

APPROVED
DODDBHH Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
Friday October 28, 2022 1:00-5:00 PM
Lansing Community College-West Campus
Room M120 and M121 (Buick and Chevrolet Room)
5708 Cornerstone Drive
Lansing, MI 48917

Council Members Present

- Jill Gaus, Chair
- Gerid Adams
- Sue Caudell (virtual)
- Terri Gordinier
- Liliana Herbstreith
- Chris Hunter
- Hannah Johnson

Council Members Absent

- Louis Bailey
- Shayla Griffin
- Sarah Hein
- Jumana Salamey
- Matthew Stephens

DODDBHH Staff

- Annie Urasky, Director
- Alayna Lail, Liaison

MDCR Executive Staff

- John E. Johnson, MDCR Executive Director

1. CALL TO ORDER

Jill Gaus, Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (the Division) Advisory Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:13pm and welcomed everyone. Housekeeping policies and roll call was taken by Director Annie Urasky and six council members were present at the start of the meeting. There was not a quorum to host the meeting. Liliana Herbstreith arrived at 1:50pm, there were seven council members present; there was a quorum to host the meeting. Chair Gaus reviewed the Communication Policy. Chair Gaus read the Oath of Office and swore in the new Council Members.

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES AND AGENDA

Upon a quorum (after 1:50pm), a vote was taken on the following items:
Council Member Hunter made a motion to accept the October 2022 agenda as written. Council Member Adams seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion passed.

Council Member Hunter made a motion to accept the March 2019 meeting minutes as written. Council Member Gordinier seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion passed.

Council Member Johnson made a motion to accept the July 2019 meeting minutes as written. Council Member Adams seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion passed.

3. MDCR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REMARKS

John E. Johnson, Jr., the MDCR Executive Director provided opening remarks to the DODDBHH Advisory Council and outlined the vision for the Department, including the fact that alleged complaints of discrimination based on disability routinely ranks at or near the top for MDCR. Director Johnson stresses the importance of having the Advisory Council input involved with the work of the Division and with MDCR to protect the rights of people with disabilities. Director Johnson also mentioned the June 2022 Civil Rights Summit, a program focused on strategies for equity; copies of the initial report were shared with Council Members.

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Urasky reported on Division activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, which included working with other state agencies to ensure public health information was accessible to the community through ASL translations of public health information, press conferences, and participating in a disability workgroup for the Protect Michigan Commission. The Division also hosts community based organization check-ins on a monthly basis and has an intern focused on research related to national trends/issues with telehealth. Director Urasky also reported on two legislative bills: HB 5777 and SB 1184.

1. COUNCIL REPORTS

Chair Gaus

Chair Gaus reported on a Support Service Provider (SSP) pilot program geared for the deafblind community, working with Marcy Colton from DeafCAN to secure additional funding for this program and data for the legislature to expand this program. Many individuals who are deafblind were isolated throughout the pandemic and needed assistance on issues related with housing, videophones and getting in-home assistance, and reporting elder abuse situations.

Council Member Adams

Council Member Adams provided updates on the Let Mi Child Hear bill, SB 1184, requiring insurance companies in Michigan to cover hearing aids up to \$3,000 each up to the age of 18 and Senator Zorn is the bill sponsor. Council Member Adams provided copies of the bill to council members.

Council Member Caudell

Council Member Caudell indicated she was happy to join the Council and she is based as a Special Educator in the Wayne Westland Schools.

Council Member Gordinier

Council Member Gordinier indicated she had no report.

Council Member Herbstreith

Council Member Herbstreith reported she has been sharing information about both her experience as a Hispanic parent who has a child with hearing loss and about SB 1184 with the Hispanic community in west Michigan because many do not realize insurance coverage may be an option for their child.

Council Member Hunter

Council Member Hunter reported he is concerned about the number of staff and budget for the Division to support the work done. He stressed the importance of assessing community needs on issues related to interpreter access with service providers (VRI and in-person interpreters) and employment statistics to elevate awareness about the importance of the Division and the role they play in the community.

