Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

**Mental Health Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Date:** May 11, 2016  
**Time:** 2pm – 4pm  
**Location:** 4600 Valley Rd, Classroom 4A, Lincoln, NE  
**Interpreters:** Sharon Sinkler & Crystal Pierce  
**Minutes:** Cindy Woldt  
**CART:** Margaret “Mydge” Heaney / Exclusive Reporting

**Present:** Ms. Jill Bird, Ms. Vicki Steinhauer – Campbell, Ms. Kathleen Valle, Ms. Peggy Williams, Mr. John Wyvill, Ms. Lisa Vogel, Ms. Barb Woodhead

Mandy Leamon joined the meeting at 2:19pm

**Absent:** Ms. Jan Goracke, Ms. Jackie Prater, Ms. Ann Thompson

**Guests:** none present

**Meeting called to order:** at 2 pm by Ms. Vicki Steinhauer – Campbell, Chairperson

Introductions were made by all members present

Ms. Williams shared with the group about a possible new member, Ms. Tracey Minto who was not able to be here today. Ms. Minto is hard of hearing and works as a counselor at Lutheran Family Services in Bellevue. She will be replacing Ms. Jackie Prater

**Approval of the May 11, 2016 Agenda** – Ms. Kathleen Valle approved as written, was seconded by Ms. Lisa Vogel.Approved by all voting members present.

**Approval of the December 2, 2015 meeting minutes** – Ms. Williams noted that on the first page, under absent we need to remove Ms. Karen Potter – Maxwell because the meeting was in Lincoln. Ms. Barb Woodhead is the Lincoln interpreter who attends the Lincoln meetings representing Lincoln interpreters and Ms. Potter-Maxwell attends the Omaha meetings and represents the Omaha interpreters. Also, on the last page under Mandy Leamon’s report it should read Fremont Health Medical Center.  
  
Ms. Lisa Vogel made the motion to approve the minutes with the noted changes, Ms. Valle seconded. Approved by all voting members present. **Approval of the February 9, 2016 meeting minutes –** Ms. Steinhauer – Campbell requested that the spelling of her first name be changed to V I C K I, removing the E at the end.  
  
Ms. Vogel approved the minutes with the mentioned changes, Ms. Valle seconded. Approved by all voting members present.

**New Business**

* **Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) Executive Director Report – Mr. Wyvill**
  + **Legislative Session is over**
    - **Interim Studies**
      * Closed Captioning in Movie Theaters – To provide a report and recommendations to the legislature by the end of the year. The Public Information Officer (PIO) / Kelsey Cruz is in the process of sending out emails to stakeholders asking if they would like to serve on the committee. If you are interested in serving, or know of someone who would like to, please let NCDHH know.
      * Hearing Aids and Hearing Aid Insurance – The state of Nebraska has doubled the insurance coverage to state employees for hearing aids. However, this does not address everyone in the state that needs assistance with coverage through their health insurance for hearing aids. There is a lot involved with this study. If we add hearing aids as an essential healthcare benefit that will likely have an increased cost for the taxpayers of NE. This might have an impact on the Hearing Aid Bank. The group will be looking at what other states are doing and then determine if we can come up with a recommendation that may result in legislation making the needed changes.
  + **Advocacy Handbook –** NCDHH is producing an American Sign Language (ASL) versions of the handbook, chapter by chapter. You will find this version posted on our Facebook page.
  + **Lincoln Saltdogs game –** This event will be July 13, 2016, we hope to have Junior National Association of the Deaf (NAD) involved. More information will be available as the date gets closer.
  + **Deaf Awareness event at the state fair –** NCDHH is working with stakeholders on organizing this event. Nothing has been publicized at this time. More information will be announced as it becomes available.
  + **Omaha Zoo –** NCDHH is firming up plans for another event at the Henry Doorley Zoo in Omaha. NCDHH will send out a save the date once we have a date set up.
  + **Lincoln front office renovation –** NCDHH is in the process of making our front office in Lincoln larger to accommodate our clients better. Some of the work has been delayed due to water pipe problems.
* **Announcement – Ms. Williams**
  + **Last Meeting –** Ms. Williams announced that she will be retiring on July 1, 2016. She has brought in a cake that is in the back, to show her appreciation to the group for their involvement with this committee.
  + **Retirement party on June 23, 2016 from 2pm – 4pm –** Mr. Wyvill announced that NCDHH is having a retirement party for Ms. Williams at the Lincoln office, classrooms A & B.
  + **Interview Process –** Mr. Wyvill announced that NCDHH is in the process of interviewing candidates for the Behavioral Health Coordinator at this time. They hope to have a decision by the end of May.
* **Technical Advisory Position – Ms. Williams**
  + **Interpreter Position –** Ms. Williams announced that Ms. Barbara Woodhead will be resigning from the committee as a technical advisor representing Lincoln interpreters. Ms. Woodhead was thanked for the contributions she has made to this committee and she will be missed.
* **Hearing Aid Bank Donations – Ms. Williams**
  + Ms. Williams shared that NCDHH has been involved with the hearing aid bank since 1981 in collaboration with the Barkley Memorial Center. This partnership includes working with the area Lions and Sertoma groups in Nebraska. Right now the supply of hearing aids in the bank are low. NCDHH is putting the word out on getting hearing aids donated that are no longer being used. Donations can be sent to the Commission or directly to the Barkley Memorial Center.  
      
