

**CODHHE MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, May 21, 2008  
6:30 PM – Delaware School for the Deaf  
Newark, Delaware

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Richard Pelletier, Chair, DSD; Linda Heller, HLADE; Loretta Sarro, DODHH; Peg Stewart, Advocate;; and Kyle Hodges, Staff

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Joe Drexler, WCD; Christy Hennessey, IRI and Terry Whitham, DSP

**GUEST:**

State Representative Gerald Brady

**INTERPRETERS**

Lois Steele  
Peg Stewart

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

- None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the April 2, 2008 minutes as submitted.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

Peg provided March and April, 2008 reports.

The balance of accounts as of March 31, 2008: Money Market Account: \$9,706.08.

The balance of accounts as of April 30, 2008: Money Market Account: \$9,709.27.

Peg is in the process of transferring the \$8,000 into a CD. Peg, however, needs to know CODHHE's incorporation status and the IRS 501C(3) status in hand for Artisans' Bank. Kyle will find out the incorporation status and Peg will be in touch with the IRS for the 501C(3) status.

## **BUSINESS**

### HB 355 (Hearing Aid Insurance Bill) – Representative Gerald Brady

Linda Heller thanked the members for inviting Representative Gerald Brady and she to the meeting tonight. The Hearing Loss Association of Delaware (HLADE) has introduced this legislation along with Rep. Brady as a sponsor along with other legislators. A copy of HB 355 has been provided as a hand-out in today's packet. Linda provided a hand-out and overview on HB 355 from HLADE—

#### Hearing Aid Insurance for Delaware's Children House Bill 355

The time has come for Delaware to help kids who need hearing aids!

“We give help and hope to people with hearing loss through information, education, advocacy and support”

#### How Many Kids Need Help?

- We can only estimate!
- Only kids with a significant hearing loss need hearing aids
- A rough estimate is there are about 504 kids tracked by the Department of Education with hearing loss + 100 more
- Many children already have hearing aids but some children do not, mostly low-income

#### House Bill 355

- Amends Chapter 33, Title 18, adds a Section 3357 for Hearing Aid Coverage
- Defines Hearing aid as any “non-experimental device to aid hearing
- Excludes batteries, cord, ALDs, but not FM
- Covers \$1,000/aid/ear every 3 years
- Covers children birth through age 24
- Covers Insurance policy dependents/riders

#### Why Help Kids Now?

- HLADE has received many calls from parents who cannot afford hearing aids
- The price of hearing aids have gone up to as much as \$3,000/aid
- Child Watch, DVR, Medicaid are only a payer of last resort-Medical claim denials

- Schools prohibit professionals from recommending hearing aids or other devices to help kids hear in school

#### What Can You Do to Help?

- Write letter/e-mail to Representative Brady
- Contact your Senator
- Go to Legislative hall on June 3<sup>rd</sup> in the afternoon—testify or visit legislators
- Sign up for HLADE HB 355 Action Alerts at [hlade@comcast.net](mailto:hlade@comcast.net)

#### House Bill 355

The time has come for Delaware to help kids who need hearing aids!

Rep. Brady and HLADE Thank You for Your Help!

Representative Brady and Linda Heller encouraged all to take extra copies to give to other interested parties. Peg noted that this has gone out electronically to several. Letters of support are being solicited from organizations and interested parties.

Motion was made, seconded and approved to write a letter endorsing HB 355.

#### DMV Regulations Regarding “Translators”

Kyle provided a hand-out of Brian Hartman’s preliminary analysis of these regulations. The first couple of comments pertain to interpreters and people that are deaf that use interpreter’s.

“First, the regulations literally apply to “driver license applicants who cannot read or speak English.” This would encompass many Deaf individuals who communicate with ASL or signed English. As applied to the Deaf, the standards would ostensibly violate Title II of the American with Disabilities Act in multiple respects.

- A. Section 5.3 requires a translator to “sit in the rear of the vehicle and relay instructions to the applicant”. Query how a Deaf driver could observe signing from someone sitting in the back seat.
- B. Sections 5.0 and 7.0 contemplate that the applicant must provide any interpreter at the applicant’s expense. This is no authorization for the DMV to provide a Deaf interpreter. Public entities must ensure effective communication. Interpreters must generally be provided if communication is lengthy or complex. In the context of the road test, which requires the applicant to follow discrete instructions from the

DMR representative while driving a vehicle in traffic, an interpreter should be offered.”

