

**Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Quarterly Meeting, March 11, 2016  
OVR Building, Harrisburg, PA**

**Members present:** Russ Goddard, chair; Art Florio. Devon Grant, Nancy Kingsley, Lori Leiman, Karen Leslie-Henry, Shatarupa Podder, Don Rhoten, Sam Trychin (by phone)

**ODHH staff:** Sharon Behun, Dee Dee Keiser

**Excused:** Dale Long, Trisha Mader, Donna Reinaker

**Guests:** Bloomsburg U interpreting students Tara Scarcella and Danielle Cavanagh and her father; Eric Jeschke (PUC); Missy Derr (PUC); Kay Tyberg; presenters Kathy Manderino, Sandra McNally, Lisa Troy, Marsha Drenth, Melissa Hawkins, Matt Seeley, Matthew Krupp, Stephanie Hardman-Dicks

**Minutes for June 26, 2015:** The minutes were approved.

### **Updates**

#### **Outreach Committee—Karen Leslie-Henry**

At the previous meeting, there was discussion about whether to create a committee to address outreach. On November 3, a conference call was held with Karen, Art, Shatarupa, Nancy, Dale, Sam, and Sharon that discussed how to create awareness of the ACDHH, such as preparing a document about the ACDHH; giving presentations; sharing resources from the ACDHH; and preparing a FAQ paper answering questions members get from the public. It was decided that an outreach committee was not needed because its purpose is the role of the entire ACDHH

**Action Point:** ACDHH members will email questions and concerns they receive from people to Karen, who will work with Sharon to create a FAQ page with information that can be posted on the ACDHH web page and that members can use to publicize the ACDHH.

#### **ACDHH'S Role in Providing Comments to TDDP--Nancy Kingsley**

The ACDHH used to be the source of input into the TDDP program, but that role was transferred elsewhere. Nancy was asked to contact Amy Goldman to find out how deaf and hard of hearing people could provide such feedback. As a result, Sandi McNally, assistant director of community services at Temple University and Lisa Troy, TDDP program manager, arranged to attend today's meeting and include this information in their presentations.

#### **Goals of Aural Rehabilitation for Infants—Sam Trychin**

The Joint Commission on Infant Hearing established 12 goals for working with children who have a hearing loss and their families, e.g. ensuring that families have access to early intervention programs and to service providers with the skills to optimize the child's language development.

Action Point: Sam will send the description of the 12 goals to Russ, who will send it to the ACDHH for possible discussion at the next meeting. (This was done after the meeting.)

Art said that In PA, 85% of newborns with hearing loss enter early intervention before age six months, whereas the national average is 70%. If a newborn is diagnosed with hearing loss, the family is referred to the PA Guide by Your Side program. While some states require a certain degree of hearing loss or a bilateral loss to receive early intervention, PA doesn't.

#### Department of Labor and Industry Report—L&I Secretary Kathy Manderino

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)-required state plan was spearheaded by L & I, which also worked with Governor Wolf on his Employment First executive order (both are discussed in Devon Grant's report). OVR will concentrate more on pre-transition employment services for students. The governor's budget, if it passes, includes additional funds for ODHH.

#### State Civil Service Commission and CART Services—Nancy Kingsley

For the annual Disability Employment Day, the PA Civil Service Commission sends out an announcement that mentions that ASL interpreting will be provided and other accommodations can be requested. However, CART should also be provided and mentioned without needing a request. At the previous meeting, Nancy was asked to contact Paula Marinak (the Civil Service Commission recruitment specialist who sends out the notices) about this and did so. Sharon noted that ODHH raised this issue earlier with Paula and her supervisor but nothing changed.

Action Point: Russ will send a letter to Paula Marinak on ACDHH stationery, asking that notices stating that ASL interpreting will be provided at an event also state that CART will be provided, without requiring the latter to be specially requested.

#### Marketing CART and Hearing Assistive Technology—Donna Reinaker (not present)

Action Point: Donna will give this report at the next meeting.

#### **New Business**

##### Nomination for a Vacant Public Member Seat---Russ Goddard

Kay Tyberg provided information about her background and her perspectives on hearing loss issues. The executive session for discussion and the subsequent public vote about recommending her were scheduled after the department reports. After the executive session, members voted publicly to recommend Kay for appointment to the ACDHH.

##### Nominations for Counsel Officers—Russ Goddard

The Council voted to suspend the bylaws and conduct the election at the current meeting rather than in June, when the new officers will begin serving. The following new ACDHH officers were elected to two-year terms:

Chairperson: Don Rhoten

Vice Chairperson: Karen Leslie-Henry

Secretary: Nancy Kingsley

## **Public Time**

### Telecommunications Device Distribution Program (TDDP)—Sandra McNally and Lisa Troy

Sandi is the assistant director and Lisa is the program manager. Sandi said that the ACDHH was the advisory council for TDDP until a couple of years ago, when Steve Suroviec, then the OVR executive director, discontinued the ACDHH's role. TDDP then switched to the assistive technology advisory council that is legally mandated to serve Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT). Leslie Kelly, who is deaf, recently joined. New members are especially needed from the western and northern parts of PA. Interested candidates can email Sandi at [smcnally@temple.edu](mailto:smcnally@temple.edu). TDDP previously agreed to provide updates to the ACDHH at least once a year.

Lisa said that TDDP prepares an annual report about its continuing education and outreach events as well as a list of equipment distributed to people who are deaf and hard of hearing or have speech, cognitive, or physical disabilities. Statewide coverage is provided through assistive technology resource centers (ATRCs) and printed and electronic mailings to 37,000 consumers. ATRCs also write articles for the local newspapers and radio stations. TDDP's Facebook page reaches 3000 people. Volunteer centers also distribute applications. Website: <http://disabilities.temple.edu/programs/assistive/tddp>. Email: [tddp@temple.edu](mailto:tddp@temple.edu).

