



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS  
LANSING

MARLON I. BROWN, DPA  
ACTING DIRECTOR

## **MICHIGAN BOARD OF INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF, DEAFBLIND AND HARD OF HEARING**

**October 25, 2023**

### **APPROVED MINUTES**

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, 1976 PA 267, as amended, the Michigan Board of Interpreters for the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing met on October 25, 2023, at the Lansing Community College (LCC) West Campus, Cadillac Room (M-121 to 122), 5708 Cornerstone Drive, Lansing, Michigan, 48917.

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Heather Keel called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

#### **ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:** Mitch Holaly, Chairperson  
Sarah Houston, Vice-Chairperson  
April Davidson  
Miriam Andrade Cuevas  
James Cech  
Rowan O'Dougherty

**Members Absent:** Leslie Pertz  
Diana McKittrick  
Linda Sykora

#### **Staff Present:**

Larry Horvath, Bureau Director, Bureau of Community and Health Systems (BCHS)  
Heather Hosey, Division Director, Health Facility Licensing, Permits and Support, BCHS  
Colleen Curtis, Qualified Interpreter Program, BCHS  
Heather Keel, Analyst, Qualified Interpreter Program, BCHS  
Katrina Johnson, Human Resources Developer, Qualified Interpreter Program, BCHS

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION by Houston, seconded by Cech to approve the agenda as presented.

A voice vote followed.

MOTION PREVAILED

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOTION by Houston, seconded by Davidson, to approve the meeting minutes from the meeting on August 9, 2023.

A voice vote followed.

MOTION PREVAILED

## **APPROVAL OF NOTICE FOR 2024 MEETINGS**

MOTION by O'Dougherty, seconded by Houston, to approve the 2024 Meetings Public Notice.

A voice vote followed.

MOTION PREVAILED

## **APPROVAL TO POST NOTICE**

MOTION by Houston, seconded by Cech, to approve the posting of the 2024 Meetings Public Notice.

A voice vote followed.

MOTION PREVAILED

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Partner Updates**

#### **1. Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Low Incidence Outreach (LIO)**

John Kirsch from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Low Incidence Outreach (LIO) provided an update to the Board. Kirsch provided background on the program and current responsibilities as an outreach project. MDE-LIO serves teachers, consultants, and educational

interpreters, in addition to providing workshops and training opportunities, such as webinars and conferences.

MDE-LIO is currently working on PA 256, known as language equality and access or Lead K. Lead K started as a community effort to assure deaf children will have access to language. The average reading level for deaf students has remained at the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade level. The goal is to remove barriers that lead to limited access of language development to due accessibility. This will be accomplished by creating the developmental milestone checklist resource, along with tracking language outcomes of deaf and hard of hearing children ages 0 to 5.

Kirsch noted that MDE-LIO is a recipient of funds to accomplish this work. MDE-LIO will be working with the Office of Special Education (MDE-OSE) and the committee team to share progress updates. Kirsch noted there are interpreting guidelines in draft form that will assist school district to make sure deaf and hard of hearing students are receiving the services they require.

Kirsch discussed the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA), which is evaluated by Boys Town. A 4.0 or better scoring level is needed in Michigan to be qualified to work as an educational interpreter. Testing in Michigan is now available through Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services out of Grand Rapids. No other locations are available, but other organizations have inquired to be an approved testing site.

Kirsch mentioned there are two workshops being hosted in early 2024. Registration details for the workshops were provided, along with how to connect with MDE-LIO for updates and information.

## **2. Michigan Department of Civil Rights, Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (MDCR, DODDBHH)**

Annie Urasky with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (MDCR, DODDBHH) provided a partner update to the Board. Urasky mentioned the focus of the division is rights and effective communication for Michigan residents who identify as Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing. Urasky mentioned this means DODDBHH focuses on awareness regarding needs and experiences of people within the community, working on legislation, and communication access related issues.

Urasky discussed the Deaf Awareness Month events in Grand Rapids and Southfield. They mentioned seeing BCHS staff participate at these events. Urasky stated that DODDBHH was selected as one of seven states to partner with two universities for a five-month project to elevate healthcare skills for interpreters and focuses those in rural areas that might not have access to training and education. DODDBHH is also working with ITP programs to expand community understanding of the division, as well as conducting advocacy training.

Urasky noted that other key areas of focus are vocational rehab services and the needs of the aging population. They discussed the MDCR complaint process and provided statistical information.

## **B. Department Report**

Hosey welcomed the group and provided highlights regarding information technology changes, recent updates to the testing room and current collaborations with other agencies. They mentioned there is an administrative rules small workgroup that has been working to make the rules more concise and easier for interpreters and the community to navigate. Testing data was provided from 2023, in addition to a comparison of Michigan and Texas data from 2022.

The program presented a report of the MOIS data pull and statistics. Discussion regarding the limitations of the current database occurred.

### **Discussion**

Houston thanked the program for the effort to provide the data. They mentioned they are concerned that only half of the interpreters live in Michigan.

Cech thanked the program for the data, and mentioned this is information that has not been provided before. They inquired about the comparative testing data. They mentioned that Michigan needs to prepare to meet the needs of the aging population. They would like to know more about other states efforts and the university partnership five-month project.

Davidson noted that the document is useful and inquired if it will be posted online. They mentioned their role is to represent the ITP community. The data provided is beneficial to their school and program that has not recovered since COVID. There has been a robust conversation about recruiting for the field and preparing people to work. Colleges have responsibilities to the students, but also limitations.

Andrade Cuevas mentioned that a community plan for health care system is needed.

Holaly inquired if there is information available from the 2019 supply and demand study or needs assessment of interpreters. Discussion of the possibility of an updated study.

Cech mentioned that we need more interpreters for health care settings.

O'Dougherty noted the number of interpreters in Kent County and Northview School District.

Discussion occurred amongst the board regarding the home location of qualified interpreters.

Andrade Cuevas mentioned there is a need for understanding how many interpreters will be needed to accommodate the aging population.

Houston discussed underqualified interpreters in the school system and accountability. Suggested strengthening the rules.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comment was provided in-person:

Deb Atwood with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services provided comment to the Board. They noted the numbers are staggering and there is not enough education. Individuals are unsure of filing a complaint and who will find out. They are concerned about outside agencies and the volume of out of state interpreters without proper credentials in Michigan.

Comments provided via Zoom:

Sonya Harrison provided comment to the board. They thanked the Program for the data that was provided. They mentioned they would like to see more information on Deaf Interpreters (DI). They noted there is a need for training of DI so those people can become certified. They provided examples of working with companies who tried to use uncertified interpreters. Lastly, they are excited about the upcoming rules discussion.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by O'Dougherty, seconded by Houston, to adjourn the meeting at 12:57 p.m.

A voice vote was held.

MOTION PREVAILED

Prepared by:  
Heather Keel  
Bureau of Community and Health Systems

October 27, 2023