

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Mental Health Advisory Committee Meeting

Date: February 9, 2016

Time: 2pm – 4pm

Location: 1313 Farnam, Room 227, Omaha NE

Interpreters: Deb Seiler & Crystal Pierce

Minutes: Cindy Woldt

CART: Margaret Heaney / Exclusive Reporting

Present: Ms. Peggy Williams, Ms. John Wyvill, Ms. Mandy Leamon, Ms. Karen Potter – Maxwell, Ms. Diane Meyer, Ms. Ann Thompson, Ms. Lisa Vogel

Absent: Ms. Vicki Steinhauer–Campbell, Ms. Kathleen Valle, Ms. Jackie Prater, Ms. Jan Goracke

Guests: Ms. Kacy Sutton, UNO Interpreter Training Program – Graduating this May from University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO). She is currently working with Ralston Schools observing in the elementary, middle and high school classrooms. Ms. Williams noted that Kacy was a part of the video – “The Unheard Journey of Deaf Nebraskans”.

Meeting called to order: at 1:57 pm by Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist

Approval of the February 9, 2016 Agenda – Ms. Williams requested that we add to the agenda the Nebraska Association for the Deaf Workshop and also an ADARA Conference – “Taking Action, and Creating Change.” Ms. Williams passed out flyers promoting the workshops.

Approval of the December 2, 2015 meeting minutes – will hold on approving the minutes until the next meeting due to not having a quorum. Ms. Leamon did note a change for the minutes. On the last page it is now called Fremont Health Medical Center, not Fremont Area Medical Center anymore. Ms. Potter – Maxwell also noted that she would like the minutes changed to reflect that she does not attend the Lincoln meetings, so she should not be marked as absent. Ms. Williams will note the changes on the minutes.

New Business

- **Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) Executive Director Report – Mr. Wyvill**
 - Mr. Wyvill encouraged the group to follow NCDHH on Facebook and to also request to receive our e-communicator, which is a periodic email updating the public on what is happening at NCDHH. Mr. Wyvill noted that we are ratcheting up our outreach with our stakeholders. In addition you will now be seeing Ms. Brenda Chappell, Field Representative in our Omaha office doing a video log (VLOG) for the deaf community, specifically for Deaf Grassroots Movement (DGM).

- Department of Education has approved raising the standard for interpreters in school setting from 3.5 to 4.0. This has gone through the rule making process, public hearing, and now it's going through the Secretary of State and Governor's Office for approval.
- The Department of Education will be working on a technical assistance manual to update what is currently in place and to give school districts guidance and support as they address the new expectations.
- NCDHH just introduced an interim study to determine the need in having movie theaters more accessible in NE by including closed captioning. NCDHH will be working on this over the summer and have recommendations by the fall. It is hoped to be similar to the state of Hawaii.
- The NCDHH Board is very interested in addressing the need for pediatric hearing aid coverage. Because there are some gaps in insurance coverage, NCDHH hopes to have an interim study introduced this session. NCDHH is working with Dr. Stacie Ray with University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL), Barkley Memorial Center.
- The NCDHH Board has submitted a letter of support for the implementation of an ADA Coordinator position for the State of Nebraska. Having a person within state government who handles all of these issues will stream line the effort for consistency. This is position being pushed by Disability Rights Nebraska (DRN) and are working administratively to see if they can have that position restored in State Government. At this time Legislation has not been introduced, however, DRN is considering an interim study.
- Mr. Wyvill noted the Ms. Williams and a number of other team members are currently working with Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide training and outreach to their ACCESS Nebraska staff. This includes how to handle calls received from deaf and hard of hearing Nebraskans. This will go out to over 700 HHS employees.
- Mr. Wyvill also added that we had a number of letters of support on the federal level in terms of apprising our federal delegation of the need to support the Alice Cogswell Deaf Education Act. In addition for support of hearing aid coverage for senior adults, the Hearing Loss Association of America is supporting that this would exempt and enable seniors to have a hearing aid provided to them. Also included is legislation which we have stated our position and concern on the federal level about the employment of hearing aid specialists at the VA as opposed to audiologists.
- NCDHH is also concerned about our budget and is monitoring that closely. Legislator is working on property tax relief, income tax relief, and revenue shortfalls. NCDHH anticipates that the budget may not be as optimistic as we have had in the past, and that possibly we may receive cuts in the future because of this.