Council Member Johnson

Council Member Johnson shared information on her background as a person who is hard of hearing and is pleased to be at her first meeting and to serve.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Gaus indicated a three-minute timeline will be set for each person providing public comment, and five people requested to speak. Nan Asher provided updates on the Early Hearing Detection Intervention (EHDI) program within MDHHS and also provided updates from the Michigan Coalition on Deaf and Hard of Hearing People. Deb Atwood spoke about issues on the west side of the state related to the increased number of requests for advocacy services and concerns about the staffing numbers for the Division serving the entire state. Nancy Piersma spoke about concerns related to the number of staff for the Division may not be able to support statewide priorities for the communities. Val Boyer spoke about tech issues with the Zoom link for the meeting. Ellen Zwarenstejn spoke about concerns with the numbers of medical and legal interpreters in Michigan and the impact on deaf service organizations and asked for clarification on the backlog on testing and certification of sign language interpreters.

3. EX-OFFICIO MEMBER REPORTS

President of MDA

There is no report from MDA.

President of SHIM=DB

Chair Gaus reported that the SHIM=DB organization has dismantled since it was difficult for the board to meet. The funds from the organization were sent to the SSP pilot program.

President of HLAA-MI

The current president of HLAA-MI is Jeffrey Astrein.

President of MIRID

Director Annie Urasky read a report in President Erin Humann's absence. During the pandemic, MIRID partnered with MDA to distribute clear masks to the interpreting/ITP community. MIRID also partnered with C Wood PD to provide access to workshops at a discounted or free rate to members. The MIRID CARES initiative was established, a program to give back to the deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing community during the holidays. Any MIRID member can nominate a deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing person, family or organization to receive a bit of monetary help this holiday. Additional information about the program will be posted on the MIRID website as the nomination

period will open soon.

4. **LARA-BCHS**

Colleen Curtis and Larry Horvath from the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Community Health Systems (LARA-BCHS) provided an overview on LARA-BCHS activities and background on the makeup of BCHS. The LARA-BCHS Board of Interpreters had a board meeting this week. The Qualified Interpreter program transferred to BCHS from the Bureau of Professional Licensing in 2021. The primary objective for the program is for applicants to get tested, certified and renewed as interpreters. BCHS provides testing for the BEI, written and performance. The performance tests are sent for rating to the state of Texas. There was a backlog for testing due to the pandemic, which is now caught up. BCHS is now offering additional test dates for the BEI exams. BCHS processes and renews sign language interpreter applications. They have done 754 renewals with about 1,100 certified interpreters in Michigan. With costs for operating this program, the program budget needs to be assessed closely. BCHS has three full time staff for the qualified interpreter program.

5. **OLD BUSINESS**

NG911 and Text to 911

Director Annie Urasky reported on updates on Next Generation 911 and Text to 911 options in Michigan. The Division previously worked with the NG911 subcommittee under the Michigan State Police to increase awareness of the need for Text to 911 options in counties across Michigan. Under the Michigan NG 911 subcommittee, specific target dates for conversion of analog to digital platforms for NG 911 programs is in place. As of February 2022, the map shows most counties have NG911 equipment in place. Next steps will involve additional awareness and training efforts on these options.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

Council Members discussed different areas of focus ranging from budget funding and connecting with legislators on funding and legislative bills as it relates to the deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing community, telehealth processes, ITP programs, ASL classes, training topics, and OTC hearing aids.

7. **GUEST SPEAKER**

MDHHS, Michigan 211 and ASL Connect provided information about the ASL COVID-19 hotline and a live demonstration of the program took place. Consumers who have videophones can contact the ASL hotline to connect with an ASL-fluent representative to ask questions related to COVID-19.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

Council Member Adams made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Council Member Hunter seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion passed.

Chair Gaus thanked all the accommodation providers and members who attended the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm.

