

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Full Commission Board Meeting – September 14, 2012 – Approved 12/14/2012
Lincoln Medical Education Partnership, 4600 Valley Road, Suite 420, Lincoln, NE

Chairperson Mr. Steven Manning called the meeting to order at 8:54 a.m.

B. Roll Call

Members present were Ms. Eileen Dakan, Mr. Dillard Delts, Dr. Carol Lomicky, Mr. Steven Manning, Dr. Raymond Meester and Ms. Diane Muelleman. Members absent were Ms. Amy Kasch, Dr. Jan Moore and Ms. Sue Petersen. Staff attending was Dr. Peter Seiler, Executive Director and Ms. Lori Burrage, Business Manager. Interpreters were Ms. Margie Propp and Ms. Lorelei Waldron.

C. Acceptance of Agenda

Mr. Manning asked for acceptance of the agenda. Mr. Manning asked to add a presentation from Mr. Jeremy Fitzpatrick under E.2., the Chairperson's report. **Mr. Delts made a motion to amend the agenda. Ms. Muelleman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, absent; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

D. Acceptance of Minutes

1. Full Commission Meeting – June 8, 2012

Ms. Muelleman asked the Board if there were any changes to the minutes. **Dr. Lomicky made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Mr. Delts seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

Dr. Jan Moore arrived at 8:58 a.m.

Audience Comments

Mr. Manning asked for audience comments. Mr. Harry Lee stated he is retired from SAC. Mr. Jeremy Fitzpatrick is from Omaha and will discuss insurance coverage for hearing aids during his presentation. Ms. Vicki Rasmussen works with the Client Assistance Program for Vocational Rehabilitation and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. She is interested in providing a presentation at the next board meeting.

E. Chairperson's Report

1. Welcome to New Board Member – Eileen Dakan

Mr. Manning introduced Ms. Dakan. Ms. Dakan is from Kearney, has a master Degree and works as an adjunct professor at UNK and a local community college and also with the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Nebraska. She has been hearing impaired since age two, has worn hearing aids since kindergarten and is now deaf in the right ear. She is looking forward to serving on the Board.

2. Mr. Jeremy Fitzpatrick's presentation

Mr. Fitzpatrick explained he had no exposure to hearing loss issues until his son was born five months ago with a mild to moderate hearing loss. His son got his first hearing aids a couple weeks ago. Through this experience, he became aware that insurance does not cover hearing aids. While the cost of hearing aids is not a barrier for his son, there are families that cannot afford hearing aids for their children and they do not qualify for Medicaid. He feels it is very important children get hearing aids early for language and speech development. Mr. Fitzpatrick and his wife have become involved with the Hands and Voices organization in Omaha. Mr. Fitzgerald contacted Senator Harr from Omaha who was interested in helping to get a bill passed for insurance coverage. The Nebraska Department of Insurance (DOI) is in charge of determining what the President's health care law will cover and is in the process of making that decision now. Mr. Fitzpatrick sent a letter to the DOI urging them to include coverage of hearing aids for pediatric patients. If it is not included in the essential health plan now, the state would have to cover the cost if it is added later. He believes hearing aids should be covered for everyone, however, there is a greater chance to get hearing aids covered for children first and then expand the coverage. He has contacted the Nebraska Appleseed, an advocacy organization that works on a wide variety of public interest issues and has spoken with Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Mr. Fitzpatrick plans to contact Boys Town since they are a national research hospital recognized for their work with childhood deafness. Mr. Fitzpatrick requested that the Commission contact the DOI and give them their stance on hearing aid coverage. Mr. Delts stated he contacted the DOI and was told that Nebraska is going to wait to make a decision until after the election in November on the advice of the Governor. Mr. Fitzpatrick stated he has a meeting in October with the DOI. Dr. Seiler stated he is willing to write a letter of support to the DOI. Dr. Meester agreed and asked if Mr. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Seiler could work together on the letter. Ms. Muelleman stated she has a huge passion for this issue and would like to be involved in writing the letter. She offered to do the footwork on contacting stakeholders to gather additional support. Dr. Lomicky offered her assistance in central and western Nebraska. Ms. Dakan would like to get a draft letter that consumers can send to DOI in support of hearing aid coverage. Dr. Lomicky stated letters to the editors and getting information out to the public on the issue is very important. Mr. Delts distributed information he gathered while doing research on this issue.