- Advocacy Handbook – in the process of converting into an American Sign Language (ASL) version. The public will start seeing various webinars addressing each section of the handbook on our website. These will be videotaped in ASL, with voice over and closed captioning.
 - Mr. Wyvill also shared with the group about the implementation of Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) Companies having to be licensed in Nebraska if they provide services within the state. Mr. Wyvill shared that NCDHH was offering a grace period which has not been decided for the VRI Companies to be in compliance with the new law that went into effect on January 1, 2016. Discussion was held on how long the grace period is for the VRI Companies.
- **Lutheran Family Services / Omaha Therapist – Ms. Williams**
 - The Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC) is currently void one position. Ms. Williams commented that there is a therapist by the name of Tracey Minto who works for Lutheran Family Services in Bellevue. Ms. Williams shared with the group that she and Beth Ellsworth would be meeting with Ms. Minto on February 10, 2016 to talk about NCDHH Mental Health services and to see if she would be interested in serving on the Committee.
- **Webinar – Mental Health Resources – Ms. Williams**
 - Mr. Wyvill covered some of this topics earlier in this meeting. NCDHH is producing an American Sign Language version of the handbook. Ms. Williams is going to be presenting the part of the handbook regarding Mental Health Resources.
 - Ms. Williams passed out copies of the PowerPoint that she will be utilizing for her presentation. Discussion on the typos in the handout.
 - Ms. Williams is going to have Ms. Crystal Pierce interpret her presentation. As noted earlier, these webinars will be conveyed in ASL, voice over and closed captioning.
 - Ms. Williams also shared with the group that if they are referring to the Advocacy Handbook, that the Mental Health Resources section starts on page 59. Discussion on where to find a copy of the handbook.
 - Mr. Wyvill discussed the purpose of the handbook. The Advocacy Handbook is to be used as a reference only. To then contact the proper avenues for who can assist you with the issues at hand.
- **Department of Health and Human Services Training – Ms. Williams**
 - The Commission has been working with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in providing training to employees that work in the call centers for DHHS. Mr. Wyvill had a meeting with a couple of their administrators, and a

decision was made that DHHS would develop a PowerPoint and give to NCDHH to review for accuracy. Ms. Williams and Ms. Kim Davis took the PowerPoint and made it a bit more deaf / hard of hearing friendly. Ms. Williams commented on the number of hours that was spent on this project.

- Discussion on how this PowerPoint will be utilized at DHHS. Noted that approximated 700 DHHS employees will benefit from this training that was collaboratively developed.
- The question was raised on the locations for the Call Centers for Access Nebraska. There are 4 customer service centers in Nebraska, Lincoln, Lexington, Fremont and Scottsbluff. Consumers are able to meet one on one at the Lexington and Fremont service centers.
- Discussion on what Access Nebraska is took place.
- Mr. Wyvill shared with the group that he has met with Ms. Courtney Phillips, who is the current CEO of DHHS. She has asked that agencies contact her directly with issues / complaints.
- **Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NeAD) Workshop** for parents – “Promoting Social and Emotional Wellness in Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children”. The presenters will be Dr. Tom and Jim Haley and held on April 23, 2016 from 9am – 12pm. Lunch and childcare will be provided. Discussion was held on how this information is being promoted.
- **Taking Action, Creating Change Conference** that is going to be in Silver Springs, Maryland. This conference will be held October 25, 2016 – October 28, 2016 at the Sheraton Hotel in Silver Spring, MD. Justice for Deaf Victims National Coalition (JDVNC) and Deaf DAWN are hosting the conference.
- **ADARA is having a Breakout 2016 / 13th Biennial National Conference – Heal Vicarious Trauma and Renewing Your Compassion.** The conference will be held March 16 -19 2016 in Colorado Springs, CO. The workshop is being presented by ADARA.

