

## Meeting Minutes: Upper Northwest DHHSD Advisory Committee, 01/27/2022

Date: 01/27/2022, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
Minutes prepared by: Jeanne Kolo-Johnson  
Location: Virtual by Zoom

### Attendance

- Members
  - Rebecca Benke-Hinckley
  - Beth Budziszewski
  - Leslie Carnegie-Hilde
  - Briana Efta
  - Les Fairbanks
- Absent: Michele Ostgard, Ann Marie Srnsky
- CART and Interpreters
  - Michelle Remer, DHHSD Interpreter
  - Maria Dively-Rodriguez, DHHSD Interpreter
  - Megan, Veritext Captioner
- DHHSD Staff
  - Jeanne Kolo-Johnson, Lead DHH Specialist
- Jerry Geist, DHH Specialist
- Dan Millikin, DHHSD Director
- TJay Middlebrook, Regional Services Supervisor
- Sarah Maheswaran, TED Program Administrator
- Others Present
  - Rochelle Garrow, Telecommunication Access Minnesota (TAM)
  - Katy Kelly, Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing
  - Lori Vigesaa, Therapeutic Services Agency

### Agenda

- Call to Order/Introductions/Handouts/Communication Ground Rules
- Land Acknowledgment Statement
- Acceptance of November 4, 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

Jeanne called the Upper Northwest Advisory Committee (AC) meeting to order at 10:35. Members and guests were welcomed. The November 4, 2021 Upper Northwest AC meeting minutes, Regional Update Report, Understanding hearing loss: A guide for law enforcement, and the agenda for the meeting were distributed via email. For a copy of any of these items, contact [dhs.dhhsd@state.mn.us](mailto:dhs.dhhsd@state.mn.us).

## Land Acknowledgment Statement

Jeanne read the Land Acknowledgment Statement. DHHS staff acknowledge use of this statement is only the beginning of their equity work. If there are questions, contact Jeanne.

## Acceptance of November 4, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Les moved to accept the minutes as written. Leslie seconded the motion, and the minutes were accepted as written.

## Regional Update Report

- How can DHHS help? Virtual chat (Jerry) – A DHHS virtual chat will be hosted on February 3<sup>rd</sup> from 6:30-8 p.m. Staff will present information about what DHHS can do for the community. The presentation will last for approximately 45 minutes, followed by time for discussion and questions. Check out the website for more information and to register.
- Update report – This report was sent out prior to the meeting. No questions were asked about the report.

## Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program, Sarah Maheswaran

### Updates

- The TED program has a newly designed application. The program description and the application have been separated into two documents: a program flyer and an application. These are available online:
  - [What is the TED Program?](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-4005D-ENG) (https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-4005D-ENG)
  - [TED Program Application](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-4005-ENG) (https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-4005-ENG)
- TED staff continue to work from home and are not able to provide home visits. Once staff determine what equipment to send, the vendor sends it directly to the consumer and then staff works with service providers and family to do training and equipment setup.

- TED staff are trying to do outreach presentations for providers virtually. If you know of any organizations who might be interested, contact Sarah.
- Distribution of smart phones and tablets has started. Staff conduct careful assessments of consumers to make sure equipment goes to people who are able and who will use the equipment. Apple products are currently being distributed but a Request for Proposals (RFP) will be posted soon to expand the program to include android devices. The equipment includes preinstalled apps.

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

- No feedback was provided.

### **Regional Needs and Gaps**

- No needs or gaps in services were identified.

### **New Business, Dan Millikin**

- Introduction to TJay Middlebrook, Regional Services Supervisor – TJay joined DHHSD on December 1 and he has been very busy with required trainings, meeting staff, attending AC meetings and with other things. DHHSD's goal is to be the one-stop resource center for everybody's hearing loss needs.
- There will be two jobs posted: One will be a grant manager who will oversee grants and some work with data and information, to be posted sometime in the spring; and the other will be an information and referral specialist, to be posted as soon as possible. The person hired to fill this position will be the first access point for everybody who contacts our office. This position should be posted in the next week or two.
- Legislative agenda – The legislative session begins on January 31. DHHSD does not have any major legislative proposals currently. The division is focusing on what is happening for the Department of Human Services (DHS). DHS has several high priorities, including behavioral health, at risk homelessness, support for workers, pandemic related support, and increased supports for people who have needs. DHHSD is consulting on these projects, and on some that fall under the health care administration. One proposal updates the language around telehealth services to include video telehealth services. Most telehealth services have been provided over the telephone and through audio only, which has not been accessible for people who use sign language or real-time captioning services.
- Budget – The budget will not change. Grant services will also remain the same. Some grant monies are being used to develop training modules to be posted to the website; if committee members recognize a need for information to be included on the website, contact DHHSD to share those ideas.
- Return to work – There is no set date for staff to return to their offices to work. Urgent needs for in person client visits are considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **Guest Speaker, Lori Vigesaa, Therapeutic Services Agency (TSA)**

Lori described the mental health services TSA provides for children birth to age 22, and the trends in Northwest Minnesota.

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

- Les commented MNCDHH needs to change the language in the law about who board members are.
- There are four major bills MNCDHH is working on currently:
  - An interpreter licensure bill.
  - ASL teacher licensure bill.
  - Closed captioning in public places.
  - A T-coil bill.
- Les questioned the need for T-coils. Jeanne and Jerry gave him information about the difference between T-coils and Bluetooth technology. T-coils are useful in large group settings like churches, theaters, and conferences. People who cannot afford Bluetooth technology may use T-coils to connect to their telephones and other devices. Bluetooth technology is useful for 1:1 and connecting to other technology such as smart phones.

## **Announcements: All members**

- No announcements were made.

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be in May. Jeannie will send an email with potential dates to members to set the date.

**The meeting adjourned at 12:31 p.m.**

