

**Sign Language Interpreter & Transliterators State Registration Act
Stakeholder Meeting: October 27, 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); John Nice (PARID); Denise Brown (ODHH); Shatarupa Podder (BSE); Russ Goddard (OVR), Corri Zimmerman (PARID); John Blasco (HDS); Jennifer Piring (ODHH); LaTanya Jones (PARID); Grace Shirk-Emmons (PSAD)

Interpreters: Cindi Brown and Nichole Wade

CART: Terry O'Connor

Visitors: Brian Smith

Meeting Summary:

Ben welcomed everyone, reviewed the communication expectations of the meeting, and introduced Russ Goddard from OVR as a new stakeholder and explained the benefits of having someone from OVR added to the group.

Future meeting dates were discussed and decided:

- January 26
- February 23
- March 23
- April 27
- June 1

Meeting minutes from the last meeting were discussed and clarifications were made. The BEI has not been approved but the group agreed to explore adding the BEI as an alternative. Jessica will be in touch with Angela from Texas about the BEI to set up a meeting for possibly the second week of January so the information from that meeting can be discussed during the January 26th meeting. The members that will be involved in the BEI discussion will be Jessica, John Nice, LaTanya, Osvaldo, Denise, and Ben. If Zoom is used for that meeting, the meeting can be held at the ODHH office and an interpreter can be provided.

Jennifer also discussed that the Kentucky Board has also adopted the BEI so it may be beneficial to talk with someone from that area to see and learn what the BEI looks like to their state and how they are using it.

Denise discussed how it will be helpful contacting the National State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to see what they are doing at the state level and make a chart/table with every

state to reference to. Denise and Ben will contact all the agencies and bring the information they have collected to the meeting on January 26th.

Grace discussed the results from the survey that was distributed over the summer about changing the provisional registration from 3 to 5 years. 46 Deaf people, 3 Hard of Hearing people, and 30 hearing people participated in this survey. The results are below:

- Keep it at 3 years:
 - 31 Deaf people
 - 3 Hard of Hearing people
 - 4 hearing people
- Wanted to change to 5 years:
 - 15 Deaf
 - 0 Hard of Hearing people
 - 26 hearing people

The survey regarding Exemption 5 was discussed. There are two videos that have to be redone before the survey is dispersed. Jennifer will be sending out the survey to the schools for the Deaf as high school students are also consumers. Reminders to complete the survey will also be sent out once it gets closer to the end date.

A video and written glossary to be added to the beginning and throughout the survey to clarify the terminology was also discussed. The terms that were agreed upon were:

- State registered – means certified interpreter, RID and NAD certifications and registered with ODHH
- Provisionally registered – graduated from ITP and passed written tests and can work in certain settings
- Non-registered – ex. DI
- Certified – may or may not be registered
- Identification badge – does not mean certified

There was a discussion about what all should be included in the paragraph that is sent with the survey:

- Contacting ODHH if you need accommodations to take the survey.
- This is a different survey than PSAD survey.
- Subject line should read something like “Important News from ODHH”
- Making it personal by stating, “This is how you will get your voice heard.”
- Some people will get this survey more than once

The stakeholders then discussed Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDI). In 2015 at the RID Conference in New Orleans was when the announcement was made regarding the moratorium for the performance test. John stated that the reason for the moratorium was the high failure rate on the written test. People began to complain about the test which is why they are trying to change it.

When the group who is discussing the BEI talks to Angela, they will ask if they also have a CDI test.

There are some concerns regarding CDI's because the performance test is on a moratorium. Those concerns consist of the DI's who have already passed the written test are now stuck, there are only eight CDI's in PA (many are in Philadelphia area and one is in Northeast Pennsylvania), and DI's are becoming depressed and are no longer motivated because they are having to wait.

Russ discussed OVR's perspective and that they are breaking federal law because they cannot always provide a CDI to their consumers.

There was also a discussion of how ODHH cannot fix the issue of CDI's because of the money that goes into creating a test and then figuring out who would grade it. RID has an alternate pathway that is already set up that anyway can do but the performance test for DI's is not open. Denise discussed that some DI's have taken Kevin Poore's classes, which is a Deaf Interpreter training. Because they have completed that training, a written test from RID, and also met a certain number of CEU's, they are now just waiting on the performance exam.

There was discussion about opening up Provisionally Registered to DI's and adding some qualifiers, such as a bachelor's degree or a certain amount of hours of workshops/experience but if that is opened up, there will be disputes from hearing interpreters because of the inconsistency.

The group agreed that the alternate pathway is on the to-do list to discuss and that everyone should look over that to fully understand it. Questions such as how the alternate pathway tracks hours (not all agencies split what is billed and how many hours someone interpreted), years of work they have experienced, what will be included in work experience in our alternate pathway, what kind of math would we use to calculate that, etc. A lot of this form is self-reported. This document will be sent out to the stakeholders so they are able to reference it. Because of all this paperwork, the question of if this is even possible for ODHH to do was also brought up.

Once the BEI group meets with Angela, the topic of CDI's can be brought up again with that new information.

At the next meeting, the following will be discussed:

- Exemption 5 survey
- Alternate pathways
- CDI's (John will find out who is on the waitlist for PA)
- Agency accountability (what should agency accountability look like, what is the response from agencies about how agencies are held accountable)
- Contractors and their renewal timelines (Ex. 15 days, 60 days with late charge)

The next meeting is on Friday, January 26th, from 10am-3pm.