



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
LANSING

MARLON I. BROWN, DPA
DIRECTOR

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

January 29, 2025

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 January 29, 2025, 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 10:05 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mitch Holaly
Sarah Houston
April Davidson
James Cech
Rowan O'Dougherty
Miriam Andrade Cuevas

Members Absent: Diana McKittrick

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, Manager, Qualified Interpreter Program, BCHS
Heather Keel, Analyst, Qualified Interpreter Program, BCHS

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Cech, seconded by Houston to change the agenda by moving the Subcommittee Report – Interpreter Shortage Investigation, from New Business to Old Business.

With no objection, the motion was accepted.

MOTION by Holaly, seconded by Houston to approve the agenda with the modification.

A voice vote followed.

MOTION PREVAILED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Holaly, seconded by Davidson, to approve the meeting minutes from the meeting on October 16, 2024.

A voice vote followed. There was no objection, and one person abstained.

MOTION PREVAILED

OLD BUSINESS

A. Subcommittee Report – Interpreter Shortage Investigation

James Cech presented on behalf of the subcommittee, providing details about the investigation process, organizations and individuals that were contacted and the report's focus. The report included several findings and factors regarding the shortage of interpreters. Cech said the report may help with the Michigan survey and will be publicly available.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Partner Updates

1. Innivee Strategies

Shane Feldman provided a video update to the board. The project team's current tasks are designing survey questions and engaging community members to gather feedback on the design and content for the Needs Assessment project. Feldman said the data collection process will begin soon and include the survey, focus groups and a final report of the findings.

B. Department Report

Heather Hosey made introductions of BCHS staff in attendance. They provided information on several partnerships that the program is currently engaged with.

Hosey provided an update on the draft rules process, and reviewed testing data.

Discussion

Holaly inquired about complaints from September 2023 and what information is available. They said that there is no enforcement, discipline or penalties. Holaly noted that the complaint process is confusing to the community. They inquired about the 20 substitute interpreters and is there any additional information.

Houston mentioned that any interpreter just starting in the profession shouldn't be working with children.

Cech said the data needs to be provided, but there are barriers to collection. The current interpreter system is a hinderance, especially with the reliance on paper documents.

Houston said that more accountability is needed with interpreters working with Deaf children in schools.

Holaly inquired if people who fill out a substitute/underqualified application can be referred to MDE-LIO and let the parents know they have options. They said the school and parents may not know of available options.

Houston said this needs to be framed in a way that the process is more proactive.

Holaly said that board members may be able to research and report back to LARA.

Davidson inquired about getting more information and following up on complaints.

Holaly inquired about nursing homes and hospital complaints and how the process is structured. They asked if there could be a conversation with MDE about identifying which IEP students are Deaf and have a better understanding of what is going on. Holaly said that supportive data is needed to make better recommendations.

Andrade Cuevas asked if a proactive approach can be used in reaching out to health and school systems to determine what communication barriers, they deal with that need to be addressed.

Davidson inquired if there is still a 90-day turnaround for testing results. They are willing to reach out to ITP directors to coordinate training opportunities. Davidson hopes that other programs will be able to join a training at LCC or possibly host at their college or university.

Holaly inquired if exams are immediately sent to Texas or are they held and sent in batches. They noted the pressure point is the Texas process.

Cech said that in doing some research, BEI is not the only exam with a delay. Other exams have announcement systems of availability posted online.

Holaly said they aren't sure if there are any recent changes or improvements to the TEP. They inquired if LARA could reach out to Texas. They are concerned about the age of the test and wonder if grammar is current.

Davidson inquired about a field on testing applications to indicate what ITP or program the applicant went to.

Cech said that the next meeting should be in the afternoon, so that more interpreters are able to attend.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comments were provided in-person:

Lawson McNally with the Michigan Deaf Association (MDA) provided public comment to the Board. They said issues with health and dental care continue. Access to an interpreter is not always available. McNally provided examples of how communication access continues to be a barrier.

Erica Chapin with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services provided public comment to the Board. They are excited to see some progress and discussion about interpreters in education. EIPA has an extreme lag time in grading. Chapin inquired if LARA has conversations with EIPA and Boystown, since there have not been any public updates. They said that students wait for about a year with no information on where they need to improve. Chapin suggested modifying the DB endorsement and labeling it tactile capable.

Comments provided via Zoom:

Alayna Lail with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) provided public comment to the Board. Lail is commenting on behalf of the Director of the Division on Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (DODDBHH), Kenya Lowe. They said there is a Department Specialist opening in the division. Lail inquired about whether future meetings could be promoted in more accessible places.

John Kirsh with the Michigan Department of Education provided public comment to the Board. They said that educational interpreters should also be added to the list of stakeholders.

Karen Mrazik provided public comment to the Board. They noted that underqualified interpreters are separate from waivers. Mrazik said that waivers are not exceptions.

Jay Poletti provided public comment to the Board. Poletti said that schools avoid needing an interpreter. They inquired if someone from the community could work within LARA.

Dylan Secord provided public comment to the Board. They inquired if using a local rating team is possible. Secord said they believe it would streamline processing results.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cech said MIRID will be hosting a monthly meeting virtually on Feb 12 and March 16, along with an in-person meeting on April 26. Cech said the Michigan Deaf Association is hosting an event at LCC the first weekend of February. On February 8, Detroit Black Deaf Advocates will have two events at Madonna University.

The next regularly scheduled meeting date and location is yet to be determined.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Holaly, seconded by O'Dougherty, to adjourn the meeting at 12:04 p.m.

A voice vote was held.

MOTION PREVAILED

Prepared by:
Heather Keel
Bureau of Community and Health Systems

May 13, 2025