



COLORADO
Department of Human Services

January 22, 2018

The Honorable John Hickenlooper
Governor of State
State Capitol Building
Denver, Colorado 80203

Dear Governor Hickenlooper:

In accordance with the statutory responsibility established through 26-21-106 (e), C.R.S., the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH) is mandated to submit an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly after it assesses the needs of the deaf, hard-of-hearing and deafblind communities. The report includes "any recommendations for legislation or administrative changes that may facilitate or streamline the provision of general government services to the deaf and hard of hearing community."

If you require further information, or have additional questions, please contact Mark Wester, Director of the Office of Community Access & Independence at 303-866-4408.

We thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Reggie Bicha', is written over the typed name and title.

Reggie Bicha
Executive Director

Enclosure

cc: Jerene Petersen, Deputy Executive Director, Community Partnerships
Alicia Caldwell, Deputy Executive Director, Legislative Affairs and Communications
Tony Gherardini, Deputy Executive Director, Operations
Riley Kitts, Legislative Liaison
Lauren Snyder, Legislative Analyst
Angela Maramba, Boards and Commissions Liaison
Mark Wester, Director, Office of Community Access and Independence
Cliff Moers, Director, Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Molly Otto, Legislative Librarian



COLORADO

Office of Community Access & Independence

Department of Human Services
Mark Wester, Director

The Honorable Governor John Hickenlooper
Members of the Colorado General Assembly
C/O Office of Legal Services
State Capitol Building
Denver, Colorado 80203

January 17, 2018

Dear Governor Hickenlooper and Members of the Colorado General Assembly:

Please accept my sincere apologies for the lateness of this report. The report was due on September 1, 2017. The delay was due to some difficulty in obtaining and providing the necessary information in a format that was up to legislative specification and Department standards. This issue has been rectified and future reports will be provided in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

Mark J. Wester
Director
Office of Community Access and Independence
Colorado Department of Human Services





COLORADO
Department of Human Services

Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Annual Report

January 22, 2018



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I. Introduction

Through hard work, dedication and commitment by the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH) staff and stakeholders, CCDHH was able to compile this report outlining the critical services and community projects conducted during FY 2016-17. The community stakeholders, including commissioners, were involved in the recommendation process and take ownership of the issues outlined in this proposal.

This report contains the following sections:

1. Community Projects and Issues (Section II) – These are collaborative projects between CCDHH and its constituents.
2. Legislative Recommendations for your consideration (Section III) – CCDHH has three recommendations. These recommendations are not reflected in the Department of Human Services priorities; it is a grassroots community initiative supported by CCDHH and its stakeholders.

II. Community Project Updates and Issues

Colorado Daylight Partnership: Behavioral Health Services/Integrated Care

The Colorado Daylight Partnership (CDP) continues to provide guidance to the Learning Collaborative members with implementation of the Standards of Care for Serving Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Persons in all Behavioral Health activities with a grant from the Office of Behavioral Health. CDP was also able to expand its scope of work for FY 2017-18. The expanded scope of work, which is tied into Mental Health Center of Denver's one-time award of unexpended funds, will involve a planning and research phase where access to integrated care for deaf, hard-of-hearing and deafblind Coloradans will be evaluated as well as implementing two sites for targeted capacity-building pilots. Sustainable funding for CDP remains a concern. CDP is a partnership between the Mental Health Center of Denver and CCDHH.

III. Legislative Recommendations

Open captioning in motion picture theatres

CCDHH recommends a legislative mandate for motion picture theatres to provide open captioned movies to address current technology issues that limit access to movies for CCDHH stakeholders. Open captioning means that the captions are hard-wired into the film itself and visible to all audience members, whether hearing-impaired or not, throughout the entire movie. In contrast, the current system of closed-captioning requires the use of access glasses and caption-view equipment that suffer from dead batteries, poor screen and text matching, capacity issues (i.e., not enough available equipment if a large number of hearing-impaired individuals show up), and other technological issues. As a result, open captioned movies provide easier and more consistent access for deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind and senior citizens who have reduced hearing acuity at no cost to the theatres because the captions are already embedded in the film.

Statutory authority for CDPHE: Infant hearing follow-up screening

CCDHH recommends that the General Assembly give the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) the statutory authority to perform long-term follow-up for infant hearing screenings. This proposal is part of an initiative by a coalition of healthcare providers, advocates, and professional associations to strengthen the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program (EHDI) at CDPHE. Currently, EHDI records a first and second infant hearing screening and makes referrals as appropriate for those infants identified with reduced hearing acuity. EHDI conducts these screenings based on research showing that children who are identified with reduced hearing acuity before the age of six months usually develop an appropriate level of language skills. A third hearing screen can also be critical to language development because detecting actual reduced hearing acuity can be difficult in the first months and years of a child's life. This proposal would give EHDI the authority for continued follow-up on infant hearing issues.

Technical clean-up of CCDHH statutes, 26-21-(101-108), C.R.S., and 13-90-(201-210), C.R.S.

Several bills, including the most recent bill HB 16-1414, and the CCDHH survey of state agencies within the Executive Branch on auxiliary services in the summer of 2016, which included sign language interpreting and Communication Access Real-time Translation, called for an amendment to the CCDHH statute, 26-21-(101-108), C.R.S., which also precipitates an amendment to the CCDHH Legal Auxiliary Services statute, 13-90-(201-210), C.R.S. Clarification and redefinition of programs CCDHH is mandated to provide are the main purpose of the amendment to 26-21-(101-108), C.R.S. The amendment to the Legal Auxiliary Services statute, 13-90-(201-210), C.R.S., will keep it consistent with the CCDHH statutory changes regarding the name change and clarification of programs and will clean up areas of confusion that currently exist within the statutes regarding the statutory authority of Legal Auxiliary Services. This amendment will ensure that CCDHH continues to build seamless, effective resources that community stakeholders deserve.

Key changes include:

- Changing the name of the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to the “Colorado Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf/Blind”.
- Clarifying and updating definitions
- Attaching the term “deaf/blind” to “deaf and hard of hearing” throughout the statutes.
- Changing the position title of the CCDHH administrator to “director.”
- Changing the name of the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program to “Communications Technology Program.”
- Making CCDHH's coordination of auxiliary services available to state agencies in the Executive Branch.

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- Creating the Colorado Deaf/Blind Citizens Council as an official advisory committee related to deaf/blind issues and needs for CCDHH and the state with a fund of \$12,420 for provision of communication access to six (6) three-hour meetings per fiscal year.
 - Ensuring clarity that CCDHH has the new Community Access Program to operate because HB 16-1414 did not have language to define it.
 - Clarifying authority of CCDHH Legal Auxiliary Services to provide auxiliary services.

IV. Conclusion

The technical clean-up amendments to CCDHH statutes are of paramount importance to CCDHH. In addition, sustainable funding remains critical to the survival of the Colorado Daylight Partnership, and CCDHH is committed to partner with the Mental Health Center of Denver in this endeavor.

CCDHH welcomes the opportunity to respond to any questions or concerns regarding the grassroots community's legislative initiatives as stated in the Legislative Recommendations section.