

**Sign Language Interpreter & Transliterators State Registration Act
Stakeholder Meeting: September 29, 2017**

Location: 1521 N 6th Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102; OVR Central Office

Time: 10:00am – 3pm

Members in Attendance:

Jessican Bentley-Sassaman (ITP); Benjamin Moonan (ODHH); Gerald Penna (PSAD); John Nice (PARID); Denise Brown (ODHH); Shatarupa Podder (PDE/BSE); Osvaldo Aviles (AOPC), Jeanne Bonnes (Agencies), Russ Goddard (L&I/OVR), LaTanya Jones (PARID), Jennifer Perring (ERCHL), Corri Zimmerman (PARID)

Interpreters: Cindi Brown and Nichole Wade

CART: Terry O'Connor

Visitors: Russ Goddard, John Blasco, Grace Shirk-Emmons

Meeting Summary:

Ben welcomed everyone and reviewed the communication expectations of the meeting.

Upcoming meetings dates were discussed. October is the last agreed upon date and since the holidays are coming up, there will not be meetings held in November or December. During that time, data will be collected from the survey and once the meetings resume in January, the survey results will be discussed. When deciding on dates for the beginning of the year, snow dates should be included as well. January 26th was discussed and decided upon unless there are scheduling conflicts with interpreters, CART, etc. Denise also explained that approximately four more meetings will be held and that everything should be finalized by May or June so meetings do not run into the Summer Academy.

Previous meeting minutes were discussed. The timeline that was discussed in the August meeting is at the end of these meeting minutes. Other timelines for registration should be looked at such as barbers, driver's license renewal, etc. so to follow what is standard.

Jessica Bentley-Sassaman made a list of what was completed and what needs to be done.

- To Do
 - BEI
 - Deaf interpreters
 - Provisional and state
 - Exemption 5 – survey
 - Agency accountability
 - Alternative pathway
 - Provisional interpreter timeline
- Actions completed

- Renewal of provisional interpreter fees
- 3-5 years provisional
- Revolving account
- Late fee - \$50 (covers state and provisional)
- Emergency situations

The members discussed the BEI on the to do list. Denise stated that there is no problem adding the BEI to the certification, but it has to be equivalent. Osvaldo explained that there should be a group within the council that studies the feasibility of accepting the BEI in lieu of the SEL for legal interpretation. After the council finishes their analysis, it is possible for a disagreement to arise and if it would be acceptable to cost for the BEI. Jeanne assumed that the BEI for legal would not be acceptable and if someone got the BEI, they would not be allowed in the courtroom.

Jessica discussed the levels of the BEI – BEI Basic, Advanced, Master, and BEI Legal and explained that if someone took the BEI Basic, then they would not be allowed to take the BEI Legal test. An interpreter cannot progress with the BEI like the RID tests. The issue regarding the BEI is that it was developed in Texas where the signage and vocab is different. If this was made national, regional signs would not be recognized by all. Denise stated that there should be a separate meeting that a sub group holds to discuss the BEI. Once the sub group concludes, they can bring it to the whole group to make a decision.

Jerry talked about the survey results (all members received a handout of the results) that was done 5-6 months ago. This survey was about providing interpreting services for consumers. The survey was only sent out to those who signed up for the PSAD newsletter. There are approximately 2,000 PSAD members but not all are signed up for the newsletter. There was discussion about the importance of knowing how many people got the survey because that provides a percentage of who completed it and gives more or less weight to the results. The results from this survey provided valuable information that can be applied to the Exemption 5 survey.

Denise led the discussion about the Exemption 5 survey. The purpose of this survey is related to registering with ODHH and Exemption 5. The results will provide an insight as to get rid of Exemption 5 or keep it. ODHH wants to remove this exemption from the law but before it is removed, there needs to be data to understand why it should be kept. There are two perspectives, the Deaf perspective (gives them the power to request an interpreter) and the ODHH perspective (following the law; ADA states that state-registered means an interpreter is qualified). ODHH is obligated to enforce the law and monitor that.

Jessica stated that RID and NAD makes the determination if the interpreter is qualified or not and that this survey is being done in a neutral way not to sway anyone, but just ask questions about it and receive feedback about Exemption 5.

Jeanne explained possible concerns with Exemption 5 and that the Deaf community could feel disempowered because they do not feel comfortable giving their name and information to the

ODHH. Jessica stated when they complete the form, the interpreter maintains a copy and is not given to ODHH.

Denise gave the members the link to the Exemption 5 survey to see how it works. There will be an ASL version that will be completed by a CDI (possibly Debi or Cren). Once everything is finalized and tested, the survey will be released at the next meeting (October 27th). The survey will be distributed to each of the members and then they will send it out to their corresponding people to complete. The link for the survey will also be posted to the ODHH website and Facebook page. There will be a standardized email that is sent out that provides the reasoning for the survey. Once the survey is sent out, a two week reminder and a five day reminder to complete the survey will also be sent out to ensure there is ample data when the meetings resume in January.

Some changes with wording were made to the survey. The beginning paragraph was changed and now says, "We need accurate information to assist in amending Act 57 of 2004." After Provisionally Registered Interpreters, "with ODHH" was added. The question regarding misdemeanor was changed from "Did you know" to "Do you know..."

The members discussed the emergency situation language. Jessica explained that Section 5.1 states that a provisionally registered interpreter cannot interpret in critical care situations. Section 4 states that if the interpreter is interpreting for a patient in the hospital and it becomes a critical care situation, a Certified Interpreter needs to replace them. LaTanya stated that this works fine for after hour ER situations but during that day, it can be harder to find a Certified Interpreter. VRI systems are being implemented more but WIFI is not always accurate.

At the next meeting, the survey and Deaf interpreters will be discussed.

The next meeting is on Friday, October 27, from 10am-3pm.