F. Business Manager's Report

1. General Ledger Report

Ms. Dakan asked where community education and outreach expenses for western Nebraska are included. Ms. Burrage explained the expenses are included in printing, postage and travel expenses. Most outreach is done through county fair, health and wellness fair booths, Husker Harvest Days, mass mailings along with monthly staff travel.

G. Executive Director's Report

1. Information of Field Representative II (Lincoln and North Platte)

Dr. Seiler reported he has hired two new Field Representatives. Ms. Kim Davis has started in the Lincoln office and has a similar background working at the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The North Platte Field Rep will start on October 15th, and has training in sign language interpreting and making presentations to

various groups; both of which will be an asset for communicating with the deaf and hard of hearing consumers in western Nebraska. Her sign language skills will be greatly appreciated by the Deaf clients in western and central Nebraska.

2. Mission and Vision Statements

Dr. Seiler asked that changes or new ideas be submitted to him as the staff will begin working on this next week.

3. Carryover Plan (Questions and Answers)

Dr. Seiler stated he has a meeting with NET for a new TV program in two weeks. He is establishing a new database for the equipment loan program which is higher than anticipated so he may reduce the amount in postage and printing to cover that cost. **Dr. Meester made a motion to allow Dr. Seiler to move carryover funds to where he sees it is appropriate. Mr. Delts seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

4. Budget Submittal

Dr. Seiler stated he and Ms. Burrage have completed the biennial budget. He did not ask for an increase in the base amount but did move some monies around to compensate for some increases. Additionally, if there is a request to reduce the base budget by 5%, the vacant Public Information Officer position will be used to cover this.

Additional Report Not on the Agenda

Dr. Seiler reported on his meeting with Grand Island Public Schools regarding a deaf child's name sign violating their weapons policy. Grand Island Public Schools does not have a gang sign policy but they do have a weapons policy. The school states they did not send a letter and have not talked with the parents regarding this issue. Dr. Seiler shared with the school that there are no registered signs in SEE (Signed Exact English) so that information is not accurate. Dr. Moore provided Dr. Seiler with an article from Dr. Sam Supalla about information on name sign rules which Dr. Seiler in turn gave to the Grand Island Public School staff. Dr. Moore stated a deaf educator should be working with the parents of this child. Dr. Seiler stated that there is a licensed educator of the deaf and hard of hearing children working in Grand Island. The school staff thanked Dr. Seiler for his assistance and insight into the situation and plan to follow up on those.

H. Subcommittee Discussion

- 1. Executive Committee**
- 2. Legislative Issues Committee**
- 3. Interpreter Issues Committee**
- 4. Education Issues Committee**

Ms. Dakan requested to serve on the Education Issues Committee.

I. Old Business

1. Recognition and Awards Program

Mr. Delts stated he has received approval from State Personnel for the recognition and awards program he developed. The Board now needs to approve the program. **Mr. Delts made a motion to accept the new recognition and awards program. Dr. Moore**

seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Mr. Delts made a motion to establish an ongoing awards and recognition program committee to support an awards and recognition program. Dr. Moore seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

J. New Business

1. Approval of Members of the Interpreter Review Board

- a. Margie Propp
- b. Jerry Siders

Mr. Manning asked for a motion to approve the new Interpreter Review Board members. Dr. Meester made a motion to approve Margie Propp and Jerry Siders as members of the Interpreter Review Board. Dr. Lomicky seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, absent; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

2. Recommendations by the Interpreter Issues Committee (pending)

Dr. Seiler stated several complaints have been received against an interpreter but there is not sufficient evidence to be presented to the Commission Board for action.

3. Membership Fee for National Association of State Agencies Serving the Deaf

Dr. Seiler attended the National Association of the Deaf conference, the National Association of State Agencies Serving the Deaf met prior to the conference. Bylaws were established and it was determined each state would be charged for participating. The fees would be between \$100 to \$150 but not more than \$200. Dr. Meester made a motion to approve membership fees up to \$200.00. Mr. Delts seconded the motion. Mr. Delts asked for an explanation of what is included in the fees. Dr. Seiler stated a newsletter, banking fees and mailing fees for various position papers such as on health care for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

K. Next Meeting – December 14, 2012 in Omaha starting at 8:30 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.