    Ms. Williams shared that she and John met with the director of the Veterans Administration (VA) in Omaha to see about setting up a VA loan program. Ms. Williams shared that the hearing aids that veterans receive from the VA are very nice hearing aids. They periodically get new hearing aids that are their property once they receive the aid. The Commission had developed a poster and a flyer to promote the HAB donation program for veterans to consider donating their used aids. Currently this has been turned over to the VA Media Department for their review.   
      
    Conversation about why there is such a need for donated hearing aids. Has to do with people in need utilizing the hearing aid bank programs more, and the fact that our population is getting older to where hearing loss is starting to impact their lives.   
      
    Conversation about various options to try to get more donations.
* **Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Director of Behavioral Health Meeting – Ms. Williams**
  + Ms. Williams shared that she has been working with the behavioral health programs throughout the state. There are six regions in the state of Nebraska. Ms. Williams noted that recently she has had an issue in both Lincoln and Omaha where she had a consumer that needed to receive counseling services, but the consumer wanted to go to an independent provider. The specialist that the consumer wanted to go to did not have the resources to hire an interpreter. Ms. Williams contacted Region 6 in Omaha and worked with them to develop a policy that Region 6 would use if the consumer was not able to receive counseling services through a specialist that knows sign language or is under the Region as a provider.   
      
    Ms. Williams and Mr. Wyvill met with Sheri Dawson who is the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Behavioral Health. Ms. Williams shared about the number of psychiatrists and mental health providers in the state of Nebraska who specialize in providing counseling services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. She also touched on issues that impact western Nebraska and not having any providers that provide services to that part of the state. The recommendation was made to Ms. Dawson that each region develop a plan for ensuring communication access. Ms. Dawson has requested data on the number of citizens in Nebraska that utilize these services.   
      
    Discussion on ways to go about finding the needed data. Conversation on how many deaf individuals in NE are receiving therapy.  
      
    On May 24, 2016 Ms. Williams and Mr. Wyvill will be meeting with the six Regional Behavioral Health Administrators to address these concerns.

Mr. Wyvill shared with the group that the new job title will be Behavioral Health Coordinator verses Mental Health Specialist which is Ms. Williams job title. Conversation among the group on the job title change.

The group took a break at 2:39pm

The meeting was called back to order at 2:50pm

**Old Business**

* **2016 Enrichment Foundation Grant / Workshop – Ms. Williams**
  + Ms. Williams passed out the survey results from the Public Safety Workshop that was held on April 16, 2016 in Omaha.   
      
    Conversation on the workshop and the facility dog named Manny that was at the workshop.
* **By-Laws – Ms. Williams**
  + During the February, 2016 meeting a question was asked if technical advisors could vote. Ms. Williams reported that she talked with Mr. John Jelkin who is with the Attorney General’s office. Ms. Williams stated that when the Mental Health Advisory Committee was set up it mandated for five voting members and two technical members. The two technical positions would be the Executive Director of the Commission and Department of Health and Human Services. In order to get it set up so that technical advisors could be voting members, the Commission would have to go in and change legislation.

**Agency Updates**

* **Ms. Lisa Vogel –** noting to report
* **Ms. Jill Bird** 
  + Discussion on what day in September, 2016 would be the Deaf Awareness Day at the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha.
  + On September 24, 2016 the Nebraska Regional Program will be hosting a workshop – “Access to You Future”. This workshop is for parents and professionals working with students who are deaf, deaf-blind, or visually impaired. Randy and Jamie Pope will be keynote speakers. They are a deaf – blind couple that speak nationally.
  + The Optimist Clubs of Nebraska awarded two scholarships for two students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Communication Contest for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in an annual competition. One scholarship is awarded from the Optimists and one scholarship was from the family of Katie Guernsey who was involved in a serious car accident.
  + Students from Camp Anderson this summer will be bused to the Deaf Awareness Night at the Saltdogs game on July 13th.
  + Southeast Nebraska Regional Program (SNRP) will sponsor a workshop on June 1 for parents and June 2 for professionals. The workshop will feature a national presenter, Karen Anderson, of Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss. The workshop title is "Developing Independence and Social Communication Skills Needed for Success in the Mainstreamed Classroom."
  + A statewide sign language skill development workshop will be held on July 21 & 22 with Noah Buchholz. There will be 4 separate topics presented during the 2-days: Language Contact in ASL: When to Translate and When to Transliterate, Developing Translation Skills, Rhymes in ASL, and Interpreting Foreign Language Classes
  + SNRP will be hosting a 4-day sign language camp June 13-16 for students who do not use sign language as their primary mode of communication so that they can gain some basic communication with their peers who are deaf.
  + SNRP along with the other regional programs will be sending many individuals to conferences this summer such as AG Bell, The Mainstream Conference at NTID, and the National Association of Interpreters in Education.
  + The Regional Programs are working to help support the revisions made to Rule 51 and the rewrite of the Interpreter Technical Assistance Document.
  + ESU 5 is still searching for a deaf educator and there are also a couple of educator positions open in the Omaha area.
  + Special Education Director for ESU 6, Nancy Meyer is retiring this summer.
* **Ms. Mandy Leamon –** nothing to report
* **Ms. Katheleen Valle –** Putting together a Patient Advisory Council or Community Board so that we can have deaf representation and consulting. Will most likely do one for Spanish as well.  
    
  Conversation on the development of the group.
* **Ms. Vicki Steinhauer – Campbell –** Reported that Mr. Pat Bracken who is the Director for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will be retiring on June 1, 2016.

Ms. Williams gave her thanks for the committee for their assistance through the years.  
  
The meeting ended at 3:29 pm.

**Next Meeting** – Tuesday, August 9, 2016 in Omaha at 1313 Farnam, Room 227