

**Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Mental Health Advisory Committee Meeting
2:00 – 4:00 PM**

Date: August 17, 2010

Location: 1313 Farnam, Omaha NE, Conference Room H

Interpreters: Kathy Joyce and Debbie Seiler

Minutes: Traci Cooney

Members Present

Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell

Technical Advisors Present

Diane Meyer

Staff Present

Peggy Williams

Peter Seiler

Beth Ellsworth

Visitor: Ann Thompson: Heartland Deaf Abuse Advocacy Service (HDAAS)

Gather, Welcome & Introductions

Ms. Williams called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM and introductions were made. Member's and visitors introduced themselves.

Approval of May 11, 2010 Minutes

Ms. Williams asked if there were any changes/corrections to the minutes. Ms. Meyer moved to accept the minutes as read. Ms. Yodogawa-Campbell seconded the motion.

NCDHH Executive Director Report

Budget Update and Issues

Dr. Seiler explained that he has met with several state senators regarding effects the 10% budget cuts will have on NCDHH. He explained that the NCDHH Board considered 3 options to meet the required cuts and still provide services to the state. Option 1: close the Omaha office and transfer the 2 staff members to the Lincoln office. Option 2: close the Omaha office and not fill 3 positions. Option 3: leave the Omaha office open and not fill 3 other positions (currently vacant positions). He stated that the Board has decided to keep the Omaha office open at this time and not fill the 3 vacant positions. He stated the Legislative session will begin in January, 2011 and the new NCDHH budget will begin July 1, 2011.

Dr. Seiler provided numbers reflecting Hard of Hearing and Deaf consumers in Nebraska. He stated there are approximately 1,783,432 people in the state, of that number; 153 thousand are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. He reported that NCDHH is currently serving approximately 6700 Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Nebraska based on the Commissions volunteer census.

Dr. Seiler reported that, on September 8th Governor Heineman will sign 2 proclamations, Interpreter Recognition Day and Deaf Awareness Week (which begins the week of September 27th). He will send information to interpreters and Rhonda Fleischer with the Nebraska Department of Education.

Interpreter Licensure Bill

Dr. Seiler explained that a draft form of the Interpreter Licensure Bill has been developed, however, there still needs to be changes made. The NCDHH Full Board supports this bill as it would require all interpreters must be licensed in Nebraska. At this time, only state agencies, courts and law enforcement agencies are required to use licensed interpreters. Dr. Seiler met with several different groups, Nebraska Healthcare Association and Nebraska Hospital Association, among others, to explain the importance of guaranteeing qualified interpreters. He explained that the bill will have some exceptions related to educational interpreters and religious setting interpreters. Senator Haar will introduce the bill to the legislature but currently NCDHH needs to find a senator to accept this bill as a priority bill and have Senators willing to support the bill.

Changes in Delivery of Services for NCDHH

Dr. Seiler stated there are no longer service regions that each Field Representatives are assigned, instead strands of service have replaced the regions previously served. The most important change is public policy and advocacy strands were added. In the past, it wasn't advocacy that NCDHH provided, it was information. Training will take place with the Field Representatives to teach them how to become better advocates.

Old Business

On June 26, 2010, NCDHH hosted a workshop entitled Vicarious Trauma and Interpreter Self-Care. The presenter was Dr. Ron Lybarger. Ms. Williams thanked Ms. Meyer for providing the facility and for setting up the room for the interpreter workshop. She stated there were 26 interpreters in attendance and the evaluations reflected very positive feedback from the interpreters attending the training Dr. Lybarger provided.

New Business

State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services

Ms. Williams stated that part of the Mental Health goals for the year are to develop a plan on what Nebraska is going to do to make mental health/substance abuse accessible services for people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Ms Williams announced that she and Dr. Seiler presented to the State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services on accessible mental health services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Nebraska. Dr. Seiler addressed concerns about accessible mental health services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing on a professional and personal level. He asked the advisory members to consider having the Governor appoint someone to this committee that has experience in working with the Deaf. Ms. Williams provided the 25 member board a copy of her presentation. She received emails after the forum from committee members remarking they were pleased with what was stated and would like to include Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the block grant. Jim Harvey asked Ms. Williams to submit a paragraph emphasizing what we would like to see in the grant. Dr. Seiler developed a statement about access to mental health services for the block grant and a draft copy was provided to the committee for feedback.

Domestic Violence Shelter/Agency Workshop – September 16, 2010

Ms. Williams announced that “Breaking the Silence”, Domestic Violence in the Deaf Community workshop will be held at the Omaha YWCA on September 16th. The workshop is open to shelters and agencies that work with domestic violence victims in Douglas and Sarpy

counties. There is no cost to attend the workshop and lunch will be provided.

CLAS Grant

Ms. Williams announced that NCDHH was awarded funding from the CLAS Coalition through Region V to coordinate a workshop for health care providers. The workshop will be held at BryanLGH East Medical Center's conference center on April 8, 2011. Speakers scheduled are Dr. Seiler addressing cultural aspects of working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing patients, Ms. Diane DeLair with Nebraska Advocacy Services will discuss legal aspects, ADA, and 501 compliance, and Ms. Barb Woodhead, professional sign language interpreter, will present on understanding the linguistics of ASL. This workshop will be offered to medical and behavioral health professionals in the State.

MHAC Term Expiration/Vacancy

Ms. Williams announced there are 2 expired counselors' positions on the committee at this time. The NCDHH Mental Health bylaws state that Ms. Frizzell Pratt and Ms. Prater can continue to serve until a position can be filled. Dr. Seiler suggested contacting Dr. Tom Haley and see if he would be interested in filling one of the vacancies. Ms. Williams discussed adding someone from the Heartland Deaf Abuse Advocacy Services (HDAAS) as a technical advisor and all agreed this would be a good idea.

Agency Updates

Ms. Yodogawa-Campbell announced that Ms. Williams was nominated to receive an award for being a hero at the Omaha 15th Annual Candlelight Vigil for Domestic Violence that will be held September 30th in Omaha.

Ms. Meyer updated the board about Camp Anderson. She stated there were 60 Deaf and Hard of Hearing students attending Camp this year, held in Fort Robinson, Nebraska. She informed the committee that they are educating law enforcement personnel that when they come to the schools to speak with Deaf children they need to bring an interpreter as the school is not responsible for providing this service for them. Ms. Meyer stated an agreement has been reached to have a social worker travel to various counties and provide services to Deaf children in different educational programs.

Ms. Ellsworth stated there is resistance among Hard of Hearing individuals in the community regarding hearing loss as many are in denial of their hearing loss. She asked for ideas on how to reach these clients. Discussion was held.

Ms. Thompson stated that Heartland Deaf Abuse Advocacy Services will try to hold meetings every 2 months.

Next Meetings

November 16, 2010 – Lincoln – 4600 Valley Road, Conference Room A

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM