

**. Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Quarterly Meeting, December 6, 2017
PaTTAN, Harrisburg, PA**

Members present: Don Rhoten, chair; Russ Goddard, Devon Grant, Kelly Holland, Nancy Kingsley, Lori Leiman, Karen Leslie-Henry, Dale Long, Shatarupa Podder, Trisha Mader, Sam Trychin

Excused: Devon Grant

ODHH staff: Denise Brown, Dee Dee Keiser, Ben Moonan

Guest: Harry Barnum (Liberty Resources), Liz Hill (PSAD), Grace Shirk-Emmons (PSAD)

Minutes for September 27, 2017: Shatarupa moved to approve, Dale seconded, and the motion passed.

Updates on ACDHH Membership, State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, ODHH Position Vacancies, and DeafBlind Support Service Provider (SSP) Program—David DeNotaris, OVR executive director

The list of ACDHH recommendees was sent again to the Governor's office, but no appointments have been made yet. The PA Advisory Committee for the Blind and the PA State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation have also been unable to get appointments, but the PA Rehabilitation Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council have been able to get appointments after writing many letters.

The State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation has been seeking persons interested in serving and received 35 applications, but only one is from a person with a hearing loss. Applicants need to submit a resume and letter of interest to David's office as soon as possible.

The first round of interviews for the ODHH director position were held, but Secretary of Labor & Industry Kathy Manderino took another position on July 31 and Jerry Oleksiak became acting secretary, awaiting official appointment. The second round of interviews of the three finalists is scheduled for January, with the hope that an offer can be made in mid-January. Don Rhoten is providing input as the ACDHH representative. Once the ODHH director is hired, that person can work on getting the vacant field representative position filled.

DeafBlind SSP funding has been affected by the \$14 million federal cut for OVR, which can now only put \$150,000 instead of \$225,000 toward this program. Efforts are being made to get help from state departments like the Office of Long Term Living and the Department of Human Services.

Shortly before the meeting ended, there was additional discussion on the subject of ACDHH appointments. The ACDHH has recommended Lori Leiman for a full term because she filled part of someone else's position, and also recommended Jerald Cohen, Marsha Drenth, and Kay Tyberg to fill the three vacancies, but it was just learned that Jerald essentially lives in Florida now. Current ACDHH members are in USQ.

Action Points : (1) Don will email Jerald Cohen to find out whether, despite primarily living in Florida, he will be able to attend at least three of the four quarterly meetings (2) Don will draft an ACDHH email to David DeNotaris (ddenotaris@pa.gov) for help in getting the Governor to appoint the

recommended persons as public members and share it with the ACDHH for feedback before sending it; the subject line should indicate that the email concerns ACDHH appointments and the email should mention that the ACDHH is supposed to have nine public members but only has six. (3) ACDHH members will send similar emails to David DeNotaris

Texas Funding for Deaf Specialists and Hard of Hearing Specialists--Dale

Dale attended the annual Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) convention in Salt Lake City, where he met the HLAA Texas State Office state director, Jason Taylor. The Texas Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) has a staff of 20, including eight people with the Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP), and the office also funds ten contractors serving throughout the state as access specialists and seven as technology specialists. There are people with expertise in serving Deaf needs and others with expertise in serving hard of hearing needs. (The ODHH budget is only about \$470,000.)

Action Point: Dale will email the Texas information to David DeNotaris.

Nancy noted that New Jersey's Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has a designated Deaf specialist and a designated hard of hearing specialist and Sam said that Utah likewise has different specialists for each hearing loss population.

Public Forum

PSAD president Liz Hill expressed concern about ODHH being placed under OVR instead of under the Department of Labor & Industry, as ODHH has a larger scope than OVR that includes police training, education, mental health, nursing facilities, emergency management, etc.

Follow-Up Items

White Paper Submission to Press Office for Posting on Website—Denise

Nancy and Karen had prepared a white paper on the differences between Deaf and hard of hearing people for inclusion on the ACDHH web page. The press office said that the authors' permission is needed for reprinting the two Internet resources that are included on the white paper. It also needs to be made clear that the information in those articles isn't being officially endorsed.

Action Points: (1) Nancy and Karen will meet with Denise during lunch to discuss resolving the press office concerns (2) Dee Dee will inform the press office that the articles are on public websites and find out whether permission is needed in that situation.

Captioning of Sam Trychin's Video--Russ

In April, OVR made a staff training video by Sam Trychin on hard of hearing needs. A transcript was prepared but the video wasn't captioned. OVR has been working with the Office of Information Technology to upgrade its software so videos can be captioned and hopes to start adding captions to its videos during the first half of 2018.

Action Point: Russ will update the ACDHH about captioning Sam’s training video.

Summer Academy Videos—Russ

The four Summer Academy videos are to be posted shortly on YouTube. Initially they may not be captioned, but they will be sent for captioning to OVR staffer Connie Moonen, who is responsible for captioning OVR videos (not including training videos). The main video (12-15 minutes) discusses the Summer Academy, and the other three are for specific audiences: parents, students, and potential resident assistants

Action Points: (1) When they are available, Russ will email the Summer Academy video links to the ACDHH. (2) The videos will be shown at the next ACDHH meeting.

