



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS  
LANSING

RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

MATTHEW WESAW  
DIRECTOR

**APPROVED**  
**DODDBHH ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**Friday, February 27, 2015**  
**10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**  
**Detroit Metro Airport Marriott**  
**30559 Flynn Drive**  
**Romulus, MI 48174**

**Council Members Present**

Jill Gaus, Chair  
Elizabeth Bystrycki  
Jeannette Johnson  
Elizabeth Kobylak  
Carole Mehling  
Kathy Mitchell

**Council Members Excused**

David Barbour  
Helen Boucher  
Renea Forrest  
Miriam Horwitz

**Council Members Absent**

Patrick Baker

**DODDBHH Staff**

Chris Hunter, Acting Director  
Karlee Rose Gruetzner, Rights Representative  
William Milzarski, Rights Representative  
Christy Hill, Executive Secretary

**MDCR Executive Staff**

Matt Wesaw, Exec. Director, MDCR  
Lori Vinson, Director of Operations, MDCR  
Dan Levy, Director of Law and Policy, MDCR

**CART**

Sue Deer Hall, Screenline, LLC

**Interpreters**

James Cech  
Jennifer Doerr  
Jeanette Gladstone  
Janie Hernandez  
Mitch Holaly  
Jeff Plaxco  
Andrea Rehkopf  
Lisa Rowinski  
Bert Schwartz  
David Stuckless  
Jeremy Wakeman

**Support Service Providers**

Desere Nies  
Nick Chizmadia  
Nicholas Goodman  
Jessica Meek

## **VISITORS IN ATTENDANCE AT THE DODDBHH ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING**

Nan Asher, EHDI  
Jill Schefke  
Millie Hursin, Interpreter  
Lucas Glashover, LCC ITP  
Alexandra Smeage, LCC ITP  
Odessa Carter, SHIM  
Jennifer Schloegel, MCC  
Contrina Kelley, MCC ITP  
Ray Watts, Rep. Howrylak  
Karen Wisinski, Michigan Hands & Voices  
Karen Young  
Katie Oskam  
Colleen Rhinehart, Hurley Medical Center  
Amanda Raymond, MCC  
Amanda Sheppard, MCC  
Autumn Anderson, MCC  
Bethany McLain, Signing Pros, LLC  
Amanda Niven, MDCR  
Lee Gonzales, MDCR  
Lexie Metcalf, LCC ITP  
Amanda Simon, LCC ITP  
Justine Bryant, EHDI, LCC ITP  
Kelly Flores, OCC ITP  
Stephanie Newbourn, LCC ITP

Mandy Mann, LCC ITP  
Mikayla Johnson, MCC ITP  
Taylor Darling, MCC ITP  
Amanda Hreha, OCC ITP  
Elizabeth Flieman, LCC ITP  
Roman Likhnovsky  
Ann Liming, HLAA-MI  
Sara Herbrucke, LCC ITP  
Adam Spannagel, LCC ITP  
Nicole McClure, LCC ITP  
Melanie Gardnes, LCC ITP  
Alex Henderson, LCC ITP  
Allison Laune, LCC ITP  
Isabell Florence, MCC ITP  
Elizabeth Carter, LCC ITP  
Cara DiGiovanni  
Chloe Lovitt, LCC ITP  
Audrey Pleasant, HLA-MI  
Tony Ferack, HLA-MI  
Connie Tincknell-Yandure, DI  
Janet Jurus, RID, CI/CT, Interpreter  
Jennifer Adams, SSP  
Danielle Douglass, MCC ITP

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Jill Gaus, Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (DODDBHH) Advisory Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and welcomed everyone, introducing herself as newly elected Chair. She invited the group to read the Communication Policy. Karlee Rose Gruetzner explained the hands-down rule for the interpreters and reminded the Council to not overlap comments and to announce their name when speaking. Roll call was taken by Christy Hill and there was not a quorum to hold the meeting.

## **2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND THE OCTOBER 24, 2014 MEETING MINUTES**

Chair Gaus indicated that because there is not a quorum, voting for approval for both the Agenda and Meeting Minutes could not occur. She will, however, send the Council Members the protocol for e-voting. She asked the group if they had any changes to the agenda, and there were none.

