

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

Mental Health Advisory Committee Meeting

Approved on August 6, 2019

Date: May 7, 2019

Time: 2pm – 4pm

Location: 4600 Valley Rd, Room 4A, Lincoln NE

Interpreters: Sharon Sinkler, Ben Sparks

Minutes: Cindy Woldt

CART: Marcy Bengé

Members Present: Ms. Vicki Steinhauer – Campbell, Ms. Tracey Minto, Ms. Kathleen Valle, Ms. Lisa Vogel

NCDHH Staff Present: Mr. John Wyvill, Executive Director; Mr. Cody McEvoy, Advocacy Specialist; Ms. Kim Davis, Advocacy Specialist

NCDHH Staff Absent:

Technical Advisors Present: Ms. Sue Czaplewski,

Members Absent: Ms. Mandy Leamon

Technical Advisors Absent: Ms. Anne Thompson, Ms. Tina Work

Guests:

Meeting called to order: by Mr. Cody McEvoy at 2pm

Mr. Cody McEvoy, Advocacy Specialist 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 the **April 30, 2019** edition of the Omaha World Herald, a legal newspaper of general circulation in this state, as required by the Open Meetings Act.

Introductions made with all in attendance.

Approval of the May 7, 2019 Agenda – Ms. Vicki Steinhauer – Campbell added that we need to add to the agenda the approval of the January 8, 2019 meeting minutes.

Ms. Vicki Steinhauer – Campbell made the motion to approve the May 7, 2019 agenda with the adding the approval of the January 8, 2019 meeting minutes, Ms. Kathleen Valle seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Tracey Minto, Ms. Vicki Steinhauer – Campbell, Ms. Kathleen Valle, and Ms. Lisa Vogel all voting aye.

Approval of the January 8, 2019 meeting minutes – Ms. Kathleen Valle noted that at the top of page 3, first paragraph – “she believes” should be “he believes”. Ms. Kathleen Valle made the motion to approve the January 8, 2019 meeting minutes with the one amendment noted. Mr. John Wyvill seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Tracey Minto, Ms. Vicki Steinhauer – Campbell, Ms. Kathleen Valle, and Ms. Lisa Vogel all voting aye.

New Business

- **Brainstorm on how to improve the Mental Health Services in Nebraska for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals** -- Cody McEvoy opened the discussion with welcoming ways that the group can improve mental health services for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in Nebraska.

Vicki Steinhauer – Campbell shared that she would like to have the information more easily accessible on where to find assistance. Would like to have a one stop shop on where they can find services.

Cody McEvoy added that in Omaha there has recently been an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) group that is for deaf and hard of hearing individuals using American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate. This AA group is for anyone who can sign fluently. Discussion on the attendance for the group and also where the group is held.

Cody McEvoy touched base on the information listed on the NCDHH website pertaining to specialized mental health therapists, substance abuse counselors and psychologists in Nebraska.

John Wyvill shared with the group that Cody McEvoy recently did a Facebook post about suicide awareness and prevention. In addition NCDHH has sent a letter to the new director of Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) asking for specific information for people with intellectual disabilities that happen to be in group homes, and the services for them in this environment.

Cody McEvoy added that in his time being in Nebraska he is observed the isolation issues with many deaf and hard of hearing individuals in Nebraska. Sharing that once we get the numbers from DHHS we can start to create the action.

Sue Czaplewski asked how we are reaching the population that isn't involved with DHHS? Cody McEvoy responded that we need to start with getting the demographics first.

Kim Davis shared that she would like to see the behavioral health section on the NCDHH website to be expanded and include more information. Adding that the counselor / therapist specialty doesn't always match what is needed with the clients needing services. Kim asked if NCDHH could provide training to assist with the counselor / therapists that are working with the deaf and hard of hearing clients. Possible topics would be how to use a sign language interpreter, various other deaf culture related topics. Kim also added that a suggestion would be on how to work with Child Protective Services (CPS). Tracey Minto shared that this would be beneficial to her. Discussion between the members on how to find presenters for this type of training, getting the word out to hospitals and providers and school counselors. Sue added that she would be willing to find out information on when the next conference is for school counselors.

Kathleen Valle reiterated her comments from the previous meeting the need to encourage deaf and hard of hearing individuals to enter the mental health fields to be counselors / therapists. Conversation between the members on how to go about this.

