

Meeting Minutes

East Central DHHSD Advisory Committee

January 18, 2011; 4:30-6:30

Meeting called to order by chairperson, Emily Smith-Lundberg at 4:32 p.m. Members in attendance: Rebecca Crowell, Linda Henrickson, Brenda Hommerding, Michelle Isham (MCDHH), Beth Schultz, and Emily Smith-Lundberg. Guest; Marty Barnnum; Interpreter: Michael Horman. Staff; Rich Diedrichsen and Diane Leonard.

Introductions were completed and there were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

Office announcements and Division News (Rich): Rich noted that we now have two vacancies in the office, the West Central Consultant position and the Office and Administrative Specialist position. Staff is covering the work as best they can but there have been a few times when the office had to be closed for a few hours since they already scheduled appointments and meetings through February. We are working to adjust schedules to limit these occurrences as much as possible. In spite of the vacancies, Rich just completed the quarterly reports the end of December and our service numbers are not down a great deal. He noted that this is mostly due to the flexibility and extra efforts of staff. Rich reported that funding for the office for this year is about the same as last year but we do not know what might happen for the next fiscal year that begins July 1, 2011. We will keep the committee advised of any up-coming changes and how they can support us by contacting their local legislator.

MCDHH (Michelle): Michelle noted that MCDHH has an on-line training called "Making Your Case" that is designed to help people learn how to present their issues and concerns to elected officials. There is no cost to take the training and she encouraged everyone to look at this on the MCDHH website.

MCDHH, like DHHSD, is currently short on staff following the resignation of the Office Administrative Specialist (hiring frozen) and the fact that Cynthia Weintzel is currently on medical leave. The next commission meeting will be Friday January 21. Michelle noted that the major effort she has been involved with is the Education Task Force, specifically the Teacher Licensure changes. Much of the changes have been with language (i.e. the Oral/Aural description was changed to Auditory/Spoken Language). It was asked what MCDHH's position is on the changes and Michelle indicated they support the current changes.

MCDHH will have their annual Lobby Day on March 2, 2011 and registration is available on the MCDHH website. (Note: I attached a copy of the website information on Lobby Day to these minutes and will get them sent to all members before the registration deadline, Rich.)

Regional up-date (Diane): Most of our work has been focused on our daily activities and goals such as senior outreach, PTE (Pathways to Employment), Family Activities, trainings and most of all client services. Rich added one note that we did a series of training at the VAMC in St. Cloud a few months ago and one of the things we encouraged was to make access a habit by doing things such as turn on captioning for TV's in common areas. Last week he was at the VAMC to help a vet who needed hearing aids and noted at all the TV's in all the common areas (waiting rooms and cafeteria) now display captioning. Rich also noted that staff is often too quiet about their success, and again stated that the service numbers for last quarter were very strong in spite of vacancies.

Feedback and announcements: Marty noted that CSDE has centralized interpreter referral for Minnesota, N. D., and S. D., Maryland and Texas into one location in Sioux Falls, S. D. The question was asked about contact numbers and Marty said they are the same and hopefully no one has noticed any change in the process of requesting and interpreter. The only change many may notice is that instead of saying "CSD MN" when answering the phone for referral they say something generic like "CSD Interpreter Referral" and no one knows that instead of talking to someone in St. Paul they are talking to someone in Sioux Falls.

CSD's St. Paul office is moving to a new building but this should not affect services.

Vidyo (remote interpreting) demand is up statewide. CentraCare in Central MN uses this service. It is not the right fit for all services but many people have expressed that they are satisfied with this option in emergency situations or short term meetings and it give more immediate access to interpreters. It can also improve privacy since often the interpreter on Vidyo will not be someone from the local community. Finally in some regions where there are not freelance interpreter living, this has expanded access for some. Marty explained the process and billing for Vidyo. In St. Cloud there is still good access to "live" interpreters in most situations. We have 35 freelance interpreters working in the area currently.

Brenda (Parent Guide): She announced that there will be a Webinar on Special Education January 20 and copies of the flyer were made of all committee members who wished to have one. The SNAPS (parent group) is working on a schedule for events for 2011. There will be a Spring Fling event and a summer picnic. In additions a "Mom's Retreat" is schedule in conjunction with Confidence Learning Center. Brenda showed the new materials MDH has developed for audiologist to give to parents of newly diagnosed children with hearing loss. Rich asked if there were plans to give the resources to the DHHSD office and College Audiology Programs. Rebecca noted that they would like to have the materials and received a contact about them recently. Finally, there will be a two-day EDHI Summit in Minneapolis March 6 and 7. Registration is limited to 300 people and Rich noted that there are plans to try to send the Deaf Mentors and DHHSD Regional Consultants to the Summit.

Beth: There will be a medical interpreting workshop in the region and she and Diane will be working with CentraCare on a short term Cultural Diversity Task Force beginning April 11.

Michelle: Michelle give out copies of the March 3-4 Winter Camp for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. Rich made copies for all who wanted them. She also announced that the EIPA (Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment) the certification for educational interpreters in MN will be held this spring at SCSU.

Future Meetings: Our next scheduled meeting for 2011 will be May 17, 4:30-6:30 and September 20, 2011, 4:30-6:30 at the DHHSD office.