Council Member Kobylak requested a change be made to her report in the October 24, 2014 Meeting Minutes, indicating that the Deaf Awareness Day sponsored by Michigan Deaf Association (MDA) last fall is misleading by using Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind language and numbers without those populations being included in the name of the event. She believes it is difficult to make people aware of the distinct identities of each population and to have an official proclamation such as the one that was signed by the Governor seems to promote the idea that one size fits all. She also indicated that during the April 25, 2014 DODDBHH Advisory Council Meeting, an ad hoc committee was formed to discuss and make a recommendation about the name change. However, the name of the Division had been changed without input from the ad hoc committee. The Advisory Council members received a notification about the name change through an e-mail press release.

Chair Gaus announced four Support Service Providers were at the meeting today, as volunteers, to perform Haptic Interpreting and thanked them for their service.

## **3. ACTING DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Acting Director Hunter greeted the group and introduced the DODDBHH staff: Karlee Rose Gruetzner, Rights Representative and Interpreter Coordinator; William Milzarski, Rights Representative; Christy Hill, Secretary; Lori Vinson, Director of MDCR Operations; Dan Levy, Director of MDCR Law and Policy; and Matt Wesaw, Director of the MDCR who will be joining the group shortly. He also welcomed to the group the new Council Members: Liz Bystrycki, Jeannette Johnson and Jill Gaus, newly elected Chair.

Acting Director Hunter gave a brief report on the following:

- VRI Service in DODDBHH Office: Staff is currently not using VRI which would be an effective means of communication in the office. He has been researching providers and hopes that it will be in the office soon.
- Short Term Goals:
  - Improve DODDBHH Communication: Responses to video phone and e-mail inquiries has greatly improved.

- Ensure That We Complete the BEI Ratings Promptly: All MI BEI Ratings have been completed within 90 business days, with over six Ratings conducted so far this fiscal year. Another Rating has been scheduled for March 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> 2015.
- Complete FAQs on the PA204 Rules: This is currently being worked on and should be completed soon.
- Develop Orientation to Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Presentation for the State Departments: Staff is currently working with the State Police, and more details will be forthcoming. Many other state departments have requested DODDBHH training and one is scheduled in March in Ann Arbor.
- Update Brochures, Pamphlets, Bookmark and Visor Cards: At this time they have been submitted for edits.
- First Quarter Report: It is located on the website at [www.michigan.gov/doddbhh](http://www.michigan.gov/doddbhh) Any questions or inquiries can be made to Director Hunter for response.
- BEI Raters Training on April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> 2015: Staff will be participating in Rating Training with staff from the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitation Services (DARS) office.
- Other:
  - Deaf Caucus, a legislative committee, has been created to work with Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing individuals to identify and resolve issues related to those communities.
  - A meeting was held on February 7<sup>th</sup> 2015 for people to voice their concerns regarding the hospital system.
  - An Interpreter Training Program (ITP) Summit was held on January 30<sup>th</sup> 2015. Representation from two ITP programs were present to discuss solutions related to the ITP programs. Acting Director Hunter indicated it was very successful and another will be planned at a later date.

#### **4. STATUS OF DODDBHH DIRECTOR AND RIGHTS REPRESENTATIVE POSITIONS**

Lori Vinson, MDCR Director of Operations, gave an update on the DODDBHH staff position vacancies. She reported that, currently, there are five individuals who applied for the Director position, some of whom do not reside in Michigan and reference checks are being conducted at this time. The Rights Representative position posting has closed with 12 interested individuals and it is anticipated that interviews will be held on March 17<sup>th</sup> 2015.

Also, Ms. Vinson indicated that March 20<sup>th</sup> 2015 is the deadline for interested individuals to apply to become a MI BEI Rater. Anyone interested in becoming a Rater can contact her directly for information at [vinsonl@michigan.gov](mailto:vinsonl@michigan.gov)

#### **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Gaus indicated a three minute timeline will be set for each person giving public comment, and five people requested to speak.

#### **6. COUNCIL REPORTS**

### **Council Chair Gaus**

Chair Gaus indicated that she is a DeafBlind individual who has Usher's Syndrome. Asher is her guide dog, and at the meeting today with her. She indicated she is both a co-founder and past President of Michigan DeafBlind and President of the American Association for the DeafBlind. She is currently the Chair for Helen Keller National Association in New York. She welcomed the other new Council Members and invited everyone to introduce themselves and give an update on their activities.

### **Council Member Johnson**

Council Member Johnson indicated she is happy to be on the Council and she is currently the Development Director at Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services in Grand Rapids. She also indicated that prior to that, she interned at the National Association of the Deaf.

### **Council Member Kobylak**

Council Member Kobylak indicated she is a person with profound hearing loss and is the current President of the Hearing Loss Association of Michigan and currently resides in Troy, Michigan. Her passion is her husband, cat, and grandchildren.