Old Business

- **2016 Enrichment Foundation Grant / Workshop – Ms. Williams**
 - Ms. Williams shared the grant at the previous meeting held this past December. The grant was approved with an additional \$500 - \$600 to round off the request.
 - Ms. Williams passed out the Save the Date flyer for the workshop. The workshop will be held on April 16th from 9:00am – 3:30pm. This event is being co-sponsored by Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI). CHI is co-sponsoring the workshop by providing the facility at the Lakeside Hospital / Swanson Education and Conference Center. Lunch will be catered from Lakeside Hospital.
 - Ms. Williams discussed how the workshop will include personal safety, gang violence, identity theft and advocating for ourselves if we become a victim of a crime. Listed below are the presenters for the workshop.

- Ms. Mary Hughes is a deaf person from Lenexa, KS. Ms. Hughes works at the Kansas School for the Deaf in Olathe. She will be presenting on advocating for yourself.
 - Trooper James Estwick, is with the Nebraska State Patrol. He will present on gang violence, internet safety, what to do if you are a victim of crime and where to go and what to do if you are a victim.
 - Ms. Kathleen Valle, with CHI Health in Omaha, NE. Ms. Valle will be presenting on access to services through CHI.
 - Sarpy County Victim Witness Unit and Division Services / Ms. Sakura Yodogawa – Campbell. Ms. Yodogawa – Campbell will be covering services as it relates to domestic violence.
 - Discussion on who can attend this workshop was held. The grant has been approved for anyone in Nebraska who is deaf or hard of hearing. Ms. Williams will be requesting people who would like to attend to please register so an accurate count can be given to CHI as lunch and snacks will be provided.
- **Licensure / Deaf – Ms. Williams**
 - At the previous meeting that was held this past December, the subject came up regarding deaf individuals getting their licenses to interpret. Ms. Williams asked Ms. Crystal Pierce to step out of her role as an interpreter to answer those questions. Clarifying that this is regarding Deaf Interpreters.

Ms. Pierce noted that deaf interpreters have to go through testing to become certified as a deaf interpreter. Sign language interpreters as well have to take either our state level test, national, or another state level test and receive their certification. When a deaf person wants to become an interpreter they also have the option of obtaining their Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) certification from Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). If the deaf individual has a CDI, this qualifies them to be a deaf interpreter and they can apply for Nebraska licensure, as long as their certification is current. Clarification was made that for a deaf individual to have a license to interpret in NE, obtaining a CDI from RID is not required. Another option is to follow requirements to become qualified on the State level with the Mid-America Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST). QAST is the state administered certification testing for Nebraska.

Ms. Pierce went on to explain the process that sign language interpreters follow to become licensed in NE. To qualify, interpreters can be nationally certified through RID and certain levels of National Association of the Deaf (NAD). Another option of qualification is the interpreter has obtained a QAST Level 3, 4, or 5. Clarification was made to explain the difference between certification and licensure.

Effective January 1, 2016, all sign language interpreters in NE have to be licensed. In order to have a license, the interpreter must hold one of the following certifications: RID, Level 3 or higher on NAD or QAST, or other state qualification testing that is equivalent to the above.

Mr. Wyvill commented that NCDHH is currently working with a committee at the Department of Education to revise the Technical Assistance Guide for educational interpreters. Within the Technical Assistance Guide, NCDHH wants to address concerns relating to the use of educational interpreters vs community interpreters. One issue specifically is when law enforcement or the Dept. of Health and Human Services (DHHS) comes on to a school campus to meet with a student using a sign language interpreter. It is mandated that a community licensed interpreter must be provided for communication between all parties involved. Ms. Meyer commented on a situation that she was involved in, and stressed the importance of the law being able to change this.

The question was raised on how to know if an interpreter is licensed, and how the general public finds this information. Ms. Pierce added the NCDHH website posts a list of licensed interpreters. Also, at any time someone may request to see the sign language interpreter's license and qualifications.

