

Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Quarterly Meeting, June 28, 2017
PaTTAN, Harrisburg, PA

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

Excused: Kelly Holland, Dale Long, Donna Reinaker

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

Guests: Harry Barnum, Liberty Resources; Melissa Hawkins, Disability Empowerment Center; Jessica Marks, WPSD; Gerald Penna, PSAD; Cathy Rhoten, ERCHL; Grace Shirk-Emmons, PSAD; Kay Tyberg, HLAA-PA; Sharon Nicarry, interpreter

Minutes for March 22, 2017: Karen moved to approve, Russ seconded, and the motion passed.

Follow-Up

OVR Videoconferencing for ACDHH Meetings—Russ Goddard

At the previous meeting, the ACDHH discussed holding meetings in a location that could videoconference the meeting to other locations so interested people in those areas could observe. Russ was asked to check into what would be needed to enable the meetings to go back to the OVR central office and use its videoconference equipment for this purpose. The ACDHH had problems there with the microphones running out of power, but the room is looped. Upgrades are planned for the audio system but the timing is uncertain. OVR doesn't have technical support for issues that may come up for the videoconferencing or audio equipment, and the room with the video conferencing equipment is not always available. For example, on the last Wednesday of the month, the room is used for videoconferencing updates about the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act. Members of the public who want to observe the videoconference of an ACDHH meeting would need to make arrangements with the local OVR district office. PaTTAN is in the Department of Education, and the Department of Labor and Industry has different videoconferencing equipment that is not compatible with it.

Update on OVR Training—Russ Goddard

Sam Trychin did OVR videoconference training on April 26 in Erie. The Altoona OVR district office couldn't connect due to technical issues. The training was recorded and is available to all OVR staff along with the captioning transcript if someone needs it while watching the training.

Action Point: Russ will check into making Sam's video available to the ACDHH for viewing.

ACDHH Deaf & Hard of Hearing White Paper—Nancy Kingsley and Karen Leslie-Henry

A statement was added to the paper to clarify that not everyone fit into the listed categories.

Action Point: Nancy and Karen will search for an official resource link that corroborates the points in the paper.

Dale Long had sent an email to the ACDHH saying he was at the HLAA convention, where he spoke to the director of the Texas Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services and learned that it has a number of Deaf specialists and hard of hearing specialists serving their respective populations. Pennsylvania combines the services, with the result that expertise in hard of hearing needs is lacking. The ACDHH can use the white paper to advocate for providing separate staff with expertise in each population's needs.

Action Point: Don will ask Dale to discuss the information he obtained about Texas' provision of Deaf specialists and hard of hearing specialists.

Act 57 Update –Denise Brown and Ben Moonan

The Act 57 stakeholders group was set up in February with nine members, each representing a different group. It will meet monthly through October and present its recommendations for enactment by the legislature. Meetings can be observed by the public, but they can only provide input by contacting a member. The group favors expanding provisional registration for interpreters from three years to five years, adding mentoring, and requiring late fees for those who do not renew registration on time. Members are currently discussing whether exception number 5 is being used properly [it allows a Deaf person to use an unregistered interpreter as long as the Deaf person has been informed of this status].

Action Point: Ben or Denise will email a list of the Act 57 stakeholder members to the ACDHH.

ODHH Services— Denise Brown and Ben Moonan

Many parents have contacted ODHH for advocacy help with IEP meetings. Denise and Ben also put them in touch with Guide by Your Side and Hands and Voices and serve on Educational Resources for Children with Hearing Loss (ERCHL). Kelly Holland from the Department of Health contacted ODHH for a live sharing session, and Denise and Ben will give a presentation regarding people with hearing loss. They are talking with the Department of Transportation about having an indication on driver's licenses that the driver is Deaf or hard of hearing, and they have been doing a lot of advocacy related to hospitals and nursing homes. Denise often has a hard of hearing person come with her to test the assistive listening systems because she can't.

The comedian Kevin Hart recently performed at Allentown's PPL Center, and his team thought the assistive listening system would be used to stream and record his performance, so they had to be educated. Sometimes events change their interpreting contract at the last minute because they find a less expensive source, but the replacement interpreters do a poor job because they are unprepared.