### **Council Member Mehling**

Council Member Mehling indicated she is from the Upper Peninsula and grew up using an oral program. As a Council Member, she is interested in working and encouraging people to become interpreters or find more interpreters interested in working in the UP.

### **Council Member Mitchell**

Council Member Mitchell indicated that she is from a large Deaf family, generationally. She was a clinical social worker for twenty years. She is now on a task force for people needing mental health services. She also indicated that her work on a Deaf Advocacy group led to the interest for a Deaf Caucus to be developed.

### **Council Member Bystrycki**

Council Member Bystrycki indicated she is very proud to be a new Council Member and she is a current resident in Otsego, which is on the west side of Michigan. Formerly, she was the 1978 Miss Deaf Michigan queen and a Board Member with the Michigan Deaf Association. She currently works with the interpreting programs in Kalamazoo Valley Community College and looks forward to working on changes and improvements.

### **Council Member Boucher**

Chair Gaus read Council Member Boucher's report in her absence:

The License Plate Committee found that government funding for DODDBHH would prevent monies be collected which would be put into the general funds and not earmarked to benefit DODDBHH. They suggest working with a community nonprofit organization.

Council Member Boucher reported that members of the interpreting community are concerned about a lack of endorsements and have questions they would like to have addressed.

She also indicated there is concern with the time it takes to update the interpreters' credentials and renewal date in the on-line interpreter directory because their names drop off until they pay their fees, which affect how they can work.

## **7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Bylaws Committee Report: Council Member Mehling distributed copies of the Bylaws and reported they discussed getting a co-Chair for the DODDBHH Advisory Council which, per the Bylaws, the Council can elect. Also, she requested input from Council Members.

Chair Gaus reminded the group they cannot vote today because there is not a quorum. She suggested the following changes:

- Part III - the DODDBHH name needs to be corrected
- Mission statement should be added
- Membership Part IV, #3 – include DB in the statement

She also asked for clarification of Section 7, which Council Member Mehling explained.

Acting Director Hunter indicated he will submit the Bylaws to the Governor's Office for review and they can vote at the next meeting. Chair Gaus added she will send the Council Members information related to e-voting.

License Plate Committee Report: Acting Director Hunter expanded on the I Love You symbol in ASL on the license plate idea. He suggested a fiduciary be established, but there has not been an agreement yet.

## **8. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Gaus indicated a three minute timeline will be set for each person giving public comment, and there was time for two people to speak before breaking for lunch.

### **LUNCH**

Chair Gaus announced the group will break from noon until 1:00 p.m. for a lunch break.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL**

### **Set Next Meeting Dates**

For the May Advisory Council Meeting, Acting Director Hunter reported it is not affordable to hold it in the U.P. Suggestions for venues in the northern part of the Lower Peninsula are welcome.

## **10. CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Gaus invited the one person requesting to give a public comment to come forward and do so.

## **11. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Council Member Kobylak reported the Hearing Loss Association will be holding an annual meeting at the State of Michigan Historical Museum and Library on April 18<sup>th</sup>. The Annual Walk 4 Hearing is scheduled for May 16<sup>th</sup> 2015 at the Kensington Metro Park to raise funds for issues related to hearing loss. She also requested everyone support HB 315 – a bi-partisan bill that gives a \$500.00 tax credit for each hearing aid for people of all ages. She invites everyone to join this on-line advocacy list.

Council Member Mehling reported that anyone interested in becoming an interpreter can contact her. She also indicated she is happy to report that Deaf people have been sending her messages via Facebook and e-mail to inquire about the Advisory Council Meetings dates and locations.

Chair Gaus indicated that Council Member Kobylak inquired whether the e-voting is written into the Bylaws, which she will research so it can be added. She also announced the DeafBlind will be holding their 19<sup>TH</sup> Annual Workshop in Holly, Michigan. She indicated there is downsizing due to one building loss so only interpreters and students will be invited to attend the event this year. However, next year is the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary so a large event will be planned.

Acting Director Hunter thanked Director Wesaw for his attendance at the meeting and announced this meeting would be his last as Acting Director and thanked everyone for coming.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Gaus thanked everyone for attending the meeting and asked everyone to join her in thanking Acting Director Hunter for his dedicated hard work to the DODDBHH for the past several months. She called for a Motion to adjourn. Council Member Kobylak moved and Council Member Mitchell seconded the Motion. The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.