

Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Quarterly Meeting, June 12, 2018
PaTTAN, Harrisburg, PA

Members present: Karen Leslie-Henry, chair; Jerald Cohen, Russ Goddard, Devon Grant, Kelly Holland, Nancy Kingsley, Lori Leiman, Dale Long, Shatarupa Podder, Kay Tyberg, Sam Trychin [could observe remotely but not comment]

Excused: Marsha Drenth, Trisha Mader

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

Guests: Harry Barnum, Liberty Resources; Sharon Behun, CILCP; David DeNotaris, OVR; Liz Hill, PSAD; John Hogue; Michelle Paonessa

Review and Approval of March 28, 2018 Minutes

Karen requested one change, and the amended minutes were approved.

New ODHH Director Melissa Hawkins

Melissa has been in this position for six weeks. She provided information about her background, including being raised in a military family that moved frequently, resulting in her being raised orally. She received a degree in applied behavioral sciences from Penn State, studied Deaf culture and ASL at Gallaudet for 1-1/2 years, and obtained a master's in human resources from Virginia Tech. Her previous position was five years as executive director of the Disability Empowerment Center in Lancaster, the last two of which included a Deaf case management program.

Report from David DeNotaris, OVR Executive Director

Pennsylvania just became the first state to provide paid summer college internships for college students with disabilities. Eighteen are working for 16 state agencies, including two who are deaf. In Pittsburgh, over 250 high school students with disabilities will have summer jobs with over 40 municipalities, and there will be six summer academies, including one for students who are deaf or hard of hearing that Russ Goddard has been overseeing at Penn State University. OVR implemented the SAP Autism at Work program with the Philadelphia Eagles, which are now interested in employing people with disabilities.

OVR recently hired Craig Shields, who is Deaf, as assistant district administrator in the Altoona district office. ODHH funds are provided through the state General Government Operations (GGO), not from the Department of Labor and Industry or OVR. Melissa can work with the ACDHH to determine the best way to use the open ODHH position and what skills should be incorporated into it. Dale previously shared information from Texas, which has staff with knowledge of assistive technology.

Senate Bill 1037 pertains to civil service modernization and creating more opportunities for individuals with disabilities to get jobs in state government.

Action Points: Karen will get more information on Senate Bill 1037 so the ACDHH can write a letter of support.

Interview of Applicants for ACDHH Membership

Applicants Liz Hill, Michelle Paonessa, John Hogue, and Nancy Kingsley gave information about their goals for the ACDHH, their backgrounds, and their skills. Due to uncertainty about the number of open slots, the ACDHH decided to recommend one candidate to fill the vacancy, and John Hogue was chosen.

Action Point: Karen will get the legal questions resolved so the ACDHH can make decisions about the remaining applications.

Election of ACDHH Vice Chair and Secretary

Motion: Devon moved to suspend the bylaws and postpone this election until the next meeting, Shatarupa seconded, and the motion passed.

Discussion Topics—Kay Tyberg

Increasing Deaf & Hard of Hearing Representation on Accessibility & Disability Forums in PA

Blair County is one of the few Pennsylvania counties in with a steering committee on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities. They welcomed Kay on it, but the grant doesn't cover interpreting or CART.

Action Point: Jerry will email information about the free Microsoft Translator app to Karen, as this can be used to provide text renditions of spoken communications. *[Update: the information is at <https://translator.microsoft.com> and <https://translator.microsoft.com/help/education>.]*

TTY/TDD Phase Out on State and Federal Levels?

Russ said that OVR and CareerLinks still have a TTY in every office and may still have TTY numbers, but the 800 numbers were phased out and the answering machine is usually turned off. Shatarupa said her office also has a TTY, but people are primarily using email to communicate. The ADA requires TTYs, so they cannot be eliminated. *[Update: TTYs are the only devices that work with landline phones, so people without access to the Internet need them.]*

Hotel Compliance Requirements for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People

Kay noted that hotel kits with TTYs are provided to comply with ADA requirements, but there may not be a telephone that will fit the TTY.

Action Point: Kay and Jerry will bring information about problems with hotel ADA compliance so the ACDHH can develop a best practices document.

Serving the Deaf Population with Mental Health & Long Term Care Needs

Action Point: Karen will ask whether any ACDHH members want to work with her on a committee to develop mental health resources.

Department Reports

Governor's Designee—Devon Grant

The Governor's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities recently got new members, including Liz Hill, so there is now Deaf representation. The Pennsylvania Disability Employment and Empowerment Summit (PADES) will be held on October 31 and November 1 at the Hilton in Harrisburg. The Employment First House Bill 1641 and Senate Bill 21 passed. There are ongoing Employment First webinars that ACDHH members can attend.

Action Points: (1) Devon will provide the correct link for signing up for Employment First webinars. (2) Karen will draft an ACDHH letter of thanks for the captioning of the archived Employment First webinars and find out who should receive it.

Department of Education—Shatarupa Podder

No report.

