

## Meeting Minutes: Southwest DHHS Advisory Committee, 02/11/2022

Date: 02/11/2022 10 a.m. - Noon

Minutes prepared by:

Location:

### Attendance

- Members
  - Chad Richardson
  - Gretchen Spear
- Absent: Lisa Dembouski, Howard Rosten, Jacqui Shasky
- CART and Interpreters
  - Michelle Remer, DHHS Interpreter
  - Maria Dively-Rodriguez, DHHS Interpreter
  - Yoo Jean Yi, Veritext Captioner
- DHHS Staff
  - Calla Kevan, DHH Specialist
  - Jeanne Kolo-Johnson, Lead DHH Specialist
  - Dan Millikin, DHHS Director
  - TJay Middlebrook, Regional Services Supervisor
  - Sarah Maheswaran, TED Program Administrator
- Others Present
  - Rochelle Garrow, Telecommunications Access Minnesota (TAM)
  - Amy Perron, System of Technology to Achieve Results (STAR) Program
  - Amie Miller, Twin Cities Public Television (TPT)
  - Kari Kennedy, TPT

### Agenda

- Call to Order/Introductions/Handouts/Communication Ground Rules
- Acceptance of October 29, 2021 Meeting Minutes
- Regional Update Report
- Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program
- Regional Needs and Gaps
- New Business
- Minnesota Commission for the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH) Updates
- Announcements
- Next Meeting Date

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

Calla Kevan called the Southwest advisory committee (AC) meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. The October 29, 2021 meeting minutes, Regional Update Report, Understanding hearing loss: A guide for law enforcement, STAR Program PowerPoint, TPT PowerPoint, 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](mailto:dhs.dhhsd@state.mn.us).

## Land Acknowledgment Statement

Calla read the Land Acknowledgment Statement.

## Acceptance of October 29, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Gretchen moved to accept the meeting minutes as written. Chad seconded the motion, and the minutes were accepted as written.

## Regional Update Report

- How can DHHS help? A virtual chat - Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division (DHHS) hosted a virtual chat on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. During this event, Deaf and Hard of Hearing specialists provided an overview of DHHS services, and ways staff can connect with people throughout the state. This event also generated some follow up contacts.
- Update report – No comments or questions were shared.

## Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program

### Updates

- TED Program specialists continue to work from home. Staff go into the St. Paul office once a week to process TED applications. TED specialists then serve the clients remotely and the vendor sends equipment directly to the client.
- Staff have been trying to provide virtual presentations and making cold calls to do outreach to agencies to provide information about the TED Program and program updates. If committee members know of agencies who might benefit from a presentation, they should contact Sarah.
- The TED Program has a newly designed TED application and a separate brochure with program information. Clients can use the new application to apply for services, or they may apply online. Find the new brochure and application at:
  - [What is the TED Program?](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfservlet/Public/DHS-4005D-ENG) (https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfservlet/Public/DHS-4005D-ENG)
  - [TED Program Application](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfservlet/Public/DHS-4005-ENG) (https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfservlet/Public/DHS-4005-ENG)
- Full distribution of iPads and iPhones began in July. Specialists use a very specific screening process to ensure clients can use the equipment or they can learn to use the equipment on their own because staff

cannot travel to provide training. Clients who receive iPhones must also set up their own phone plan. A Request for Proposals, or RFP, will be posted soon to expand the program to include Android devices.

## **Minnesota Relay (MR) Feedback**

- No feedback was provided.

## **Regional Needs and Gaps**

- Gretchen, who works for Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) has found many providers will not work with VRS clients to fit them with hearing aids because VRS follows the MA contract, which does not pay well for hearing aids. Consequently, consumers must travel far distances to get hearing aids.
- Chad shared he has had the opportunity to do some presentations in the region and has received more referrals for children's mental health services. He also has several clients in the Minneapolis area.

## **New Business**

- The Mankato office – The office in the past housed six staff members and currently only houses one staff person. The Mankato office has the most expensive lease in the Division and two fleet vehicles have been assigned to that office. Because funding levels remain the same, but operations cost more, expenses need to be decreased, and the decision has been made to close the Mankato office. The Southwest region will continue to receive services, but those services will be provided remotely and in other creative ways.
- Personnel:
  - Dan will be out for paternity leave soon. While he is out, Amy McQuaid-Swanson will assume the position of Interim Division Director. Dan will be out of the office for approximately 2 months.
  - The planner position left vacant when Teika Pakalns moved to the Policy and Planning Specialist position will be posted soon. The planner position will oversee grants.
  - An Information and Referral Specialist position will be posted soon; this position will be a front line position and will obtain information about the consumers, and then referring the requests to the correct staff for services and assistance.

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

Calla shared information received from the Southeast representative to the Commission.

- The Commission's board voted on the legislative agenda. The top legislative items include:
  - Telecoil education.
  - Deafblind interveners in the classroom.
  - Inclusive requirements for Commission board appointments.

- MNCDHH will also support the following bills which are led by others:
  - An interpreter licensure board.
  - Closed captioning in public places.
  - Certified deaf interpreters (CDIs) in the classroom.
  - Local government website accessibility.
  - IEP process accommodations for parents.
- For more information, visit the website [Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, Deafblind & Hard of Hearing](https://mn.gov/deaf-commission) (https://mn.gov/deaf-commission).
- MNCDHH hosted two question and answer sessions about current legislative agendas. They will send out a recording of the second session.
- St. Anthony Main, an independently owned movie theater in Minneapolis that had agreed to provide open captioning for their film showings, has been sold. MNCDHH is advocating to have the new owners caption the films shown at the theater.
- MNCDHH has begun civic engagement work because elections will take place on November 8, 2022. They will co-host an event with special guests U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar and Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon. Dave Haggen, former Pulitzer Prize winner and editorial writer will moderate.
- MNCDHH hosted focus groups so underserved communities could share their perspectives on potential legislative items, gaps and needs, the Commission's vision and the strategic plan.
- Calla asked if any members would like to represent the AC to MNCDHH or if they know of anybody in the Southwest Region interested in serving on the MNCDHH Board. The Southwest AC continues to need a representative. Contact Calla with questions.

## Guest Speakers

- Amy Perron, System of Technology to Achieve Results (STAR) Program – Amy shared information about the STAR Program and answered questions. A PowerPoint was shared prior to the meeting.
- Amie Miller and Kari Kennedy, Twin Cities Public Television (TPT) – Amie and Kari shared information about the captioning grant they receive from DHHSD to caption the Almanac and the Almanac at the Capital, and they answered questions. A PowerPoint was shared prior to the meeting.

## Announcements: All members

- No announcements were shared.

## Next Meeting

Calla will send an email to members to set the next meeting date. Choices will include May 20<sup>th</sup> and June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## The meeting adjourned at 11:29 a.m.

