

CODHHE MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, May 16, 2007
6:30 PM – Delaware School for the Deaf
Newark, Delaware

MEMBERS PRESENT: Richard Pelletier, Chair, DSD; Christy Hennessey, IRI; Loretta Sarro, DODHH; Julia Sullivan, HLADE; Terry Whitham, DSP; and Kyle Hodges, Staff

MEMBERS ABSENT: Diana Armstead, Advocate; Joe Drexler, WCD; Peg Stewart, Interpreter/Advocate

INTERPRETERS

Lois Steele
Alyx Richardson

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

- June meeting and Emergency Preparedness

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was stated that Christy Hennessey was not present at the March 21 meeting. On page 3, delete the last sentence regarding CapTel. Also, on Page 6, it should be added that the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the March 21, 2007 meeting minutes as amended.

TREASURER’S REPORT

There was no Treasurer’s Report as Peg was not at the meeting.

BUSINESS

Interpreter Bill

Kyle passed out a brief overview of what some of the other states are doing in the context of requiring licensing or certification of interpreters. Betsy Tucker had contacted Kyle to determine if the Council was addressing this. Kyle noted that CODHHE had discussions on this issue, but had never moved forward on it. Betsy was going to attend the meeting to address this issue, but was unable to attend. Kyle asked Loretta to explain to the members about this.

It was asked if there was ever anything brought to the Delaware legislature. Kyle replied that he was not aware of anything. Loretta replied that at one time the ratio of students versus interpreters at the Sterck School was presented to the legislators. Loretta is not familiar with the NAD bills. Kyle is familiar with a bill which requires interpreters for specific state events (e.g. the Governor's State of the State address). Kyle is not sure if there is a process or procedure in place for a person who is deaf or hard of hearing to testify at a legislative committee meeting.

Christy and Loretta serve on a Mental Health Sub-Committee in which Dr. Myers has provided a needs assessment. In turn, the needs assessment was sent to Renata Henry, Division Director for the Division of Mental Health (DSAMH), who had expressed concerns about securing appropriate interpreters for mental health settings. Renata reviewed the draft and contacted Christy. Christy invited Loretta and someone else to discuss the needs assessment with Renata. There was a paragraph about interpreter policies. DSAMH has a policy with a lot of different components. Basically, it is about foreign language interpreters and does not appear to be very clear. There is nothing mentioned about sign language interpreters; so, we want to make sure that there is appropriate language in the policy for deaf people. Renata was not willing to contact another private agency in the mental health field to find out what their policy was on interpreters. Renata was concerned that others would ask what the state policy is for interpreters and what the official rules are for the state. And, there is no State policy or law for any kind of sign language interpreters. Renata asked if CODHHE could do something about this situation. Loretta asked her supervisor, HarrietAnn, if she could research this issue; and HarrietAnn gave her Loretta permission to do this. Loretta went back a few years to see what other states had done for regulations, rules or policies. Rich said that the NAD has all that information available so Loretta doesn't have to invest all that time doing research. Rich said that there is an interpreter Model bill/legislation. Loretta explained to all about the clarification between a RID Certified Interpreter and a Certificate Training program. A certified interpreter passes a national test on skills and competencies. Council gave permission for Alyx to step out of her interpreter role – she stated that there is no requirement/law pertaining to interpreters in Delaware. The issue is to pass a law in Delaware for people who are deaf and what is a certified interpreter. And, if you are certified in another state, you should be automatically certified in Delaware to practice and call yourself an interpreter.

Kyle asked what Loretta's office wants and what is the CODHHE's role. Rich said that he will contact NAD to get information to bring back to the next CODHHE's meeting. Rich feels that CODHHE should initiative this bill with the information from NAD. Kyle says that CODHHE can initiate a bill; but what does Renata actually want.

It was stated that the issue of licensing will also add to the confusion. If you work in the state of Delaware, you are supposed to have a Delaware business license. It was stated that in Pennsylvania they have a list of people that are certified in the State. Because interpreters are independent contractors, they are responsible to monitor themselves and this has been a success. The agency is not responsible because these people are independent contractors.

Loretta added that since we do not have state regulations for interpreters in Delaware, the hospitals and agencies need to negotiate their agreement with interpreters. It was stated that we may lose some interpreters if the interpreter bill passes in Delaware because we do not have many interpreters and many are not certified.

