

**Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Equality  
Behavioral Health Committee Meeting  
July 17, 2012  
Independent Resources, Inc.  
Wilmington, DE  
1:00 pm**

**Present:** Loretta Sarro, DODHH; Christy Hennessey, IRI, Inc.; Karen Miller, Deaf Ministries; Carol Stevens, Deaf Ministries; Josh Weinstein, D.A.D; Kyle Hodges, Staff.

**Guests:** Hebe “Abby” Berger; Mark Campano, DSD

**Interpreters:** Deb Monhollan and Pam D’Occhio

**Approval of the Meeting Minutes**

Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the minutes of the May 15, 2012 meeting as amended as follows: Under Reports/Announcements: Page 3 - Should say Carroll’s Plaza instead of Haslet Building; Page 2 – Delete 2<sup>nd</sup> to last sentence in first paragraph.

**Additions to the Agenda**

- Finalize Meeting Time & Location
- Legislation
- Issue - Group Home After Care for Deaf
- Issues we want to address in the new State Fiscal Year

**Chair Report**

Christy stated that she had contacted DEAFinitions and the search is being done for a presenter to provide a workshop on bullying (including the sign language) intended to broaden interpreters’ knowledge of related terms. Another workshop would benefit consumers (parents, families and students) so they become better informed.

Christy spoke about Mid-Atlantic Behavioral Health in Newark regarding an issue that came up with them not knowing that they need to provide interpreters for deaf clients who are referred to their agency. Christy asked Dara about the list of people they are using to secure interpreters. There will be further discussion and Christy will provide an update on this.

Comment was made about private agencies that receive relay calls and when a request for interpreting is made, they are told to bring an interpreter. They also are not educated on how the process works.

**Business**

**Mental Health Fair**

The next Fair will be held in 2013 (bi-yearly). Kyle referred to several handouts, including a flyer, exhibitor form, and results from evaluations of the first fair held in February, 2011. Kyle commented that there had been previous discussion about collaborating with the ODHH and he had spoken with Andrea Guest and she expressed interested in collaborating with CODHHE. Options discussed were: mental health fair, workshop on bullying or a larger conference incorporating all of these topics and others. Loretta will be meeting with Andrea about this. Possible topics discussed included: bullying, crime and violence, schizophrenia, transition, professional development (clock hours) and CEUs. Mark suggested that more State agencies be involved, which shows collaboration; he added that the more strands included, the more participants. He thinks it best to look what the participants need (CEUs, updated or new information) and have a larger focus than mental health. Kyle suggested that a larger conference including DSCYF, Education, ODHH (Office for Deaf & Hard of Hearing) might be better and draw more people; this involves a lot of planning. The pressing issues would determine the audience.

Mark asked what the goal is and expected outcome of this Committee. Kyle explained the mission of the Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Equality (CODHHE) is to unite, in one Council, advocates and State agency policymakers to ensure the empowerment of individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. Loretta explained that this particular Committee focusses on behavioral health issues and systematic issues, for example, regulations and policy which impact this constituency. This Committee wants to educate the community to improve communication and build access to services. Loretta provided background information on this Committee. Comment was made that a minimum of eight or nine months is needed to plan a large conference. Question was raised if it would be more effective to combine consumers and those interested in professional development. Mark suggested looking at the target audience (those individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing who have mental health issues), the services, supports and resources provided, including training (which would include the content). Collaboration with other agencies would include the latest hot topics or issues that they are interested in and would help with funding sources; then decide on the cost for materials, presenters, etc.

Loretta commented that clarification is needed if we really want a workshop or training focused on mental health or one part of the mental health piece included into a larger conference because she would have to get approval from her supervisor that they will sponsor a conference that included these topics. She asked if the audience we want to draw are from different pieces of behavioral health issues. Mark added that you could have several workshops going on at the same time. Mark explained that this Committee would have the behavioral health strand and set up the structure for the other agencies to plug in their content and govern the overall content. Suggestion was made to have an all-day conference, with the morning being more general, with the afternoon defining four or five specific workshops. Mark suggested setting five-year goals and work backwards and decide which way to start. He added there could be four areas: Behavioral Health, Families, Educators and Interpreters, with workshops in their particular focus area. Kyle commented that CODHHE could be part of the planning. Lois commented that it would be important to invite therapists and intake workers to the conference; a presenter from the outside could present on a national or state level. A common topic could be chosen, for example, bullying, and each specific area would address this issue. Recommendation was made regarding a presenter from Gallaudet University as the keynote speaker.