Ms. Pierce also shared with the group that the NCDHH website lists VRI providers. The list is updated to show the only the licensed VRI providers.

Ms. Potter-Maxwell stated she was very impressed with how NCDHH is stepping up to the plate for interpreters.

- **By-Laws – Ms. Williams**

- Discussion was held at the last meeting to review the MHAC By-Laws for revision. In the previous meeting there was discussion as to whether or not technical advisors could be voting members. It is not stated in LB 25, which is the legislation that created the Mental Health Specialist position. The by-laws were created by the original Mental Health Specialist at the Commission and the mental health advisory committee. The Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC) is mandated to consist of three counselors familiar with mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse disorders in working with deaf and hard of hearing people and two Human Service positions are voting members and one non-voting technical advisor from the Department of Health and Human Services. In addition, the MHAC has appointed hoc committee members in a non-voting capacity. The question of technical advisors becoming voting members will wait

until NCDHH can talk to the Attorney General's office.

In the past the by-laws were changed to reflect that when a member's term expired they could continue to serve on the committee until a replacement was found. Ms. Williams shared the difficulty in finding members that understand deafness and hearing loss.

It was explained that a quorum would consist of having three of the five MHAC members present at a meeting. Discussion was held regarding the need to have a quorum present at each meeting.

Agency Updates

- **Ms. Lisa Vogel** – Community support workers are needed that have knowledge working with deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Ms. Vogel shared several scenarios of how these positions are needed in the community. Discussion was held on how to get the word out to assist with this need. Ms. Vogel will send information about this request to Ms. Williams and she will promote it through NeAD and OAD.
- **Ms. Karen Potter - Maxwell** – Reported information about training that is offered through Iowa RID. On Friday, April 8th Understanding the Law: ADA Rights and Responsibilities will be presented and Saturday, April 9th I'm Carrying an Invisible What?: An Introduction to Power & Privilege will be presented by Jonathan Webb. This workshop is for people who are Deaf and interpreters.
- **Ms. Ann Thompson** – Heartland Deaf Abuse Advocacy Services (HDAAS) is working on trying to get more members involved with the organization. This group is also working on setting up a workshop, working on the specifics of what is needed. Ms. Thompson added that the Nebraska Coalition has received a grant that will provide funding to pay for training they will provide HDAAS.
- **Ms. Mandy Leamon** – The Fremont Health Inpatient Behavioral Medicine floor at Fremont Health is now up and running. This opened in December, 2015 with ten beds which will progress up to twenty beds as the year moves forward. At this time Mandy was not aware if a video phone was in place. At the clinic, Fremont Health Outpatient Behavioral Medicine now has an advanced psychiatric nurse practitioner on staff Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM.
- **Ms. Diane Meyer** -

- On January 9th the Regional Program had a parent workshop that was presented by Mark Keith from the Florida School for the Deaf/Blind. His topics included Man Laws for Moms and Helicopter Parents. Discussion was held about what the workshops covered.
- On January 29th the Regional Program had their dance - Hawaiian Paradise. The following morning advocacy and becoming leaders was discussed. Ms. Brenda Chappell from NCDHH presented to the group on services that are available to them.
- On February 6th the Regional Program had Robinson Crusoe Day. Mr. Mike Brummer led the group of students as they learned how to do GPS coordinating and geo-catching.
- On February 20th students are going to Lincoln to learn about bugs at UNL. This will include 3rd – 6th graders which will be an overnight activity. Discussion was held as to what the activity will cover.
- Ms. Meyer also shared about an upcoming workshop with Dr. James Kilpatrick who is fluent in five languages. He will be doing a workshop on fingerspelling which will be on February 26th. Discussion was held on how this pertains to the students. The following day the presenter will do a voicing workshop on How to Model Appropriate fingerspelling and will be open to NE Educational Interpreters.
- On March 5th Mr. Mike Brummer is going to do a Cat in the Hat, Thing 1 and Thing 2 Dr. Seuss activity.

The meeting ended at 3:44pm.

Next Meeting – Tuesday, May 11, 2016 in Lincoln