

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH)

Mental Health Advisory Committee Meeting

Approved 08.27.2026

Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025

Time: 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Location: Omaha SOB Room 227

Interpreters: Pamela Duncan and Deb Teller

Minutes: Gina Petersen

CART: N/A

Members Present: Cody McEvoy, Scott Loder, Erik Decker

NCDHH Staff Present: Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell, Kyle Miers

Technical Advisors Present:

Members Absent: Briana Stradinger

Technical Advisors Absent: Erica Ziemann, Diane Meyers, Sara Peterson, Ronda Rankin

I. Meeting call to order:

Mr. Cody McEvoy called the meeting to order at 2:26 PM.

Mr. McEvoy announced the notice of the meeting was duly given, posted, published, and tendered in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, and all board members received notice simultaneously by email. 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:

Ms. Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell notified the group of a typo on the agenda, advising everyone to correct the spelling of Gina Petersen's last name from an "o-n" to an "e-n." Mr. Erik Decker made a motion to accept the agenda as amended, seconded by Mr. Scott Loder. With no further discussion, the motion carried with all voting ayes.

III. Approval of prior meeting minutes

Mr. Erik Decker made the motion to approve the minutes from February 15, 2024, seconded by Mr. Scott Loder. With no further discussion, the motion carried with all

voting ayes. Mr. Loder made the motion to approve the minutes from May 16, 2024, and August 15, 2024, seconded by Mr. Decker. With no further discussion, the motion carried with all voting ayes. Mr. Decker made the motion to approve the minutes from November 14, 2024, seconded by Mr. Loder. With no further discussion, the motion carried with all voting ayes.

IV. Discussion:

- **Purpose of MHAC and by-laws**

- Ms. Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell explained to the group that she found in her research some things the committee wanted to change but were never given to the board for approval, so she included those materials for review as it is a new year. The two biggest proposals were changing the “Mental Health Specialist” title to “Behavioral Health Coordinator” and meeting twice a year instead of four times.
- Mr. Erik Decker stated that he would be fine with continuing with the change from “Mental Health Specialist” to “Behavioral Health Coordinator.”
- Mr. Kyle Miers suggested a review of the by-laws to make sure the committee is in line with statutory and legal requirements before proposing to the full board.
- Ms. Yodogawa-Campbell asked Mr. Cody McEvoy if he was present at the time that the mental health survey was completed. Mr. McEvoy responded that he was, and that the previous director along with Linda Witmuss developed a needs assessment, but nothing ever came of it.
- Mr. Decker suggested conducting an annual needs assessment to keep up with changing populations and community growth, to which Mr. Miers asked for Mr. Decker to share that process with NCDHH later on.

- **Co-chair**

- Ms. Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell shared that Ms. Briana Stradinger will be out on maternity leave soon, so the committee needs a co-chair in her absence.
- Mr. Erik Decker motioned to have Mr. Cody McEvoy chair the meetings in Ms. Stradinger’s absence. With no further discussion, the motion carried with all voting ayes.

- **MH (using VLOGs, social media, newsletters to get the message out)**

- Mr. Cody McEvoy discussed a conversation he had with Ms. Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell in which they discussed the lack of access that the

Deaf and Hard of Hearing community has to information. Mr. McEvoy opened up the room for any ideas on how to improve that.

- Ms. Yodogawa-Campbell shared her thoughts on why it would be important for the committee to work on providing access, as it is a very challenging mental health time for many individuals, and it is easy to become overwhelmed by all the changes, especially with communication access cutoff at the federal level.
- Mr. Scott Loder agreed with Ms. Yodogawa-Campbell but warned that being able to give people trustworthy news is a challenge in of itself, but it is important to give the people that the committee is advocating for the news as absolute truth.
- Mr. Kyle Miers suggested developing some guidelines as opposed to creating “dos” and “don’ts” and deferring to other sources that do supply such information so that the commission can maintain its key role rather than doing all of the work.
- Mr. Loder emphasized the importance of self-care, to which Ms. Yodogawa agreed and stated that it is one of the things that should be promoted by the agency. Mr. Loder followed up by mentioning the dangers of social media, to which Mr. Miers and Mr. McEvoy agreed that it is a challenge.
- Ms. Yodogawa-Campbell shared that the conversation has given her some good ideas for what to include on a survey. A big part of what she wanted to discuss is what does this committee really want to do and build upon mental and behavioral health in the community.
- Ms. Yodogawa-Cambell emphasized the importance of interpreter mental health in addition to the community. Mr. Miers agreed, stating that there is a ripple effect that takes place when interpreters aren’t taken care of.
- Mr. Decker asked if the committee could find a way to incentivize the interpreting profession. Mr. McEvoy mentioned one challenge being that the only interpreter training program in Nebraska is at University of Nebraska at Omaha.
- Mr. Loder asked the group if the committee is allowed to have guests present at the meeting, to which Ms. Yodogawa-Campbell said absolutely. MR. Loder then suggested having the administrator for the office of consumer affairs come to the next meeting to learn more about some of the needs in the behavioral health services population.

- **Update BH resources on Agency Website**

- Ms. Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell stated that the website is very outdated, for example when it comes to the list of therapists, most of those people

aren't even practicing or are not in this state. Additionally, very few are ASL fluent.

- **Community involvement and engagement**

V. NCDHH Agency Updates

- Executive director [management team] reports
 - Mr. Kyle Miers introduced himself as the new executive director for The Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. For the next year there will be a lot of reviewing with the agency, figuring out goals and intentions, talking with stakeholders, and develop a strategic plan for 2026 going forward. Ms. Miers shared that he has had the opportunity to take a look at the agency and the roles and responsibilities within and identifying what that reputation is and getting it out there. Mr. Miers stated that he does not have a whole lot of updates from the agency yet, but that is the plan going forward.
- Behavioral Health Coordinator Reports
 - 6-month probation/2024 recap
 - 2025 enrichment grant workshop

VI. Committee Member Updates

- Mr. Cody McEvoy shared with the group on behalf of absent technical advisor Ronda Rankin that Deaf Centric Hospital will be taking place in April. The purpose of Deaf Centric Hospital is to get incoming medical providers to understand what lack of communication looks like.

VII. Next Meeting Date

- May 29, 2025, 2:00 PM

VIII. Meeting Adjournment:

- Mr. Cody McEvoy adjourned the meeting at 4:07 PM