ODHH & Department of Aging Videos—Sam Trychin, Denise Brown, and Ben Moonan

At the previous meeting, the ACDHH discussed the fact that the ACDHH and ODHH were both working on similar video plans, so they were encouraged to get together. They need to decide the content, the target audience, etc. Commonwealth Media Services is ready to proceed, and ODHH is developing a statement of work, after which the four videos can be produced. It was previously recommended that Bill Best and Kay Tyberg cover technology and Sam Trychin cover coping strategies. Captioning and interpreting will be included for the videos. Denise and Ben had previously indicated that the funding

had to be used by June 30, but Dee Dee said that ODHH requested a waiver if it approved, the funds would be available until December 31.

ODHH Director Search Update—Don Rhoten

Forty-two people applied for the ODHH director position. Nine of them met the necessary criteria and were chosen for interviews, after which two or three would be selected for a second interview. David DeNotaris asked Don to be available as a consultant on the final two or three people.

Motion: Karen Leslie-Henry moved that Don Rhoten represent the ACDHH as a resource to the Department of Labor and Industry for the ODHH director interview process. Shatarupa Podder seconded, and the motion passed.

Public Comments

Several commenters mentioned problems with VRI in hospitals, which may be a topic for the ACDHH to address. Disability Rights Pennsylvania is a possible source of assistance.

Law Enforcement at Traffic Stops—Denise Brown

Denise contacted a representative of the municipal police departments and learned that they have no protocol or training to follow when they stop a Deaf or hard of hearing driver. She invited him to come to the ACDHH meeting but he couldn't. Around 2000, the disability community had asked legislators to enact a law requiring the Municipal Police Officers' Education & Training Commission (MPOETC) to include a disability curriculum as part of officer training, but it didn't pass. Instead, a working group on recognizing special needs was set up with individuals from different disability groups, and Denise was a representative for the Deaf and hard of hearing population. A curriculum was developed that is currently used and includes best practices when interacting with Deaf and hard of hearing people during routine checks. While a code could be included on the back of the driver's license to identify the person as Deaf or hard of hearing when the officer checks the license in the computer, this information needs to be conveyed as soon as the stop occurs.

There is nothing to support Deaf and hard of hearing drivers on the Pennsylvania state trooper website, so maybe the ACDHH can start raising awareness with the state and municipal police. Nancy recently received an email from the Department of Transportation stating that they are setting up a focus group to discuss interactions with Deaf and hard of hearing people at traffic stops.

Action Points: (1) Nancy will email the information about the planned PennDOT focus group to the ACDHH and ODHH. (2) Don and Denise will discuss which police representatives to invite to the September 27 ACDHH meeting to discuss the training police officers need for traffic stops of Deaf and hard of hearing people.

Department Reports

Department of Education—Shatarupa Podder

A new organization called the National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes (NDC) at the University of Texas in Austin received a five-year grant in September to work on improving postsecondary transition outcomes for Deaf and hard of hearing students, and the education and OVR points of contact from every state were invited to attend a conference in Austin earlier this month to discuss the current status and what could be done to improve the outcomes. Russ, Shatarupa, and Jane Freeman, the PaTTAN Deaf/hard of hearing consultant who heads transition for Deaf hard of hearing students, represented Pennsylvania. Attendees came from 37 states, and states with similar issues will join a consortium. A point person from the NDC will work with it to address the issues.

Russ said that PEPNet had been the recipient of federal funding for this purpose for the previous 20 years. According to the data from the Census, only 48% of people with hearing loss are employed, while the figure for the hearing population is 72%. One factor affecting employment is educational attainment; 38% of hearing people have a bachelor's degree, but only 18% of those with hearing loss do.

Department of Labor—Russ Goddard

The Summer Academy on the Penn State campus is for Deaf and hard of hearing high school students with the capacity to attend college, a trade school or, a vo-tech school. Forty-six students applied this year and 25 were accepted, but some dropped out beforehand and not all could be replaced from the waitlist of 6 or 7 students, so just 22 planned to attend. Most are hard of hearing and mainstreamed, but 4 come from WPSD and PSD. The students live on campus for two weeks and get training on how to self-advocate, handle academics, and manage leisure time and finances. They are exposed to CART, C-Print, TypeWell, and FM systems and receive a certificate of completion.

Accessibility for ACDHH Meetings

In order for the ACDHH to be able to continue using PaTTAN in Harrisburg as its meeting site, two communication issues need to be corrected: (1) the meeting room needs to be looped (along with provision of a sufficient number of microphones) and (2) Sam Trychin needs to be able to communicate remotely without necessitating the removal of CART from the screen while he is talking.

Action Point: ODHH will work with PaTTAN to loop its meeting room by the end of this year and enable CART to be visible on the screen while Sam Trychin speaks remotely.