

**Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Equality  
Behavioral Health Committee Meeting  
May 15, 2012  
Independent Resources, Inc.  
Wilmington, DE  
1:00 pm**

**Present:** Loretta Sarro, DODHH; Christy Hennessey, IRI, Inc.; Dara Schumaier, DSAMH; Kyle Hodges, Staff.

**Interpreters:** Carol Stevens and Deb Monhollan

**Approval of the Meeting Minutes**

Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the minutes of the November 20, 2012 meeting as submitted.

**Additions to the Agenda**

Dara spoke about the following changes due to the Settlement Agreement between the Department of Justice and the State of Delaware that started in July, 2011:

**Current Providers for DSAMH:**

- Connections
- Horizon House
- Psychotherapeutic Services, Inc. (PSI), Fellowship Health Resources (FHR) –Contracts Ending

**New Providers:** Anka and RHD. A third contract provider is possible.

Dara provided background information on the Settlement Agreement. Loretta spoke about the feedback given by the State Council for Persons with Disabilities regarding transitioning and follow through when people are reentered into the community. Dara commented that it was important for DSAMH to be aware of needs of all communities, including the deaf community. Kyle. Loretta explained that this Committee is now putting focus on services for children and adults, and pulling in resources and representatives from DSCYF agencies, different mental health and behavioral agencies whenever possible.

**Chair Report**

There was no Chair Report.

**Business**

**Warmline Program at the RVSC**

Kyle explained that Alan Conover was to attend the meeting today to discuss this. Kyle commented that Karen Miller from the Committee was interested in having this program in Delaware. Kyle said that RVSC has something similar in place and the Committee wanted to get more information to see if these are similar programs or could be added, or if anything more needs to be done. Kyle will try to reconnect with Alan. Kyle stated that he had also been in contact with Penny Chelucci of DSAMH's Peer Support Program and she could not attend today's meeting and the March meeting was cancelled. Dara noted that a contract had been signed by Bryce Hewlett to be the new Executive Director of the Delaware Consumer Coalition. Kyle asked if would be beneficial to have Penny and Bryce attend a future meeting to give an update on what the two groups are doing. Agreement was made to revisit this at a later time.

### Celebrate Recovery

Carol spoke about a 12-Step Program and includes a wide range of issues that is religious based and is deaf sensitive, but open to everyone. They meet weekly at Praise Assembly and have been in operation for about eight months. An interpreter volunteers at these meetings. Kyle asked if the two groups could interact. Carole shared information with Dara.

### Adults with Hearing Loss Related to Bullying, Facebook and Domestic Violence

Loretta explained that she is receiving a lot of emails about this issue from parents who are deaf and the need for them to understand this issue inclusively, including vocabulary, in order for them to gain an understanding so they can help their children. Loretta suggested having a workshop for deaf parents as soon as possible. Loretta stated all of these issues, including awareness needs to be increased regarding social networking, for example, Facebook. Loretta spoke about DOE's policy regarding all schools regarding awareness, but added that deaf parents may not realize what is happening at school or home; if communication is a barrier, it causes a larger problem. The workshop would increase the parents' knowledge of social networking. Kyle asked how domestic violence would fit into this. Loretta explained that there would have to be different topics at the workshop to cover these issues. Loretta added that the expectation is that when the parents leave, they know what to do about these topics.

Kyle suggested having a ½ day workshop and reaching out to Hands & Voices since they do a lot of work in the schools, including Wendy Strauss of GACEC (the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens). Loretta will contact these two groups; if they are interested, we can work collectively to accomplish this. Kyle recommended that this idea be brought up to the full CODHHE group since it is not only addressing behavioral issues. Loretta recommended having a meeting in the summer and hold the workshop in the fall. Carol also recommended having a person present who could tell their own personal story, which will be more impactful. She will provide this information to Kyle and Loretta. Agreement was made to discuss this at the CODHHE meeting tomorrow.

### Sign Language Interpreters Related to Bullying, Facebook and Domestic Violence

Loretta explained that one workshop could be geared toward adults on how to teach interpreters on the vocabulary relating to social networking, bullying and domestic violence when interpreting. This would reduce the risk of the interpreter not knowing how to explain. Loretta suggested that it could be done here at IRI, Inc. and count toward CEU's. Christy suggested

contacting an interpreting agency so they could include it as a topic in a workshop (for example, DEAFinitions). Loretta asked for feedback. She added that it can be connected to a wide range of issues and would increase the interpreter's abilities. Loretta explained that interpreters could attend a workshop on what is the sign for a specific word, for example, Facebook. Agreement was made to bring this up at the CODHHE meeting tomorrow and will be added to the agenda.

### Mental Health Fair

Kyle spoke about the Mental Health Fair held last year at DSD and gave background information. He stated that agreement had been made to have another one in 2013 and we need to start planning now if we still one to have one. Kyle added that Della should be included in the planning. Christy commented about the lack of State agency representation and how they can increase their knowledge. Kyle suggested giving lots of notice. Dara can reach out to DSAMH. Kyle commented that we also need regular attendance at these Committee meetings. Kyle will add this to the agenda for the next meeting and give a heads-up to those who could not attend today's meeting to bring their ideas; he will also invite Della to attend. Loretta will research and connect with others to get workshop ideas before the next meeting, including a theme and presentation at the Fair.

### Other Business

Kyle asked if this Committee could piggyback with CODHHE's meeting dates and suggested this group meet prior to the CODHHE meeting (usually held on 6:30 pm on Wednesdays every other month) and suggested 4:30 pm as a possible time. Kyle will poll this Committee and also discuss at the CODHHE meeting tomorrow. Loretta commented that this may increase attendance at both meetings.

### Reports/Announcements

Loretta stated that DVR recently had a public meeting in Dover at the Carroll's Plaza. Christy spoke about a deaf client going to the Northeast Treatment Center to get some assistance and were refused an interpreter and sent home. A complaint was filed against the agency (which receives federal funding) with the U.S. Civil Rights Office. Dara commented that DSAMH needs to be informed since they contract with this agency and are in the process of ending their contract. Kyle stated that if the State is contracting with these providers, they have a responsibility as overseer that the providers they contract with abide and do what they are supposed to do. Christy asked if they had a Communication Policy in place. Dara commented that she thought there was a policy in place, but will confirm that it is in the contract. Kyle asked for a copy of the contract boiler plate; Dara responded that the language is currently being revised for all new contracts. Dara also said that the Detox contract is currently out for bid and includes language about communication and grievances that apply in this instance. She will confirm this with their Contract person (Fran Anderson). Kyle noted that the DPC Interpreter Policy included most of the recommendations that CODHHE had recommended. Christy will inform Dara of any other situations that happen similar to this one. Carol asked if there could be a meeting with this Committee and the agencies they contract with to give them sensitivity about deaf people and getting interpreters, etc. because it could be that Northeast does have a policy in place, but the front desk person was not informed about it. These meetings might alleviate some of these situations from happening. Carol noted that there is not one person in Delaware who is

fluent in sign language and can provide therapy without having to use interpreters except in the schools. Dara commented that if she is informed about a situation, she can fix the problem that day and also said that DSAMH may have to request that the agencies post their communication policy; currently they are requested to post their grievance policy. Dara added that this would apply to not only people who do not hear, but for those for whom English is not their first language and have limited English proficiency. Kyle commented that posting would be a good standard, similar to what the State Service Centers posts. Dara will follow-up on this.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting ended at 2:04 pm. The next meeting will be Tuesday, July 17, 1:00 pm at IRI in Wilmington.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jo Singles  
Administrative Specialist  
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