- **NCDHH Executive Director Report – Mr. John Wyvill**
 - Legislation
 - LB15 is the hearing aid insurance for kids, this bill is waiting to be placed on the agenda for final reading. This bill has gone through without a single dissenting vote, has very strong legislative and community support.
 - LB248 which is to change the language for hearing impaired in all state laws, this is waiting to be put on the agenda. When that happens, the bill will move quickly. The bill might likely have three readings in two days.
 - Budget process – John shared that NCDHH fared better than many of our state agency colleagues with the appropriations committee. Adding that we have two of the three requests being granted. The agency will be allowed to carry over some of the money that we did not spend this fiscal year, perhaps they think up to \$50,000. Next we have an increased spending authority in our cash fund which means that Sharon Sinkler, NCDHH Interpreter Program Coordinator will have more discretionary income for interpreter programs and conferences. The third request for \$100,000 for HearU was not granted. NCDHH will go back to the board and through the committee again in the future when the best climate dictates.
 - July 31, 2019 will be the Salt Dogs Game at Haymarket Park in Lincoln.

- September 22, 2019 will be the Omaha Zoo Event.
- Our Scottsbluff Advocacy Specialist, Brittney Isom is in the midst of organizing another zoo event as well in the Scottsbluff area.
- Education Task Force – will hopefully be wrapping up in the next couple of months. We’re being more assertive in areas that we have not been before.
- NCDHH has been very proactive in our flood relief and dissemination of information. Teresa Hevner, Lead Advocacy Specialist in Omaha has been the point person for this.
 - We have prevailed upon the Public Service Commission to modify our Nebraska Specialized Telecommunication Equipment Program (NSTEP) process with the exception of cell phones. Which means that someone who had their phone damaged in the flood does not have to wait five years for it to be replaced.
- In addressing the flood related actions has also brought up the need for Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to make their news conferences accessible for deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

Old Business

- **Update By-laws (4 meetings a year)** – Cody McEvoy recapped that it was decided at the previous meeting that the committee would continue to meet four times a year. Adding that if needed the members are open to handling some of the participation by video if needed.
- **Purpose of the Committee** -- Cody also shared that the purpose of the committee is that we are an advisory group. Everyone comes with different experiences and information sharing, advice and feedback. It’s really a cooperative team unity to help improve services in Nebraska.
- **Enrichment Grant** -- The Enrichment Grant is being spearheaded by Ms. Carly Weyers upon her return. There is \$3,500 in the budget.
- **Mental Health Advisory Committee vacancy** – Cody commented that NCDHH is working on attracting some candidates, we have terms that are coming to the end. Vicki Steinhauer – Campbell asked which positions were open. Conversation between the members on when terms are up, and possible replacements for members who have

termed out.

Agency Updates:

- **Ms. Kathleen Valle** – Shared that the first part of April, she and Ms. Nancy Flearl with Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCBVI) attended a conference in Lincoln for all social workers and care managers employed by Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI). The presentation by Ms. Flearl was well received.

At CHI Health the ethics director started something pretty cutting edge a few years ago. It is called ethics on the big screen. What this is, once a quarter she shows a documentary and then has a panel discussion about that topic. In July she has chosen “Through Deaf Eyes”. The panel members will include a deaf individual, a hard of hearing individual, family members of and possibly a child who has a cochlear implant.

- **Ms. Sue Czaplewski** - Currently working on the summer transition workshop for students, this will be focusing on the students next steps in making plans for life after high school.

Each Education Service Unit (ESU) is hiring additional mental health positions.

- **Mr. Cody McEvoy** – Shared what was discussed earlier regarding the letter to DHHS. Also touched base on how he has been involved in the communication with FEMA.

Cody is excited to throw out the first pitch at the Salt Dogs Game on July 31, 2019.

- **Ms. Kim Davis** – Shared with the group that she and Cody have been working on developing some signs for emergency responders like the police department, fire department, and ambulance.

Also have a law enforcement task force group that has not been active for a while. We are in the midst of splitting up the group in hopes to be able to get more accomplished, for example police department, deaf community, hard of hearing community, etc.

Kim shared with the group regarding the outreach she has been doing.

- **Ms. Vicki Steinhauer – Campbell** – Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) still has a wait list, the order of selection. Just last week she met with administration on what the future looks like. They are expecting to this process, order of selection to last for three additional years. Shared that VR is currently in a hiring freeze to accommodate budget restraints.

Discussion about the unemployment rate in Nebraska for people with a disability.

- **Ms. Tracey Minto** – Shared that she is on the board for the Nebraska Association for Marriage and family Therapists. The Association does two conferences every year, wondering if we could have a session on working with deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

Next Meeting – August 6, 2019 at 1313 Farnam, Room 227, Omaha, from 2p – 4p.

The meeting adjourned at 2:56pm.