

Behavior Health on Deafness Sub-Committee Meeting
April 16, 2008
Independent Resources, Inc.
Wilmington, DE
10:30 am

Present: Christy Hennessey (Chair), Kirsten Olsen; Hank Passi; Cliff Rodman; Lois Steele and Linda Bates, Support Staff

Interpreter: Pamela D’Occhio

Additions or Deletions to the Agenda

- Kyle e-mailed Rich Pelletier from the DE School for the Deaf in reference to representation on this Committee. As today, no response has been received from Rich.
- Helen McDonnell e-mailed Kyle that she will be out of the office for a while. Kyle e-mailed Steve Dettwyler for a perspective on the appropriate path forward. Steve asked for a description of the group, its charge and how it is organized. Kyle, in turn, provided info on the Committee’s mission, responsibilities and the membership. To date, Kyle has not had a response back from Steve.
- Christy added that Loretta Sarro is at a DSAMH training and she is providing a deaf class called “Deaf Culture 101”. A DSAMH 2008-2009 Training Catalog was distributed as a resource. Christy encouraged all to try and attend a class or two as it would be very beneficial.
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Approval of the Meeting Minutes

Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the February 20, 2008 meeting minutes as submitted.

Chair Report

Christy has been meeting monthly for the last year with the Consumer Recovery Advocacy Coalition of DE — a brochure was provided. Consumers attend the meeting monthly—some have addiction or mental health issues. This group is sponsored by DSAMH and they are given guidelines. Now this group is working more independently; however, DSAMH is still there providing support and guidance where it is needed. The brochure was distributed because the Committee is discussing making some implementations for events prior to October’s mental health month. There will be a smaller event in all three counties so that transportation will be more accessible. A focus group town hall meeting will be provided to promote mental health awareness and the Coalition is behind that effort.

Christy contributed to the development of a survey for patients who discharge from the DE Psychiatric Center (DPC). They are asked certain questions in that survey to make sure that they are receiving appropriate services upon their discharge from DPC. This seems to be an area of weakness. There is a group working with us from the University of PA and there is one more meeting to discuss the final changes and revisions to this survey. DSAMH is developing a position entitled “Peer Support Specialist”. This peer specialist will work with the staff at DPC and the patient to make sure they receive services upon discharge such as medication distribution and independent living skills. Christy believes that there are ten positions that they are hoping to

fill. Originally these positions are volunteer; and they are working on having a paid position in a future budget.

Christy reported that she has a client that is seeking counseling for personal issues. Christy told the client to contact Blue Cross to find out which providers they could access. The client's mother called and the provider will not provide an interpreter. So, now they are back to Step 1 explaining about ADA and where their responsibilities lie in providing an interpreter. Lois added that a private provider that accepts insurance has to provide an interpreter. Then, that provider can forward the interpreter bill to the insurance company. If the client has Medicare, they can receive services from Community Mental Health.

Kirsten gave an update of Connection's services to the deaf and hard of hearing. Kirsten said that there is a small contract for interpreter services from DSAMH. Christy re-sent an e-mail today to Kirsten with concerns about one of her clients that were reported in the last minutes. Christy restated her concerns. Christy had come to Connections for services with a client at 7:30 am and had to sit and wait and wait. Christy had requested an appointment to address the issues one after another. Kirsten said that was an Open Clinic day and that if Christy gives her some feedback, Kirsten will try and figure out a better system. Christy stated that the client has no interest going back to Connections. Kirsten said that if the client is willing now, it will take 3-4 weeks for an appointment. Kirsten and Christy will work this out via e-mail.

Hank added the concerns that he is as he refers DVR clients to Connections independently. So, when a client needs mental health services, they need to access a deaf friendly agency. Is there a person at Connections that has a knowledge of deaf culture and can be assigned to work with deaf clients? Kirsten said that 99% of their clients are hearing people. Kirsten stated that this is part of why she is a member of this Committee so she can get input from the group. When you have a specific incident, please let her know and Connections will work through it moving forward. Hank said that this is a statewide issue and we have addressed this with DSAMH. This is for adolescence and adults as well. Kirsten said that this Committee has struggled to develop the data/numbers that would be to able to present to DSAMH for deaf needs. Kirsten stated that the Deaf Help Center initially had 8-10 clients a day. However, does that fiscally support that level of funding and service? Hank stated that we need to develop a plan to address DSAMH about developing a mental health coordinator position that works with these agencies and educates them on the deaf and hard of hearing.

Christy may have a new client—16 years old—so, who could she refer them for mental health needs in New Castle County. Cliff said that there is an intake line that you can call.