Department of Health—Kelly Holland

The Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) advisory committee met in April and reviewed the care coordination plan that is mailed by the Guide By Your Side (GBYS) program to families with a child newly diagnosed as deaf or hard of hearing, so they can make decisions about how to communicate with their child. Every two weeks, a list of newly diagnosed children is sent to early intervention. GBYS, a national program from Hands and Voices, is administered statewide in Pennsylvania through PaTTAN. The guides are parents of children with a hearing loss, who assist families with similar children from birth to age three, giving them information about the various communication options. .

The second learning community recently met, facilitated by Mary Ann Stefko from the Scranton School for the Deaf. The learning communities are part of the Federal HRSA grant; there will be six throughout the state, looking at ways to address barriers to getting children diagnosed and enrolled in early intervention.

Action Points: For the ACDHH, Kelly will email to Dee Dee and Karen: (1) the Infant Hearing Screening Advisory Committee (IHSAC) meeting dates and (2) information about the GBYS program.

Department of Labor and Industry (L&I)—Russ Goddard

The Summer Academy will be held July 8-27, with 30 students (there were just 22 last year), and the graduates will receive three college credits. Every Summer Academy student is a customer of OVR, which tracks them for years, and when high school students go to college, they are similarly tracked, allowing OVR to collect data over a long period to find out how well they are succeeding.

Russ attended a convention in Austin, Texas, attended by at least one education representative and one vocational rehabilitation representative from every state, to discuss how to provide transition services

for deaf and hard of hearing high school students so they can achieve competitive employment outcomes. Pennsylvania is way ahead of most other states.

Department of Human Services—Trisha Mader

Trisha was not present but had emailed a report on the Harry M settlement.

ODHH Report—Melissa Hawkins

There are currently 437 state-registered interpreters and 60 provisionally registered ones. On May 31, Ben, Denise, and Melissa met with L&I's director of legislative & public affairs to discuss proposed changes to Act 57, which are expected to be made around January. Stakeholder representatives were asked to provide their group's suggested changes to Ben by the end of June, but none were sent yet.

Melissa met with the executive director of the Long-Term Care Council (under the Department of Aging), which meets quarterly and is charged with making recommendations on regulations, licensure, financing and other responsibilities of the departments and agencies that relate to long-term services. She asked why this Council wasn't providing CART or interpreters for the public, and they will do so at the upcoming meeting.

Action Point: Karen will obtain a list from Melissa of all the councils in the state that Deaf and hard of hearing people may want to serve on and find out which ones have such representation.

Old Business

MPOETIC Curriculum Feedback—Denise Brown

Nancy was the only person to send feedback, which Denise passed on to Isaac Suydam. Denise hopes to get the revised curriculum and will follow up in a few months.

Summer Academy Video Feedback

The videos are on YouTube and are captioned. Karen noted that three each speak to a different audience, one to the students, one to the parents, and one the RAs (the fourth is an overview).

PA Association of Broadcasters Revised Letter Draft---Karen Leslie-Henry

Karen revised the draft encouraging the provision of ASL interpreting and captioning for emergency announcements, mentioning that this information should be shared directly with the people responsible for implementation at the local level.

Action Points: Karen will (1) get statistics on the number of people with hearing loss in Pennsylvania who would benefit and (2) make the correction in the draft to note that captioning shouldn't cover other information and add that interpreters should be state registered.

PSAD Rally at State Capitol

The April 9 rally promoted passage of House Bill 2069 to fund support service providers for deaf-blind people.

ACDHH Representation from the Department of Aging, House, & Senate

Karen met Secretary Teresa Osborne at an event in Philadelphia month ago. The secretary said she is aware of the vacancy and plans to fill it soon. Melissa, Karen, and Nancy have been working on obtaining representatives from the House and Senate.

Action Point: Karen will follow up with the Department of Aging on filling its ACDHH vacancy.

House Bill 2069 Letter of Support & Update—Karen Leslie-Henry

The ACDHH submitted a letter of support for House Bill 2069 to provide funding for deaf-blind support service providers.

New Business

Hearing Aid Funding

Ben said that most calls to ODHH are for financial aid for hearing aids, and ODHH made a packet with hearing aid funding resources. Denise said that the proceeds from the lottery go to the PACE program, which helps pay for prescriptions, and perhaps some of these funds could be allocated for hearing aids for low-income seniors.

Action Point: Karen, Jerry, and Nancy will write a position paper about the need to address hearing aid availability, including a list of resources.

Suggested issues

1. Create a list of unmet needs and desired skills for the ODHH staff vacancy.
2. Create a checklist for addressing communication needs.
3. Create a PowerPoint about what ODHH does.

Possible presenters

1. Department of Labor and Industry Secretary Jerry Oleksiak (was a special education teacher)
2. Department of Human Services Secretary Teresa Miller
3. Department of Education Secretary Pedro Rivera
4. [Department of Aging Secretary Teresa Osborne]
5. Joanne Manganello from the Governor's Office
6. Guide By Your Side Program Coordinator Anne Gaspich
7. [Long-Term Care Council Executive Director Charles Quinnan]
8. [OVR Acting Executive Director Ryan Hyde]