

## Meeting Minutes: Southwest DHHSD Advisory Committee, 10/29/2021

Date: 10/29/2021, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Minutes prepared by: Natalie Regenscheid  
Location: Virtually on Zoom

### Attendance

- Members
  - Chad Richardson
  - Howard Rosten
  - Jacqui Shasky
  - Gretchen Spear
- Absent: Lisa Dembouski
- CART and Interpreters
  - Michelle Remer, DHHSD Interpreter
  - Maria Dively-Rodriguez, DHHSD Interpreter
  - Jayne, Veritext Captioner
- DHHSD Staff
  - Calla Kevan, DHH Specialist
  - Jeanne Kolo-Johnson, Lead DHH Specialist
  - Natalie Regenscheid, OASI
  - Dan Millikin, DHHSD Director
  - Teika Pakalns, Policy & Planning Specialist
- Others Present
  - Rochelle Garrow, Telecommunication Access MN (TAM) Administrator
  - Dennis Siemer, Guest

### Agenda

- Call to Order/Introductions/Handouts/Communication Ground Rules
- Land Acknowledgement Statement
- Acceptance of April 30, 2021 Meeting Minutes
- Regional Update Report, Calla
- Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program, Jeanne
- Regional Needs and Gaps, Calla
- New Business
- Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH) Updates
- Announcements: All members
- Next Meeting Date

## Call to Order/Introductions/Handouts/Communication Ground Rules

The Southwest Advisory Committee (AC) meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Calla Kevan. Members and guests were welcomed. The April 30, 2021 SW AC meeting minutes, Regional Update Report, Telecommunication Access Minnesota (TAM) PowerPoint and agenda for today's meeting were distributed via email. For a copy of these items, contact [dhs.dhhsd@state.mn.us](mailto:dhs.dhhsd@state.mn.us).

## Land Acknowledgment Statement

"We collectively acknowledge that we are located on the traditional land of Indigenous people that once and still is occupied by the Ojibwe, Dakota and other Native peoples from the time immemorial. These lands hold great historical, spiritual, cultural and personal significance for these Native nations. We recognize, support and advocate for the sovereignty of these nations in this territory and beyond. By offering this land acknowledgment, we affirm tribal sovereignty and will hold ourselves accountable to the American Indian people and nations."

- The land acknowledgment statement is a part Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division's (DHHS) efforts to develop a more equitable lens and provide more equitable services. September 30, 2021 was Orange Shirt Day. Orange Shirt Day was established in 2013 by Phyllis Webstad, a residential school survivor in Canada, to honor those Indigenous children who were taken from their homes and placed in boarding schools. They were then shamed and abused for their heritages. Thousands of children died in these schools. The last boarding school did not close until 1996. Orange Shirt Day is intended to give people the opportunity to pause and reflect on the treatment of Indigenous people.

## Acceptance of April 30, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Howard motioned to accept the meeting minutes. Jacqui seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as written.

## Regional Update Report

No feedback.

## Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program

### Updates

- The TED Program is distributing iPads and iPhones, within a limited budget. When a consumer applies to the TED Program, a TED specialist reviews their application to determine if they are eligible for the program. If they are, the specialist then conducts an in-depth assessment to determine whether they need an iPhone/iPad. Current TED clients do not need to reapply, but they do need to reverify their program eligibility to receive an iPhone/iPad.

- Sarah, the TED Program Administrator, is in the process of submitting a request for proposal (RFP) to expand the TED Program to provide Android devices in addition to iOS devices.
- In the past, 3G network devices were provided to consumers. They will be discontinued at the end of the year. TED specialists are contacting TED clients to replace the 3G devices with 4G devices.
- Virtual presentations are being offered to service providers and consumers to explain more about the services provided by the TED Program.

## Minnesota Relay (MR) Feedback

No feedback.

## Regional Needs and Gaps

- Dennis shared his experience with a telecommunications company. Dennis was in the process of obtaining streaming services for a project with an association he is doing work for. He struggles to communicate by telephone with the telecommunications service company and they would not provide an email (because they do not have one) as an alternative method of communication. Dennis asked if this is a common occurrence for others. Rochelle asked that Dennis reach out to her about this instance. She explained there is a state and federal requirement for communication access and that a complaint should be filed with the Minnesota Department of Commerce or Public Utilities Commission and the Federal Communications Commission. Dan added this is a violation of the ADA (Americans Disabilities Act) Title III, which mandates the provision of communication access to public services. DHHS can also provide training to educate businesses on the importance of ADA adherence and communication access.

## New Business

- Position updates: DHHS is hoping to wrap up the human resources process and hire a Regional Services Supervisor soon. Teika Pakalns is now the Policy and Planning Specialist; she left her position as a Program Planner to fill the Policy and Planning Specialist position. The Program Planner position will be posted soon.
- Fiscal Year (FY) 22 and FY23 budget updates: COVID-19 impacted the division's budget, resulting in reductions but no impact on services. There are three positions that have not been filled and will remain parked. Three fleet vehicles will be eliminated. The biggest concern for budget cuts would be for FY23 because bigger reductions than expected will be required.
- Regional office facilities: There are currently five regional offices, and two (Rochester and Hibbing) satellite offices. The Rochester office will remain a satellite and the Hibbing satellite will close; the Hibbing office staff will continue teleworking and work from the Duluth office as needed. There is discussion of subleasing the Mankato office to another state agency.
- Legislative audit and updates: The Office of Legislative Audit (OLA) selected several state division's programs, including DHHS's, to audit. There were recommendations made for improvements and corrections for the TED program and for grant program compliance. In the past year, DHHS made these changes and DHHS is now fully compliant. DHHS will continue to practice the measures implemented.

