

Meeting Minutes: Southeast DHHSD Advisory Committee, 05/13/2022

Date: 05/13/2022, 10 a.m. - Noon
Minutes prepared by: TJay Middlebrook
Location: Virtual on Zoom

Attendance

- Members
 - Lloyd Ballinger
 - Matt Heidenwirth
 - Chandra Petersen
 - Sonny Wasilowski
 - Ashley Worthen-Galuska
- Absent: Wes Brandenburger, Melissa Cummins, Ridge Euler, Annette Peters
- Captioner and Interpreters
 - Maria Dively-Rodriguez, DHHSD Interpreter
 - Michelle Remer, DHHSD Interpreter
 - Jayne, Veritext Captioner
- DHHSD Staff
 - Calla Kevan, DHH Specialist
 - Dan Millikin, DHHSD Director
 - TJay Middlebrook, Regional Services Supervisor
- Others Present
 - Christy Leach, Consumer Directions, Inc. (CDI)
 - Brandon McElroy, ABC 6 News/KAAL

Agenda

- Call to Order/Introductions/Handouts/Communication Ground Rules
- Land Acknowledgment Statement
- Acceptance of January 28, 2022, Meeting Minutes
- Regional Update Report
- Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program
- Regional Needs and Gaps
- New Business

- Guest Speakers
- Minnesota Commission for the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH) Updates
- Announcements: All members
- Next Meeting Date

Call to Order/Introductions/Handouts/Communication Ground Rules

Calla Kevan called the Southeast advisory committee (AC) meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. The January 28, 2022, meeting minutes, Regional Update Report, Hear for the health of it, links for Signs of hearing loss and Tinnitus, Using Zoom for DHHSD webinars, DBCDS General Program Description, TTAP Program Guidelines, and the agenda for the meeting were sent out by email before the meeting. For a copy of these items, contact dhs.dhhsd@state.mn.us.

Land Acknowledgment Statement

Calla read the Land Acknowledgment Statement.

Guest Speaker

Christy Leach from Consumer Directions, Inc. (CDI) shared information about the services provided by CDI and answered questions. Two documents were shared prior to the meeting.

Questions: Why does a SSP (Support Service Provider) have to purchase a ticket to accompany their clients instead of having venues cover the expenses for SSP?

Acceptance of January 28, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Chandra moved to accept the meeting minutes as written. Matt seconded the motion, and the minutes were accepted as written.

Regional Update Report

- Sonny mentioned that the new publication Hear for the health of it, did not prioritize learning sign language. Sonny would like DHHSD to refocus and consider providing ASL language resources.
- Chandra asked about the status of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services for offices and specialists statewide.

- Sonny shared information about supply of interpreters and Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) search engine for interpreters in Minnesota. There is currently no public registry for Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA). The Minnesota Department of Education has a registry.
- Sonny asked about how DHHSD provides support to school districts for students who have deaf students and making sure they have appropriate accommodations.
- Lloyd shared a concern about how children are learning ASL and if it is from interpreters and hearing individuals or from deaf ASL signers. He added that parents do not always know their rights for their children's needs.

Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program

Updates

- TED Program is producing a video focusing on physical and speech disability. Once the video is completed, it will be shared within the organizations that serve those communities.
- The Northeast TED specialist position will be posted next month. The plan is to expand the counties served per region, and four TED specialists will provide services instead of five. Sarah is working on updating the service area map.
- TED specialists are now providing home visits (if needed), presentations and booths in person.
- New promotional flyers were developed to reach out to people who have physical/speech disabilities, and Latine and Black communities. The Latine flyer is available in both English and Spanish.
- The TED Program also has posters in different languages: Arabic, Bosnian, Kurdish, Nepali, and Somali.

Minnesota Relay (MR) Feedback

- Sonny provided feedback that it is important for relay service providers to be in Minnesota. This will ensure they are familiar with Minnesota terminology and geographical locations.

Regional Needs and Gaps

- Lloyd shared he has noticed missing information on television and internet for emergency services and weather alerts. He noticed gaps and missed information in realtime captioning. Brandon from ABC 6 News/KAAL responded. ABC 6 News/KAAL provides realtime captioning during severe weather. The station receives grants from DHHSD to provide realtime captioning, and Brandon asked members to please contact the station if there are issues with captioning and shared his contact information. They had issues with their previous realtime captioning

provider due to staffing coverage. Brandon shared that the station has switched to another provider during the last couple months of this year's agreement.