The target audience for the conference was discussed. Offerings of clock hours, CEUs, lunch, certificates of attendance, welcome packets, door prizes, etc. will draw people. Lois suggested offering the same workshops in the morning and the afternoon so people can attend two different ones in which they have interest. Lois questioned the cost involved in bringing a speaker and having them do two workshops during the day. Topics suggested were bullying, sexual harassment, domestic violence, family education, addictions (including drug, alcohol and gambling), internet safety (including terminology, cyberbullying--for adults and children), legal & medical issues and emergency preparation. These could be compared with other lists and choose two or three related to the deaf and hard of hearing community. Mark suggested having vendor tables available related to the topics and make sure the State's listing of resources is available at the presentations and tables. Items to be considered include topics, audience and facility depending on number of attendees.

Kyle will send an email requesting ideas to CODHHE and this Committee in the next couple of weeks and will see if the ODHH is interested in collaboration. He explained that CODHHE also has some resources. He will request feedback within a couple of weeks. Lois suggested that Christy (as a deaf presenter) do a workshop on legal issues for deaf and hard of hearing in tandem with someone, for example, Brian Hartman and hearing people would benefit from what deaf and hard of hearing experience. Mark suggested a lunch simulation, for example, silent lunch, try to communicate not using spoken language, vision simulators or headphones—it affects people on an emotional level and stays with them longer.

#### Standard Follow-Up Items

- Meeting Times & Dates – Kyle said that this had been discussed previously and also at CODHHE. CODHHE will be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month at 4 pm at DSD. BHC will be held at 1:30 on the same day and location (prior to CODHHE), beginning September 18.
- Northeast Treatment Center – Christy reported that Dara had an one-on-one meeting with the Center regarding a deaf client being denied an interpreter and wants to also have a meeting with the client, but the client wants to have a meeting with the Office of Civil Rights and resolve the situation. The Center admitted they were wrong and Dara provided them with information. Kyle commented that any agencies that contract with DSAMH should have their policies located in a conspicuous place for people to see and Dara was going to follow-up on this.
- Kyle referred to several pieces of legislation: H.B. 314 (signed on 6/19/12), which changes the name of Delaware School for the Deaf to Statewide Programs for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind; S.B. 248, which provides persons who have deafness, hearing loss, or speech disabilities with telecommunications service for analog communications devices (passed, but not yet signed by the Governor) and there will be a surcharge on telephone lines to pay for this service. The Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing will be administering this program. Loretta stated that a meeting with the provider is scheduled for July 24, with implementation taking place in January. Ten people will be added per month and they are required to pay for their own telephone.

#### Other Business

Carol spoke about a lack of appropriate group home placements for deaf people. Staff and the people running a program have no knowledge of working with deaf clients so the turnover rate is high for employees. There also are several out-of-state nursing homes/assisted living places which were resources for deaf people, that are now closing. Carol suggested that an already existing agency could set up a couple of homes staffed that are knowledgeable in working with deaf people and proficient in signing. There is a need to improve the training that current agencies have and that staff be required to be fluent in sign language. Kyle asked how many people are in group homes that are deaf. Carol explained that to her knowledge, there have been four people, but thinks the number is higher.

Abby explained her involvement with United Healthcare and distributed her business card. Her agency is a provider for Medicaid clients and involved in community-based services, including personal attendant services and those transitioning from nursing homes. Several other Committee members gave Abby their business card.

### **Reports/Announcements**

Carol spoke about a workshop on communication resources on August 8 or 9 at Delaware State University sponsored by Division of Developmental Disabilities Services. A flyer was provided.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting ended at 3:05 pm. The next meeting will be Tuesday, September 18, 2012 - 1:30 pm, Delaware School for the Deaf, Newark.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jo Singles  
Administrative Specialist  
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