

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH)
Mental Health Advisory Committee Meeting

Draft I, current version as of 05.30.2025

Date: Thursday, May 29, 2025

Time: 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Location: NCDHH, Lincoln, 4600 Valley Road, Meeting Room 4B

Interpreters: Ben Sparks, Meghan Cassidy

Minutes: Kendall Couture

CART: N/A

Members Present: Briana Stradinger, Scott Loder

NCDHH Staff Present: Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell, Kendall Couture

Technical Advisors Present: Diane Meyer

Members Absent: Cody McEvoy, Erik Decker

Technical Advisors Absent: Erika Ziemann, Sara Peterson, Ronda Rankin

I. Meeting Call to Order:

Ms. Briana Stradinger called the meeting to order at 2:06 PM.

Ms. Stradinger announced that notice of the meeting was duly given, posted, published, and tendered in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, and all committee members received notice via email. The agenda was kept current and available at the Commission's office and website. Materials used for the meeting were made available in a public folder in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. Publication of official notice of the meeting appeared in a legal documents, local documents and general circulation in this state, as required by the Open Meetings Act.

II. Approval of the Agenda:

Due to lack of quorum, no motion could be made to approve the agenda.

III. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:

Due to lack of quorum, no motions could be made. Approval of minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

IV. NCDHH Agency Updates:

- **NCDHH Changes Pending Board Approval**

- Ms. Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell shared that several updates are pending board approval, including a change in her title from “Behavioral Health Coordinator” to “Behavioral Health Liaison.” She also introduced Kendall Couture, the Commission’s new Marketing and Communications Specialist. Ms. Couture spoke about upcoming initiatives including a statewide content guide, internal communication strategy, and use of social media as a tool for education, advocacy, and outreach.

- **Upcoming Events/Initiatives**

- Ms. Yodogawa-Campbell also shared plans for the September 27 “Out of the Darkness” suicide prevention walk in Omaha. A team will be formed to represent NCDHH and include participants across the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, and hearing communities. Committee members discussed shirt designs and public awareness efforts tied to the event.
 - In partnership with Region 6, NCDHH is also planning a Recovery Awareness event on September 12 at the Omaha Association of the Deaf (OAD). The event will be a hybrid (Zoom and in-person) presentation focused on lived experiences of deaf and hard of hearing individuals in recovery. Flyers and outreach efforts are underway.
 - Additionally, an Emergency Preparedness Training is scheduled for September 13 in Omaha, in collaboration with the National Weather Service, Douglas County Health, and Sarpy County agencies. The training will focus on communication access during natural disasters.
 - The agency is also preparing a Deaf Culture and Sensitivity Training for Omaha Police Department and Douglas County Sheriff’s Office in early October, funded by a grant from the Omaha Community Foundation.
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V. Committee Member Updates:

- **Improving Access and Empowering Self-Advocacy**

- Mr. Scott Loder shared a recent experience advocating for a Deaf patient within a hospital system. Equipment requested to support communication access was denied due to confidentiality and cybersecurity concerns. Mr. Loder expressed

frustration with the lack of institutional awareness and sensitivity, and asked for support in identifying best practices and advocacy approaches.

- A group discussion followed about the need to improve self-advocacy among Deaf individuals and educate service providers. Members expressed interest in hosting workshops for both Deaf and hearing communities on legal rights, interpreter request procedures, and ADA-compliant communication.
- The committee discussed creating a referral list of Deaf-friendly providers and institutions with existing knowledge of working with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Harley Orthodontics and CHI Emanuel were named as examples.

- **Recruitment and Training of ASL-Fluent Providers**

- Mr. Loder suggested potential incentives for behavioral health professionals to become ASL-fluent or pursue interpreter training. He also proposed contacting DHHS about loan forgiveness or tax credit programs for providers with relevant qualifications.
- Ms. Yodogawa-Campbell and others expressed interest in outreach to universities like Gallaudet, NTID, and CSUN to recruit ASL-fluent therapists or encourage Nebraska licensure.
- Committee members also discussed the potential for interpreter trainings specifically focused on mental health terminology, trauma-informed communication, and emotional boundary setting. The possibility of a certified specialty track was brought up.

- **Community Engagement and Mental Health Awareness**

- Ms. Stradinger shared updates on the NABOA Deaf Night Out project and suggested incorporating short mental health awareness segments into these community events. Mr. Loder suggested presenting statistics on mental health in the Deaf community and normalizing access to care.
- Ms. Meyer emphasized the importance of educating both individuals and family members, including public service announcements on accessible services like the 988 crisis line with ASL support. She also recommended partnering with TV and radio services that are federally required to offer free community service messaging.
- The committee expressed interest in developing a recognition system for Deaf-friendly businesses and providers. This could include website listings or in-office signage, with categories such as dental, vision, hospitals, etc.

- **Behavioral Health Resources and Website Updates:**

- Ms. Yodogawa-Campbell confirmed that the behavioral health provider list on the agency's website is outdated and under review. She expressed the goal of removing the list in favor of directing individuals to verified, accessible, and ASL-fluent providers or resources. A new webpage format is being developed in collaboration with Ms. Couture.

- **Membership, Quorum, and Meeting Format Discussion:**

- Due to ongoing challenges with achieving quorum, committee members discussed strategies to increase attendance, including:
 - Hybrid meeting options (in-person with Zoom access)
 - Recruiting rural and western Nebraska members
 - Revisiting bylaws regarding member absences
 - Adding new members pending board approval
 - Ms. Meyer announced that she plans to retire at the end of the 2025–2026 school year. Ms. Stradinger and Ms. Meyer discussed contacting Abby from ESU-7 as a potential replacement, as she is hard of hearing and located in Omaha.
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VI. Next Meeting Date:

Thursday, August 28, 2025, at 2:00 PM, Omaha

VII. Meeting Adjournment:

Ms. Briana Stradinger adjourned the meeting at 3:30 PM.