- Sonny shared that there needs to be more schools or colleges programs offering interpreting and captioning as well as deaf education and Blind Visually Impaired (BVI) programs in the area. He is concerned about quality of interpreters in the region.
- Chandra shared that there is a need for independent living services tailored towards people who are deaf and hard of hearing not only in the Southeast region but statewide. She refers her participants to independent living services providers. Although many will provide interpreters, the issue is having to wait for interpreters to be available for meetings. This means service is not as quick compared to what someone who can hear may experience. Chandra asked about a grant to fund a deaf or signing provider for independent living services statewide.
- Chandra asked for future advisory committee meetings to keep number of presenters to a minimum so they can focus on the needs of the deaf community and less on learning about services they can read about. The focus of the advisory committee is to share needs and gaps in the region and that is why the members are here so spending time on presentations and not having enough time for region needs and gaps does not allow them to provide feedback.
- TJay added that the deafblind community has been wanting more feedback and resources also they are sharing the information. He is working on setting up a workgroup to improve services when it comes to communication needs and gaps for the deaf and deafblind community. There has been a focus on the deafblind community to help identify those needs and gaps and mitigate the needs. TJay shared information about emergency communication cards and working with the deafblind community for feedback. He invites members to share those who may be interested in connecting and becoming involved with the community. He thanked the group for the feedback and appreciates those feedback.

New Business

- Dan shared that the division is getting close to the end of the fiscal year 2022 and it has been quiet. They are currently working on terminology for the telehealth bill and expanding to include video communication to ensure telehealth is inclusive when it comes to signing communication or using interpreters through a video platform. The group is working on the implementation portion which is coming up next.
- Budget continues to be steady. Operational costs were discussed and the budget for fiscal year 2023 has been balanced and they are strategizing for fiscal year 2024-2025 to cover vacancies and costs. Dan mentioned that everything looks good and there are no reductions on grant funding and providers can continue to provide their services. Department of Human Services prioritize and value grants and see that as a great priority for providing services to our communities.

- TJay announced that Lindsey Moon, the new Information and Referral Specialist, will start on May 25. Lindsey will be able to connect individuals who contact DHHSD to the programs and specialists based on their needs.
- TJay shared updates on DHHSD grants. Several DHHSD grants provide specialized training to improve communication access the individuals who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing. These grants also improve the skillset of interpreters who serve those populations. A few examples are:
 - Video Remote Training – specialized training for working with people who are deafblind, low-vision and speaking deafblind.
 - Mentoring to Excellence – provides deaf and ASL interpreter mentors to pre-certified and newly certified interpreters working in Greater Minnesota.
 - Specialized medical and health interpreting training for interpreters working in Greater Minnesota.
 - Protactile and other communication systems training is provided to 1) individuals who are deafblind 2) interveners 3) support service providers 4) interpreters. Training is also available for other service providers who serve individuals who are deafblind.
 - People who are deafblind and need access to assistive technology or services and supports have access to two different Intervener and Support Service Provider (SSP). These programs provide access to on-going intervener or SSP support and/or technology that helps the person maintain or improve their independence.
 - If you have questions about any of the DHHSD grants or would like additional information, please contact your local DHHSD regional specialist.
- TJay shared that the content on the DHHSD website as well as accessibility features. Lloyd added that he appreciated the updates about the website. Lloyd noticed that the Department of Aging does not have a lot of information about language access on their website. Dan shared that Disability Services Division will start under Continuing Care for Older Adults division in July and our division will be able to continue provide resources and services for that population.

Guest Speaker

Brandon McElroy from KAAL ABC 6 News shared information about realtime captioning services and grant they receive from DHHSD. Brandon answered questions.

Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH) Updates

- Chandra shared that there are links to MNCDHH website regarding legislative updates, collaborative experience and other events that will be occurring. The document with links and

information was sent out to members prior to the meeting. There is a board meeting on Friday, May 20. This will be the first one that will be held in person since 2020. The board meeting is open to the public if anybody is interested in joining the board meeting and those who are interested can check out the MNCDHH website for details. Chandra informed the members that if there is anything that needs to be brought to the commission, or if there are any questions, comments, or concerns, members can reach out to her.

Announcements: All members

- Sonny shared that Minnesota State Academies will host a virtual open house on Tuesday, May 17 focused on all areas including early childhood education, elementary, high school, adult learning for example. It will be posted on YouTube. There is a play list available, and he will share with members.
- Sonny also said he has been working with MNCDHH on getting closed captions on in all public spaces. He shared that Representative Daniels is continuing the effort and they will continue to monitor the bill.

Next Meeting

Calla will send an email to members to set the next meeting date in October.

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

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