The SCPD recommends writing a letter consistent with the above observations. Kyle did tell the SCPD that he wanted to share this with CODHHE and get any additional input. If you agree with the above observations, the letter will come from both Councils.

Peg stated that regarding observation A—the DSD does provide an interpreter to sit in the back seat during the deaf student’s driver’s education. Peg believes that at one time, there was something in writing about deaf and hard of hearing communication.

In summary, Kyle will write a letter from SPCD and the CODHHE to include the following: Recommend that DMV develop separate regulations regarding the use of interpreters for Deaf and Hard of Hearing driver license applicants. The Councils welcome the opportunity to provide technical assistance to the Division. Motion was made, seconded and approved to write a letter with the recommendations above.

#### Brochure

Kyle stated that the brochure is done and Kyle will bring them to the June meeting. Kyle will send Rich a copy electronically.

#### Visor Card

Kyle reported that as of this time there is not a lot to update. Kyle is waiting for the Department of Safety and Homeland Security’s (DSHS) Public Information Officer to determine the path forward (e.g. press conference). Kyle may contact DSHS and tell them that the Delaware Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is anxious to move this along and they are willing to plan the press conference—do you want that office to take the lead? The cost of printing the first 1,000 brochures will be covered by DVR.

#### BHD Committee (BHDC)

Kyle reported that Helen McDonnell from DSAMH used to be a representative on the BHDC. Helen will be out for an indefinite time and they are not sure of her work status. Kyle has been corresponding with Steve Dettwyler to have another DSAMH staff member attend in Helen’s place. Kyle wrote that he understands staff issues, but believes that it is critical that DSAMH be a regular participant on this committee, especially given that the reason for its existence under CODHHE was at the behest, in part, of DSAMH. Steve responded that he understands how this came into being, but that was in 2003 and their process of strategic planning and service development has changed substantially over the years. This has made the original need for this group somewhat redundant. Steve would not suggest that the group not meet; but DSAMH will no longer routinely

participate as it has historically. If the BHDC continues to meet, please send them an agenda in advance for review and they will send a representative when they feel it will assist them in their planning. He thinks that the periodic meetings they have with representatives of the DHH community and advocates is helpful and he would urge us to work the Governor's Advisory Committee on addressing systems needs at that level.

Kyle stated that one approach would be to become a member of the Governor's Advisory Committee. This could be an option if the BHDC decides to join this Committee. Kyle wanted to bring this to the full CODHHE.

Loretta stated that she does not know how Helen McDonnell got appointed to the BHDC. Linda Heller stated that Helen was asked to be a member of the BHDC because it was a desire of the BHDC to have a representative that understood about clinical expertise and knew how the mental health clinics worked. And, Steve did not seem to know about the BHDC. Loretta stated that there is a Strategic Planning Committee under the Consumer Advisory Leadership group staffed by Penny with mental health services in general for all persons. Loretta is a member of this Committee for the Strategic Plan. Andrea Guest is a member of the DSAMH Advisory Council.

Kyle said that Steve did know about the BHDC and Helen was bringing back information. Kyle suggested that Steve attend one of the meetings to explain his rationale on not wanting to be a part of the BHDC.

In summary, Loretta will discuss these issues with Andrea. Kyle also stated that this will be discussed at the next BHDC meeting.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kyle gave a hand-out from the Dover Post on "DPH trains interpreters in case of emergency". A contact number is included.

HLADE—this is better speech and hearing month. Numerous activities are going on this month. One is the Governor's proclamation signed for "Better Speech and Hearing Month." Anyone is welcome to be a member of HLADE.

DSD—graduation is on June 6 at 7 pm at the Sterck School. Rich stated that 11 students are graduating. No completion date for the new school has been issued.

### OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will be held on June 18 at 6:30 pm at the Delaware School for the Deaf, Newark. Our usual end-of-the year dinner will be provided.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Kyle Hodges  
CODHHE Administrator

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