To summarize, Rich will check with NAD on the interpreter bill and licensing. Loretta's office will develop an information (fact) sheet to provide to state agencies on the differences of various interpreters—certified, qualified or whatever it may be. When Betsy has time, Loretta will sit down and discuss this information with her. Kyle stated he believes this is what may be the type of information that Renata and other state agencies are looking for.

Visor Card Update

Kyle gave the following update:

Terry and Kyle met with the representatives from the State Police and showed them the draft visor card. The State Police liked the idea and had one suggestion on wording; so basically, we have their approval to move forward. The next step is to go to the Police Chief's Council so we can get buy-in from all the police departments in Delaware. We will get their suggestions and then we can move forward to get a final card. After that, we will take it to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Division Director, Andrea Guest, to determine if the visor card could be distributed through Loretta's Office. Terry left a message with the President of the Police Chief's Council asking if we can get a meeting soon and move forward with the visor card. Who pays the cost of the visor card has yet to be determined. Terry said the expenses will be nominal. Kyle said once we get to that point, the Colonel of the State Police thought it would be good to issue a press release with a photo shot and have an article in the newspaper.

Brochure Update

Kyle gave the following update:

In your hand-outs today, there are three cost estimates for the brochure.

Peg and Kyle met with the State of Delaware's Government Support Services. Proofs will be made hopefully by the next meeting. Kyle will bring the proofs to the next meeting so we can decide on the final version.

CapTel Update

Kyle noted that there is a hand-out in today's packet of a letter, received after our last meeting, from Jim Cole to Rich with an attachment of summaries from other States. Kyle said maybe we can use a combination of Julie's and Jim's information. Rich passed out information with an estimate from the Census Bureau of people who have difficulty hearing. It states that, in Delaware, 30,603 "have difficulty hearing normal conversation" and 258 are "unable to hear normal conversation". Kyle has not received any other statistics from Linda Heller.

Julie added that Rhode Island had 35,000 to 40,000 relay calls a month. Julia will clarify with Rhode Island on "CapTel relay costs" and whether the phone is included.

Terry clarified that the Internet protocol is a lot faster and cheaper. The analog requires 2 phones which costs more. Terry added that with the work that Julie has done and the information Rich has provided, we now need to determine how to fund the telephones, obtain seed money and get a sponsor for a bill. Kyle said we need to find a state that has established legislation and develop a bill. Kyle also added that if you need a fiscal note and when there is money involved it is very hard to get passed. Kyle noted that it would be better to wait to come to the State Council for Persons with Disabilities once legislation is drafted.

Kyle clarified that the 211 bill does not apply to this issue. That is a bill which sets up the 211 number so it can be called to access some types of human services agencies 24 hours a day. Terry said the 211 bill has gone through the House and now is in the Senate and the Governor is going to sign it. Kyle added that \$250,000 is in the Governor's budget, but the "budget bill" has not passed at this point.

Emergency Preparedness

Art Paul, with the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) addressed a committee on emergency preparedness about the DENS (Delaware Emergency Notification System). This is a system that calls people's phones in an emergency situation. They want to make sure that their system is compatible

with TTYs. Art spoke with Loretta and Kyle about getting some numbers to test the system. Kyle had asked Rich, Linda and Loretta to give him their TTY phone numbers. Art was going to send Kyle a protocol on how they would test the system, but Kyle has not received it yet. Terry noted that the other day they just did a test.

Loretta added that Donna Platt, Manager of the Washington State 9-1-1/TTY Education Program at the Hearing Speech and Deafness Center in Seattle, Washington contacted her through a video phone for more information on the Emergency Preparedness in Delaware since she received a copy of the Delaware Office for the Deaf and hard of Hearing newsletter from Eric Raff, Executive Director of the Washington State Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Donna said the deaf community in Washington State had different sign-ups—emergency notification, through pager or e-mail (or you can be notified both ways). Terry added that Washington State is trying to do the similar testing process as Delaware.

Kyle asked for Julia and Christy's TTY #s--Julia's TTY is 230-1610 and Christy's TTY # at IRI is 765-0194.

REPORTS FROM ORGANIZATIONS ON CODHHE

Julie reported on HLDA. Christy reported on IRI. Rich reported on DAD which is having a Community Day.

OTHER BUSINESS

Kyle will check to see if it is time for the CODHHE Election of Officers and it was noted that the next meeting will be June 13 at 6:30 pm at the Delaware School for the Deaf in Newark. Food will be provided.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Kyle Hodges
CODHHE Administrator

CODHHE/minmay07.doc