***TDDP Wireless Pilot:*** Sandi said that TDDP wants to add wireless devices and will be conducting a pilot study to gather data. In the first phase, 30 people (10 deaf, 10 hard of hearing, 5 blind, and 5 with intellectual disabilities) will receive a WiFi iPad, iPad mini, or iPod touch and must come to Temple U in Philadelphia for several meetings. Participants who fulfill the pilot program requirements can keep the devices free of charge. (In a second phase, mobile phones will be added.) Funding will need to be found after the pilot ends in November.

### SSP Program for the Deaf-Blind—Marsha Drenth

Marsha is the program manager for the statewide Deaf-Blind Living Well Services and is herself deaf-blind. Currently, 27 consumers are using support service provider (SSP) services; the grant is for 50. Funding is provided by OVR's Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services, ODHH, and the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). In the first three months of 2015, 56 SSPs were trained and 30 are providing services. The Facebook page is [www.Facebook.com/dblwsnline](http://www.Facebook.com/dblwsnline) or PA Deaf Blind Awareness. A monthly newsletter is also published.

SSP training by Shannon Wright was scheduled for March 31 and April 1. Twenty-six people applied for the 20 slots. The trainees are interpreting students from Bloomsburg University, Community College of Philadelphia, and Mount Aloysius College. Sharon Behun and Marsha were scheduled to present at the PA Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf conference about the differences between interpreters and SSPs. Another SSP training will be held in November.

Disability Empowerment Center (DEC) and SILC—Melissa Hawkins and Matt Seeley.

Melissa is the DEC executive director and Matt is the SILC executive director. DEC is the center for independent living serving Lancaster and Lebanon counties, and Melissa is also a SILC a board member. DEC took over deaf and hard of hearing case management from Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) of Lancaster on March 1 because DHHS has financial problems. Matt said SILC wants to be more of a partner with groups like the ACDHH. The State Plan for Independent Living will be submitted for public input at forums in Allentown, Altoona, and Erie.

OVR Update—Matt Krupp, Executive Assistant to OVR Executive Director David DeNotaris

Governor Wolf secured a \$5 million increase in state funding for OVR in the 2015-2016 budget, which enabled OVR to receive \$18.5 million in federal funding. That increase allowed OVR to raise dispensing fees for one hearing aid from \$300 to \$500 and from \$400 to \$600 per pair of hearing aids. OVR's annual report calendar will be available online and hard copy form, with a QR code on each page of that can be either listened to or watched. A new round of invitations for bid (IFBs) will be released for pre-employment transition services and made available at [www.emarketplace.state.pa.us](http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us). OVR has been developing partnerships with schools and tech programs to help high school students transition to work or college.

Stephanie Hardman- Dicks, Legislative Assistant to Representatives Dan Miller and Ed Gainey

Stephanie had been on the ACDHH in the past and wants to serve again but can only do so if a representative she serves is appointed by the Speaker of the House. Rep. Miller is a founder and co-chair of the bipartisan House Disability Caucus and has a son with autism. Nancy mentioned that the ACDHH had previously discussed the fact that PA Medical Assistance doesn't cover hearing aids, although more than half the states do. Stephanie said that she would bring this to Rep. Miller's attention, and it would be a great issue for the Disability Caucus.

**Action Point:** Russ will send a follow-up letter to the Speaker of the House asking that Rep. Dan Miller be appointed to the ACDHH.

**Department Reports**

Department of Education—Shatarupa Podder

The Federal government passed the Every Student Succeeds Act to replace No Child Left Behind, and the new regulations need to be developed. The PA secretary of education is

collaborating with Highmark Foundation and the Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention to create a Bullying Prevention Consultation helpline.

#### Department of Health—Art Florio

1. There are numerous drug overdose deaths nationwide, particularly from prescription opioids. The Wolf administration made this a priority and the PA Department of Health and PA Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs are playing major roles. Naloxone, which reverses opiate effects, is being made widely available and physicians will be required to enter information about opiates prescribed into a database to prevent doctor shopping for more.
2. Electronic baby toys have been found to decrease language development when compared with traditional toys like puzzles and blocks that involve more interaction with parents.
3. On April 28, nationally developed videoconference training was scheduled for PA providers serving young children who are deaf or hard of hearing, to explain parents' emotions when their children are diagnosed with hearing loss. The next day, parents were to be videotaped discussing their experiences, and the videos will be available to early intervention providers and on the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) website.

#### Governor's Cabinet for People with Disabilities—Devon Grant

Meetings of the Governor's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities were scheduled for May 20, September 9, and November 3. On March 10, Governor Wolf issued a press release that explained the WIOA state plan to ensure that PA workers have the necessary skills and the governor's "Employment First" executive order directing that competitive integrated employment be the preferred outcome for Pennsylvanians with a disability (earning at least minimum wage, in a work setting where most workers do not have a disability).

The Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFLMP) is a federal program in 19 states. This year, PA will target sheltered workshops with segregated employment below minimum wage (primarily for people with intellectual disabilities) to help them transform to provide meaningful employment services. Sixteen providers were invited to attend a leadership boot camp, and four of them will receive more intense assistance from subject matter experts. There will also be a series of webinar trainings for the whole provider community.

#### ODHH—Sharon Behun

ODHH representative Denise Brown is doing a presentation about organizing a parent group in Allentown to do fun activities with their deaf and hard of hearing children. ODHH's next Hearing Loss Expo will be November 2 and 3 in Harrisburg and will offer simulations on being deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind. ODHH is working on the sign language interpreter issue created by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf testing moratorium.