- AC and Town Hall meetings: AC meetings will continue to be virtual until further notice. DHHSD is revisiting long-term plans of community and town hall meetings throughout the state. Town Hall Meetings will focus on one or two main topics in each region. Once the pandemic subsides, it will be easier to determine what things will look like for in-person meetings. Currently, there is talk of having “Virtual Talks” that can serve as virtual town hall meetings once every quarter to connect with members about specific topics until an in-person town hall meeting can occur. Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) specialists will facilitate these meetings.
- Telehealth services: The Department of Human Services (DHS) is studying the provision of telehealth services in relation to equity and accessibility. DHHSD has used video platforms to provide services for a very long time and are ahead of the rest of DHS, and so Dan, DHHSD Director, is participating in the committee tasked with studying this issue to provide insight and guidance. He can provide a strong perspective regarding accessibility for people who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, and late-deafened. Proposed best practices for telehealth services addressing internet connectivity, equipment recommendations, the use of varying languages, etc. are being considered.
- Central office operations and mental health (MH) program updates:
  - Central office operations updates:
    - Two new trainings introduce consumers and entities to the use of Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) services. These [new video trainings](https://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/learning-center/trainings/) (https://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/learning-center/trainings/) are now available on the DHHSD website.
    - [Introduction to Video Remote Interpreting \(VRI\) for Consumers](https://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/learning-center/trainings/#/detail/appId/1/id/491010) (https://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/learning-center/trainings/#/detail/appId/1/id/491010)
    - [Introduction to Video Remote Interpreting \(VRI\) for Entities](https://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/learning-center/trainings/#/detail/appId/1/id/491016) (https://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/learning-center/trainings/#/detail/appId/1/id/491016)
    - Lutheran Social Services (LSS) is now the provider for the statewide Deaf Mentor Family Program. LSS received a grant from DHHSD to provide these services.
    - Central office operations continue to provide support to the various statewide grantees that receive DHHSD’s specialized services.
  - Mental Health (MH) updates:
    - Dr. John Gournaris reported 85% of all 313 of consumers in FY21 achieved their individualized treatment plan goals or were in good progress to achieving these goals. MH staff made 3,075 contacts during FY21.
    - People Incorporated opened their drop-in center on Tuesdays as of July.
    - Regions Hospital’s Health and Wellness program provided counseling services to 85 deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing consumers.
    - LifeConnect Health provided psychiatric services to 14 deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing consumers.
    - Ninety-two children were served collectively by Volunteers of America and Therapeutic Services Agency. Metro Educational Cooperative Service Unit (ECSU) completed 27 psychological evaluations in greater Minnesota.
    - Dr. Gournaris and a colleague published a peer reviewed scholarly article, ["Healthcare Altruism and Dysconscious Healthism in the Delivery of Integrated Healthcare Services to Individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind"](https://nsuworks.nova.edu/jadara/vol54/iss2/3/) (https://nsuworks.nova.edu/jadara/vol54/iss2/3/)

- Telecommunication Access Minnesota: Rochelle went through the PowerPoint explaining services, programs and common questions received over the years. For a copy of this PowerPoint, contact [dhs.dhhsd@state.mn.us](mailto:dhs.dhhsd@state.mn.us).

## **Minnesota Commission Of the Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH) Updates**

Calla shared the following from the Southeast Advisory Committee's MNCDHH Representative:

- Two RFPs will be published soon. 1) Recruitment of deaf and hard of hearing community members to help with promotional information, outreach, and engagement. 2) Citizen Advocate video campaign series to provide tips and resources for people who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing to advocate for change.
- Items from the 2021 legislative session will continue into 2022. These items are: establishing an interim interpreter licensure board, captioning in public places, accessibility grant for local governments, defining CDI (Certified Deaf Interpreter) in the education law, defining deafblind intervenors in the education law, and fixing statutes to include early intervention services at Metro Deaf School (MDS).
- New items being considered for the 2022 legislative session are: American Sign Language (ASL) teacher licensure, language acquisition tracking for early intervention, insurance coverage for hearing aids for adults, requiring telecoil education by providers, access to truck driving schools for people with hearing loss, communication access protocols in emergency situations, parent accommodations for IEPs (Individualized Education Plan), mandating impact statements prior to legal sentencing, braille labels on prescription bottles and communication facilitators for phone calls.
- MNCDHH hired two new staff members, Danelle Gournaris is the Collaborative Plan Program Director and Alicia Lane-Outlaw is the Government Relations Director.
- If anyone knows of someone who would be interested in participating on the SW AC and being a representative for the commission, please contact [dhs.dhhsd@state.mn.us](mailto:dhs.dhhsd@state.mn.us) and ask to speak with Calla Kevan.

### **Announcements: All members**

- No announcements.

### **Next Meeting**

Calla will send an email to all members to confirm the next meeting date.

**Meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.**