Cliff voiced his concerns on the BHDC membership concerns. Cliff stated that someone on this Committee should be a report directly to Steve Dettwyler at DSAMH. Also, we need to have a representative from the DE School for the Deaf. Cliff feels that with a DSD rep on this Committee, we could make up a survey to distribute to the parents that could get us the data—how many kids have deaf parents, how many have hearing parents and how many have a history of mental health issues. Hank feels that it would be more appropriate to have a DSD school psychologist—that would be aware of the students' backgrounds. Another idea is to write a letter to Ed Bosso and express the desire to have a DSD rep on this Committee with a copy to Jeannie Evans who is a high school psychologist at DSD and Ann Morgan who is the elementary school psychologist. Kirsten feels that it would be better to send a formal letter requesting a DSD representative. Christy said that Rich had come to a committee meeting about 18 months ago. Christy stated that maybe we should ask Kyle to contact Ed Bosso for some feedback.

Cliff said that the second issue is the Committee needs to have people responsible for report-outs. A report out is they are given a task or assignment; and it is their responsibility to deal with that task or assignment; then come back to the Committee and report out; and then close that assignment once it is reported.

Als, a few months ago, there was a very fruitful discussion on interpreters. Discussion was had about the registry, certification and different ways to get parity for deaf persons. This is what we are really talking about — access and communication for mental health. If we do not have committee members responsible for tasks and reporting, then we will not get anything accomplished.

Kyle and Cliff had a very productive discussion with Ollie Cantos who is the Assistant to the U.S. Deputy Attorney General U.S. Ollie is blind; and has many, many resources including several with Gallaudet. Ollie could help us with contacts from Gallaudet to advocate for the deaf.

Cliff stated that another issue is how we can get the data and numbers to show DSAMH that there is a need for deaf persons. Cliff said that DSD is the place to get people to survey. If we take this prospective as a group, Rich or Steve Dettwyler might feel that coming to this committee's meetings are worthwhile.

Therefore, we should involve DSD and find out how practical it is to acquire information either from them or through surveys sent home with the kids to begin a database that makes this Committee's advocacy more scientific.

Following this meeting, Cliff e-mailed Linda the following details on his assignment as follows:

“In keeping with the suggestion that the BHD members need assignments and should be responsible to ‘report-out’ completion or time frame for completion of assignments, Cliff volunteered to take on the following assignment:

WHAT: Research existing surveys and present survey ideas at the next BHD meeting (June 08).

WHO: A survey developed to collect perceptions of parity from deaf/HH community. Carrying out survey will depend on degree of community partner cooperation, i.e., without deaf organization involvement, deaf interpreter involvement, audiologist support, DSD cooperation, etc., this survey will not succeed.

PURPOSE: Survey will be used to define where Deaf/HH do not have parity with other Delawareans in a) Access to services (transportation, communication, Health & Human Services, entertainment), in 2) Access to Jobs, and in 3) Access to educational opportunities.

WHY: a survey of deaf/HH consumers could be used to guide three functional BHD activities: 1) BHD as an information resource, to include behavioral health education and awareness, 2) BHD can advertise and market what is known about the state of knowledge in deaf/HH behavioral health, 3) BHD, and community partners, can advocate for parity in meeting deaf/HH behavioral health needs.

Bottom Line: If BHD evolves and is recognized as doing important work for the deaf/HH community, there will be more interest in broader membership and broader support. We do have control over increasing the importance of our work, and what it can mean to others. We must have a plan and we must work at it. This is a beginning in making a plan and in volunteering to

do some work. This is something I know how to do. This is something I can do, and something I will do.”

Cliff stated for example: Loretta could be a very good resource before the next meeting to be given the assignment of gathering information from Gallaudet regarding employment—bring that to the next meeting—then it would be put in the minutes and become part of the history as a Committee.

Also, Cliff added that this Committee could develop some guidance for interpreting services. Christy added that there was a discussion either at this Committee’s meeting or at the CODHHE meeting about proposing legislation for an Interpreter’s bill. Since there is a shortage of interpreters in Delaware, to enforce certification on them would decrease those numbers. We can take the interpreters that we have and develop their skills.

Christy added that Cliff is correct that we really need to be working on a survey at the next meeting. We need to initiate the first step on the survey so that we can meet these individuals and explain our purpose in a service capacity—and then get that survey out so we can access that data. Christy stated that she has some ideas that she gathered at a Gallaudet conference which would be a good resource.

Cliff noted that he believes that Loretta attended a conference where Matt Denn proposed legislation to pay for hearing aids for children. Matt is very aware of the issue since his son has bi-lateral hearing aids. Matt added that the past way to get the attention of the legislators is for a group of deaf and hard of hearing persons with their families to come to Legislative Hall. If they do not have an interpreter available, this would require advocacy from people in the deaf and hard of hearing community to make this happen.

In conclusion, a letter should be sent to Ed Bosso, re: a representative from DSD attending the June meeting.

Reports/Announcements

Hank announced that next year’s Statewide Deaf and Hard of Hearing Conference sponsored by DVR will be held on April 24 and 25, 2009 and is open to the public. They are encouraging DSAMH, DVI, Goodwill, OCI, Community Mental Health and other service providers to attend. More information (flyers/announcements) will be distributed in July.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kyle Hodges
CODHHE Administrator
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