

DRAFT
Department of Rehabilitation Services
67 Prospect Avenue, 3rd Floor
Hartford, CT 06106-2980

Advisory Board Meeting: September 8, 2014
Minutes

Members in Attendance:

Luisa Soboleski, Board Chairperson
William Rivera, Designee, Department of Children & Families
Mary Silvestri, Deaf Member
Amy Mirizzi, Designee, Department of Public Health
Terri-Lynn Johnston, Designee, Department of Social Services
Matt Ranelli, Parent of student in oral education program

Members Not Present:

Raymond DeRosa, Parent of student enrolled in public school
Jeff Bravin, Executive Director, American School for the Deaf, Ex-Officio Member
Sandra McGee, President of CCOSD, Ex-Officio Member
Mary Lynch, Hard of Hearing Member, Office of State Comptroller
Colleen Hayles, Designee, Department of Education
Jane Whitehead, Designee, Department of Developmental Services
Bernice Zampano, Designee, Department of Labor

Vacant Positions:

Designee from DMHAS
Consultant for Hearing Impaired Programs, Ex-Officio
Otolaryngologist licensed to practice in the State of Connecticut (filled effective 9/4/14)
Deaf / Hard of Hearing Member
Parent of a deaf child
Parent of a student enrolled at ASD

DORS Staff Present:

Amy Porter, Commissioner
Sara Gerhold, Interpreter Coordinator
Dwight Godwin, Interpreter Coordinator
Melissa Dennis, Counselor
Maryann Dayton-Fitzgerald, Counselor
Andrew Norton, DORS Legislative Liaison

Guests Present:

Patty Wilson
Sue Pederson
Mike Fiorino
Harvey Corson
Lisa Hoffeith, Department of Children and Families

Keith Vinci
Leslie Warren

Interpreters:
Heidi Catalan and Kerr

CART Reporter:
Sharon Masse

Report out from CRID

While waiting for a quorum, Keith Vinci provided his report on behalf of the Connecticut Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (CRID). He described their work on the proposed interpreting legislation, and indicated that there is a lot of work involved in thinking through the Monitoring Board, including their conduct, agency involvement, etc. Keith also reported that CRID has been working closely with the community, including CAN, ASD and DORS, and they were recently cited as being the most progressive and effective chapter of RID in the region. Their next meeting is scheduled for September 12th, with a follow up meeting with DORS on September 16th.

Amy Porter also reported that there is a meeting scheduled with the State Department of Education to talk about the legislation as it relates to educational interpreters.

Call to Order, Acceptance of Agenda, Minutes and Adjournment Time:

Luisa Soboleski called meeting to order at 1:46. Acceptance of the agenda and minutes from the June meeting.

DORS Report

Commissioner's Update: Amy Porter presented a brief department update. She indicated that the Department has recently posted additional interpreter positions, and that interviews will be scheduled in the very near future. She reported on some of the work that has been happening around emergency preparedness, including the new Red Cross video, which is a great tool to help individuals who are deaf in their preparation for emergencies. She also reported on the release of Connecticut's first report on emergency preparedness, and she will share copies with the Board members. It is clear in this report that they are looking at the availability of interpreters during emergencies, and progress is being made in this area. Amy also reported out on a recent conversation with Scott Devico from Emergency Management. He indicated that CT-N, the TV station that records much of the activity in state government, will be using a two-camera approach where the speaker will be filmed by one camera, and the interpreter will be filmed by the other. This will enable the station to have a separate box for the interpreter, and be more consistent in their access.

Interpreting Unit Report: Sara Gerhold and Dwight Godwin presented a report for the interpreting unit.

- Staffing: They reported that additional interpreter positions have been posted to replace vacant positions, including four interpreters who have left since last Spring. We currently have 37 interpreters, 31 of whom work 20+ hours/week.
- Work Cycle: Summer is typically a slower time, but for the new semester, we are working with 11 colleges, 29 different students in 94 total courses. We are also supporting 2 school districts for K-12 interpreting, and need to continue to maintain a balance. We are also working with the

Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCDs) in the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) to meet their needs with a temporary pilot.

- Registrations: DORS has 278 registered interpreters, 130 that live in CT. Many of the others work with VRI companies. This information is all on the DORS website.
- Assignments: A report of current statistics was shared, and Sara pointed out that there were 6,382 assignments, with 23,252 hours of work. May and June look a little different because the college courses ended, but there is an increase because of the BRS pilot. This is a large volume of work with a shortage of staff interpreters.

Counseling Unit Report: Melissa Dennis and Mary Ann Dayton-Fitzgerald presented a brief report for the counseling unit, sharing data that covered the time period from the last meeting as well as this meeting. They continue to work collaboratively with other agencies and organizations, including CAN and OPA, DCF and DMHAS. They presented two sets of data, one from April 1 through June 1, and the second from June 1 through September 1. A summary of the April to June data includes 118 counseling sessions, and 63 inquiries for topics such as counseling services, assistive technology, hearing aid funding, housing, case management and other topics. Similar patterns from June through September but with increasing numbers. There were questions from Board members related to the ability to bill for services, the impact on student testing in schools. This last question led to a request to have further discussions about the current testing at our next Board meeting. Luisa will invite Janet Stuck and Christie Alboretti to the next meeting.

Old Business

Luisa reviewed the status of Board membership, and listed the vacancies. Luisa announced that Dr. Carl Moeller has been appointed to the Board as of yesterday. The appointment for Harvey Corson is pending. Amy Porter encouraged Board members to reach out to individuals who they think might be interested in joining our Board, as we continue to have vacancies.

New Business

Luisa presented dates for the 2015 Board meetings. The following dates were approved by a vote of the Board.

- February 9th (postponement date of February 17th)
- April 6th (postponement date of April 14th)
- June 8th (postponement date of June 16th)
- September 14th (postponement date of September 22nd)
- November 9th (postponement date of November 17th)

Andrew Norton reported out on research he did following the last meeting about the costs related to proposed hearing aid legislation. He already sent an email to the Board describing the information he received.

Andrew will continue to track legislation around hearing aids or other issues that impact services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. They are currently working with 12 individuals, and they are networking in the community and making referrals back to BESB when appropriate. They are also beginning to work with individuals who are aging and deaf, some with mobility or communications issues, and they have a grant from the North Central Area Agency on Aging. She introduced Patty Wilson, director and Michael Fiorino, bookkeeper.

Announcements

Sue Pederson gave an overview of the services provided by CAN, which was established in 2005. Their primary focus at this point is work with the deaf-blind population, and they are working as a contractor for BESB.

There was also a reminder that the Deaf Interagency meeting is scheduled for late September, so the next Board meeting could include a report out from anyone who attended.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

Next Meeting

November 10th, 2014