ODHH Videos –Ben

The ACDHH established a committee to work on the videos to educate the departments about what it means to be hard of hearing. There were originally going to be four, but two more will also be included. The first is on what it means to be hard of hearing, the second is on communication strategies, the third is on assistive technology, the fourth is on psychological factors, the fifth is on misconceptions, and the sixth, for service providers (such as nursing home staff), is on how best to serve people with hearing loss. They are each 20-40 minutes long and will be captioned. The videos will be on the ODHH website and sent to the Department of Aging, the Department of Health, OVR, and any other relevant state agency to educate the public and the Commonwealth staff. ODHH will work with the Department of Aging to develop something more specialized for a different audience if needed.

Sam noted that most people with hearing loss do not wear hearing aids, resulting in loss of brain cells in the auditory area, and there are recommendations for preventing and dealing with this.

Action Points: (1) Ben will update the ACDHH when the ODHH videos have been captioned. (2) Sam will draft a letter to the Department of Aging on dealing with the health and cost effects of untreated hearing loss and will provide the draft to the ACDHH for review.

Summer Academy for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students Not on the College Track —Shatarupa

Shatarupa discussed this proposal with her director, but nothing has been set up yet. It would be similar to the current Summer Academy, with collaboration between OVR, PaTTAN, and BSE. Russ hopes to eventually get one program set up at WPSD and another at PSD.

PSD Parents’ Review of App--Karen

At the previous meeting, David DeNotaris mentioned that he wanted people to try a new app called Planning for the Future Checklist, which helps students with transitioning, and give feedback on it. The link to download the app was included in the newsletter that goes to parents of PSD students, but Karen hasn’t received any responses. Parents will be asked again at PSD family meetings.

Shatarupa said that Information about the app was also broadcast to the transition staff in the PaTTAN west office, so they should be sending the information to the families they assist. Russ suggested that Hands & Voices also be asked to get feedback on the app.

Action Point: Karen will inform the ACDHH if parents provide any feedback on the transitioning app.

Review and Discussion on Police Training Curriculum--Denise

The curriculum just underwent a major revision, but minor changes won't have to go through the curriculum review process.

The review and discussion of the police training curriculum have been postponed to the next meeting.

Action Points: (1) Denise will scan the relevant curriculum pages and email them to the ACDHH for suggested revisions. (2) Denise will ask Isaac Suydam, who had asked the ACDHH for feedback, whether it can also be obtained from PSAD and HLAA before the next ACDHH meeting. (3) ACDHH members will propose and discuss any suggested revisions at the next meeting.

Department Reports

Department of Labor & Industry—Russ

The department is working on the 2018 Summer Academy. Russ is now representing OVR in the Act 57 stakeholders group, which has been meeting monthly since February.

Department of Health—Kelly

As part of its Federal funding, the department started the Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) advisory group, which met twice so far. There are 25 stakeholders, including the schools for the Deaf, ODHH (Denise), PSAD (Liz Hill), representatives from early intervention, and audiologists, among whom is Janet Trychin. EHDI meets jointly with the Infant Hearing Screening Advisory Committee. The goal is to educate people about newborn hearing and follow-up, with early intervention by age six months. Learning communities will be held regionally. A data share agreement is being arranged with Early intervention (EI) to provide better records.

The ability to share data on children who are identified in the 0-3 age group as deaf and hard of hearing and then follow up with them during preschool years is very important, because early intervention is optimal, and the 3-5 age range is critical for language development. Armed with the data, the EI staff can locate the students and offer EI services to their parents.

ODHH---Ben and Denise

The Act 57 stakeholder group didn't meet in November or December and will resume in January. It has been finalizing a survey with about 60 questions about people's awareness of the law's provisions, e.g.

about fines and the use of nonregistered interpreters. The survey will be sent out to collect data in order to support the amendments that will be proposed.

Denise receives many calls from nursing homes and needs to talk to the Department of Aging about addressing communication access system wide.

New Business

Department of Aging ACDHH Appointee

Donna Reinaker retired, so another person is needed to represent the Department of Aging on the ACDHH.

Action Point: Don will draft a letter requesting that the Department of Aging appoint an ACDHH representative to replace Donna Reinaker, and Denise will forward it to the proper person.

Televised Emergency Notification Interpreting

Don said that frequently, there is an emergency where police, the Governor, or someone else is making interpreted announcements on TV. Sometimes the interpreters are terrible, and Don asked what mechanism is available in Pennsylvania to ensure that emergency announcements have a certified interpreter. A second issue concerns the interpreter's visibility on TV. The interpreter stands beside the Governor or other speaker, and the PCN camera, which is the official state camera, shows both of them, but there are other cameras from local news agencies that may not include the interpreter.

It was learned after the meeting that the FCC requires captioning of TV emergency notifications and can be contacted about violations of this requirement. There is no requirement for interpreting.

Action Points: (1) Denise, Ben, Shatarupa, and Karen will serve on a committee to draft a protocol checklist and a letter for sending to TV news agencies about showing the interpreter and captioning during emergency announcements (2) Karen will develop a list of who to call at the TV stations about communication access complaints (3) Don will invite a PEMA disabilities integration specialist to address the ACDHH about this issue

Agenda for Next Meeting

1. PEMA speaker on interpreting and captioning of TV emergency announcements
2. Review and discussion of the police training curriculum
3. Viewing of the Summer Academy videos (in addition, David had suggested having someone speak about their Summer Academy experience)
4. Status of ACDHH appointments
5. Follow-up on all action points

Meeting Dates for 2018

Wednesday, March 28; Tuesday, June 12; Friday, September 21; and Friday, December 7.