

STATE OF COLORADO



Colorado Department of Human Services

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**OFFICE OF ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS DIVISION
COLORADO COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

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**COLORADO COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Mental Health Center of Denver
4455 E. 12th Ave., Room 121
Denver, CO 80220
December 5, 2013**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the Regular Meeting to order at 4:04 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Commissioners Debbie Mohny (Chair), Kirk Neuroth (Vice Chair), Leslie Ralphe (Secretary), Amy Beckett, Mary Pat Graham-Kelly, Lisa Weiss.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Liz Konkel, excused

CCDHH STAFF PRESENT:

Cliff Moers, Administrator; Cheri Davis, Legal Auxiliary Services Manager; Timothy Chevalier, Outreach Consultant for the Deaf Community; Joanne Hirsch, TEDP Coordinator; Mandy Turner, Auxiliary Services Coordinator

INTERPRETERS/CART REPORTER:

Interpreters: Lynda Rimmel, Tricia Frank, Sara Romes
CART Provider: Alicia Berg

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was approved.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The September, 2013 meeting minutes were approved.

5. REPORTS

Chair's Report, Chair Mohney

- Chair Mohney thanked the interpreters and the CART provider for their services and the Commission staff and the Department of Human Services for their cooperation and hard work. She welcomed visitors and encouraged active participation in the meeting. She announced that following the regular meeting, there would be a community forum, with several presentations. If time does not allow for public comment following the presentations, people are encouraged to submit their comments in writing or contact the office.
- Chair Mohney described her personal struggles in conversations as she was growing up with a hearing loss. Sometimes, in her efforts to participate in a discussion, she inadvertently interrupted others because she did not hear them. Over time, she learned to improve her listening skills as part of her efforts to become an advocate for those with hearing loss. In a society that often pays the most attention to those with the loudest voices, listening is a valuable skill that demonstrates respect for everyone in a conversation. It's important that everyone's voices be heard. Citizens are encouraged to participate in the meetings and contact the commission office with their concerns.

Commission Administrator's Report, Administrator Moers

- Administrator Moers reported on commission growth since its inception in 2000. During fiscal year 2004, the office had a budget of \$88,000, and 1.0 FTE. Currently, the office has a budget of over one million dollars and a staff of 6.3 .FTE. The staff fields questions about interpreters, citizen's rights, hearing aids and assistive technology, and other resources. The number of inquiries has grown over the years to 1776 in the previous fiscal year, which shows an increased community awareness of the commission. The Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program has seen a drop in distribution, and the staff will be investigating reasons for that. Legal Auxiliary Services has seen a significant increase in interpreter and CART requests, 3,106 requests in the past year, amounting to about 9,500 hours of auxiliary services. Likewise, the number of presentations and trainings given by Outreach and Consultative Services has grown dramatically in the past fiscal year, and trainings have been done in a variety of regions throughout the state. Administrator Moers also reported on the grant program. This year a single grant of \$50,000 was awarded, and the community forum will provide more information about that.
- The new outreach consultant job position has been posted. That position has been vacant since June. This person will focus on the needs of the hard of hearing community. The outreach program will be restructured in terms of leadership, and the staff hopes that it will be possible to add more outreach consultant positions in the future.
- Recently, members of the deaf-blind community wrote to the Department of Human Services and Administrator Moers, expressing their concerns about a lack of services for deaf-blind persons. These individuals feel it would be useful to have a deaf-blind representative on the board and a deaf-blind staff member in the commission office.

Colorado currently lacks some of the key programs such as mobility orientation, needed when a deaf-blind person moves to a new area and is not familiar with the location in order to work, shop, and use transportation. The Helen Keller National Center has a regional center in Lakewood, serving six states, but it is closing soon, so services to the community will be further reduced. Administrator Moers suggested that the commission research what other states are doing for the deaf-blind community and how those services are funded, and then consider ways to provide those services to the community and better represent the needs of these community members. The board expressed support for including a deaf-blind representative.

- The office has produced four new television programs on education, to be posted on the website and hopefully broadcast on Colorado public television. Each focuses on a single theme, topics such as language and literacy, critical pedagogy, and teacher training programs.
- Joyce Brubaker is currently working on updating the website. It should be ready by the next quarterly meeting. Online training will be added as well, including video from a law enforcement training session that Timothy Chevalier led in Pueblo recently.
- Board members will need to bring their handbooks to the next meeting in March so that they can be updated.
- Administrator Moers hopes to have Joe Benedetto speak at that meeting about the future of the Disabled Telephone Users Fund (DTUF), which provides about 92% of the funding for the commission. Some states add wireless and VOIP surcharges, but Colorado applies fees to landlines only at this time. In the state of Washington, for example, includes all surcharges – landline, wireless and VOIP – and puts their “DTUF” dollars in the state’s general fund which is often difficult to obtain when an increased FTE or funding is needed. The March meeting will be an opportunity to learn more and discuss funding.
- In response to a board request, Administrator Moers agreed to give members an opportunity to preview the website updates before the March meeting. He also explained that the website upgrades and video productions will be developed by our temporary employee (Media Specialist), Joyce Brubaker..

Committee Chair Reports

A. Legal Auxiliary Services

Chair Pendley reported that the Legal Auxiliary Service Advisory Council met in October. There are two new members, Mark Angelo and Liz Keyser. The CART representative position is vacant, and Cheri Davis is publicizing that position now. The Council recently voted to keep terms at two years; members can serve up to two terms. The council voted to hold regular meetings every six month rather than quarterly, since a growing staff has reduced the advisory council’s workload. If necessary, a special meeting could be convened. A subcommittee worked on a fee schedule for services in 2014, and the advisory council approved it with minor changes. The fee schedule is posted on the CCDHH website.

B. Bylaws Committee

Chair Beckett reported that the bylaws will probably not need any changes to reflect the new term limits. If a deaf-blind representative is added, the bylaws will need to be revised, and the vision and mission statements will need to be updated once the new ones are adopted.

C. Nominations Committee

Chair Weiss reported that three commissioner terms will be expiring in the summer. Administrator Moers agreed to publicize those vacancies in January.

D. Grant Program Subcommittee

Administrator Moers reported that the grant recipients will be making a report during the community forum, after the meeting.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Commissioner Graham-Kelly reported on progress with vision and mission statement revisions. A committee of staff persons and board members met to discuss and draft proposals for the commission. The committee felt that it was important to use innovative language in order to have an impact. The proposed vision statement is "We envision a barrier-free Colorado." The proposed mission statement is "To be the catalyst for a sustainable network, committed to cultural and linguistic equality." The group deliberately chose to focus on equality rather than on the ear in the mission statement. Administrator Moers reported that when community members were surveyed through the CCDHH bulletin, only sixteen persons responded. All the respondents approved the vision statement. Three-quarters of them liked the mission statement. There was no place on the survey to indicate reasons why they did not like it. After much discussion, the vision statement was adopted. The committee will continue to work on a mission statement. Chair Mohny requested that if the community is surveyed again, respondents be given the opportunity to provide reasons for their responses.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Weiss asked whether the commission had plans to create a liaison to follow up on progress with education initiatives. She also asked whether a board member should be in communication with the community about adding a deaf-blind member to the board and pursuing legislation for that. Commissioner Graham-Kelly expressed interest in working with the deaf-blind community. Chair Mohny agreed that having board liaisons for those purposes would be beneficial. She appointed Commissioner Weiss to report on educational issues, and Commissioner Graham-Kelly to work with the task force pursuing legislation to add a deaf-blind person to the commission.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting will be held on March 6, 2014. The location will be announced at a later date.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Ralphe, Secretary