair Moran announced that she has accepted a new opportunity and plans to step down as Chair of the Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MACDHH).
- Work is underway with the Appointments Office to fill the leadership role.
- The last meeting was canceled due to the absence of a quorum. Moving forward, if a quorum is not met, meetings will still proceed, but no votes will take place.

Report from Director – Usherla DeBerry

- Budget Hearing: The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (GODHH) had its budget hearing on February 6 and 7, 2025.

Legislative Updates:

- GODHH provided oral testimony for the Open Captioning Bill (HB 1363), which was

positively received. The bill was amended regarding reporting requirements to the General Assembly.

- Director DeBerry will continue hosting Open Door Hours.
- GODHH will update its website with resources for federal workers affected by recent layoffs.
- The next Town Hall is scheduled for May 2, 2025—more details to follow. ● The Human Trafficking Awareness event originally scheduled for January has been postponed to May 21, 2025. Dr. Bowman will provide more information on how the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) community has been impacted.

Presenters:

- Delegate Kaufman will provide an update on State House activities for the legislative session.
- Mr. Brick from the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) will be presenting during today's meeting.

SBSLI Website & Interpreter Licensure:

- The SBSLI website currently displays a message stating that the portal will not be open until the regulations have been approved.
- Regulations are awaiting approval from the Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review (AELR) Committee. Approval is expected in approximately two weeks, followed by a one-month public comment period.
- There are no new updates on interpreter licensure; its status is still pending and dependent on regulation publication.

Report from Outreach/Interpreter Manager – Tanéa Brown

ASL Lunch & Learn:

- Monthly sessions for state agency employees to practice ASL while having lunch. The program began in January and will continue, with the next session scheduled for March.

Interpreter Certification Events:

- An NIC/BEI Study Table will be held on Saturday, March 8, 2025, to support pre-certified interpreters through peer mentoring.
- GODHH is developing a mentoring program for minority groups, including BIPOC interpreters, heritage signers, and Deaf signers.

Upcoming Events:

- The Telecommunications Access of Maryland and the Deaf Culture Digital Library are planning a large event in Columbia this fall. More updates will be shared in the next meeting.

Interpreter Licensure Portal:

- The portal is currently being tested to ensure a user-friendly and comprehensive experience.

Old Business

- No old business.

New Business

- Encourage community engagement by sharing information and outreach services.
- Weekly virtual workshops for recently laid-off federal workers are held every Wednesday.

Announcements

- Paige Bradford: The American Sign Language Glossary defines commonly used signs in Maryland. The link will be emailed and distributed.
- Training & Webinars: Additional training and webinars on communicative competence have been added to the website, all with captioning and interpretation.
- Low-Incidence Hearing Specialist Position: The position requires ASL proficiency, Deaf culture knowledge, and experience working with the Deaf community.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 PM.

Special Topic Presentations

- Delegate Kaufman
 - Background: Del. Kaufman does a lot of work on disability issues because he has CP. He uses a walker and wheelchair to get around. He served on the Montgomery commission on people with disabilities.
 - He has worked with Senator Mary Washington and the Maryland Association for the Deaf to establish a workgroup to see if co-navigation for the DeafBlind was feasible and also to have a more general evaluation of the needs of individuals who are DeafBlind and the DDBHH community in general. The Co-Navigation Bill may come back at a later time.
 - Other Bills the Delegate is working on:
 - HB 694: Lack of accessibility in schools for wheelchair users: Single point of entry bill.
 - HB 31: Right to repair Bill
 - HB 701: Service delivery model bill
 - HB 1493 -Health Occupations - prescriptions for children subject to shared custody or visitation schedule
 - HB 703 - Criminal Procedure - Diagnosis of Developmental or Intellectual Disability - Evidence
 - HB 940 - Criminal Procedure - Probation Before Judgment - Defendants Diagnosed With Autism or Intellectual Disabilities
 - aaron.kaufman@house.state.md.us
- National Association of the Deaf (NAD) COO Kelby Brick
 - Mr. Brick has been with NAD for about two months now.

- Recent federal level developments are of great interest to NAD, they want to focus on protecting civil rights.
- Brick acknowledges the challenge of shifting power to the state level and sees it as an opportunity for the state to improve and push for change.
- The strength of the community can overcome many challenges.
- NAD has been providing ASL interpreters and Certified Deaf Interpreters for press conferences.
- NAD won a lawsuit to make sure the White House is following Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and provide interpreters again.
- Maryland has an impact on other states. Other states look to Maryland as a role model for providing interpreter services and NAD provided technical assistance to help them implement similar practices.
- By 2020 interpreters began appearing consistently across various media platforms, making news and public announcements more accessible.
- Workshops are being hosted to provide training so that federal workers that have been laid off can be recruited into the state of Maryland. They have also been doing a lot of work trying to recruit federal employees to become teachers.
- Brick acknowledged the Council's efforts in ensuring access for DHH individuals, specifically for federal workers.
- He emphasizes the importance of making job recruitment, fairs, and workshops accessible for federal employees facing potential layoffs.
- 17 state attorney generals have filed a lawsuit against the federal government over a two year old decision to redefine disability more broadly to include gender dysphoria. The suit targets Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act which NAD successfully used in its suit against the White House. The suit threatened to remove section 504 protections and the community's response was so powerful that the 17 AGs backpedaled. They issued a clarification, but despite the backpedaling, Section 504 is still under threat of removal.
- Regarding the Executive Order to downsize the Department of Education and

transfer responsibilities to the state, NAD is exploring potential impacts.

Particularly how it may affect IDEA the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

■ NAD is working with a strong consortium to devise a strategy for pushing back against these changes and strengthening services at the state level. ● Dr. Beth Bowman

- Types of Human traffickers: Familial, Brothel owners, Romantic, Violence or Addiction Based
- Human trafficking Definition: To force, falsify or coercion, for control could be mental or physical that forces sex work. This can include sex work, prostitution, or labor trafficking.
- Children with disabilities are more likely to experience abuse of many kinds. ■
Many in the Deaf community suffer from language deprivation, affecting understanding of cause and effect.
 - Sexual abuse is common and human trafficking can coexist with sexual abuse making identification difficult.
 - There is a barrier in reporting abuse due to communication challenges.
- There are higher rates of sexual abuse in Deaf children compared to hearing children.
- It is illegal for children to engage in prostitution, the perpetrators are the lawbreakers, not the children.
- LGBTQIA+ youth, often homeless, are at risk of being trafficked when adults offer food and shelter in exchange for sex.
- Abusers may break or withhold crucial assistive devices to control individuals.
- It is very important to have Trauma-informed care.
 - Environmental triggers like lighting and sound as individuals may have heightened reactions due to trauma.
 - To identify potential trafficking situations it is important to understand what abuse looks like.
- Dr. Bowman suggested the inclusion of human trafficking education in training

for Deaf school staff and encouraged increased awareness within the deaf community.

○ Resources:

- Master word: <https://www.masterword.com/>
- HEARD: behearddc.org
- Activating Change: activatingchange.org
- Deaf-Hope: deaf-hope.org
- Deaf-DAWN: deafdawn.org
- Deaf Dove: deafdove.org
- Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services: adwas.org
- National trafficking hotline: 1 (888) 373-7888 OR 233733 (Text "HELP" or "INFO")
- Polaris Project: <https://polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/>