

Meeting Minutes: East Central DHHS Advisory Committee Meeting

Date: 03/27/2019, 4:00-6:00pm

Minutes prepared by: Kristina Anderson

Location: Benton Stearns Education District, 517 2nd St. South, Sartell

Attendance

- Diane Schiffler-Dobe/ Chair of the Advisory Group
- Marie Koehler/ DHHS
- Suzanne Iwainat/ MN Hands and Voices
- Jamie Speier/ Sorenson VRS and CDI
- Sarah Maheswaran/ TED Program
- Todd Grabowski/ Consumer
- Shane Grom/Parent
- Michelle Isham/ Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 - Absent: Melinda Brown, Judy Leach, Omar Ibrahim

Agenda

- Call to Order, Introductions, Welcome, Marie Koehler
- Acceptance of October 2, 2018 Meeting Minutes/ Marie Koehler
- DHHS SE Update Report/ Diane Leonard
- TED and MR Update/ Sarah Maheswaran
- Old Business:
 - Update and progress related to DHHS redesign
- New Business/ Marie Koehler
- Member Feedback – Needs and Gaps
- Upcoming meeting dates: preferred days and times to meet/ Marie Koehler
- MNCDHH Update/Michelle Isham
- Announcements/ All members

Meeting Notes

Call to Order/Introductions/Welcome New Members

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm. Members were welcomed.

Acceptance of October, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Suzanne made a motion to accept the meeting minutes, and Shane seconded it. The minutes were approved as written.

DHHS West/Central Update Report – Diane Leonard

The Central DHHS office was involved again in the Disability Awareness event. The purpose of this event is to raise awareness that people with disabilities are capable of doing and achieving all sorts of things, and to create a mindset of eliminating “dis” in “disability.” This year’s theme was autism, and “Life Limited” is the movie. The man in the movie is fascinated with Disney, and learned to express himself through the Disney movies.

We will also be having a Celebration of Abilities- this includes the amputated snowboarder who won a gold medal at the 2018 Winter Paralympics. He was on the news because of his injury; BioDapt, Inc. is the name of his own company that provides prosthetics for people who are active in things like sports.

Three times a year we have gatherings in Olivia of deaf adults residing in the southwest and west central regional area. Last year we discussed voting and showing people how to register to vote and how to get information on the people running for office. MNCDHH sent their Voting Matters teams to lead the discussion.

In December, DHHS was involved in the annual Winter Wonderland party, which has been very successful in years past. Diane Schiffler-Dobe, teacher for deaf and hard of hearing students and the east central advisory committee member, presented this year. The topic was “Advocacy in the Early Years.” It’s important for parents to understand how they are a huge supporter of the child’s language. People need to recognize that parents are their child’s first teacher and children get their language from their parents.

This year’s Hearing Loss 101 training is scheduled for April, those brochures were handed out. Also in April, a staff person from the Department of Public Safety will provide a presentation to Deaf and hard of hearing community members in Olivia on Text-to-911. Deaf people can now text 911 in an emergency. Callers should immediately identify themselves as deaf. The Department of Public Safety’s slogan is “CALL if you can, text if you CAN’T.” Texting is limited to people with hearing loss or a speech disability, or those involved in a domestic situation and they do not want to be overhead talking on the phone. No abbreviations or emoticons should be used when texting 911.

TED/MR Update, Sarah Maheswaran

TED Updates, including new Minnesota Relay booklet

There are currently two vacant positions- the Administrative Assistant position in Metro and the TED Specialist position in Mankato. Both vacancies will be filled. Sign Language fluency is a requirement.

On March 15, TED launched Phase 2 of the iPad/ iPhone pilot. This pilot is limited in nature in that only apps related to telecommunications are installed on the devices. Consumers in the pilot are required to complete several surveys. Once the pilot is completed, the devices will be unlocked and consumers can download whatever apps they want.

In this year's governor's legislative proposal, there is language to modernize the TED program. If passed, the new legislation would 1. Allow TED to provide multi-functioning devices that would alert consumers to when their telephones ring, doorbell rings, smoke alarms activate, etc. 2. Provide intermediary devices like streamers or neck loops. 3. Allow TED staff to educate consumers about other hearing technology that they could possibly benefit from, and if consumers are interested in any of the technology, they would then be referred to the DHHS Specialists for follow-up assistance. 4. Enable TED staff to educate consumers about other telephone services such as Lifeline.

MN Relay and Captioned Telephone brochures were recently updated and copies were distributed to members.

TED has a new factsheet with some statistics; this was also handed out during the meeting

Feedback regarding MN Relay and CapTel Relay

Member feedback was that phone numbers and other information that is captioned on the CapTel phones are not always reliable. Consumers can file complaints with the FCC (Federal Communication Commission). Sarah will send the complaint form. Marie's understanding is that sometimes the issue isn't related to the quality of relay service itself, but when the information crosses between analog and digital lines.

Old Business

Redesign Updates

The division has been going through many changes. Last year, Dan Millikin was hired as the new director. He "hit the ground running" and has made critical decisions and necessary leadership. Part of the redesign was changing the structure of teams. Each of the regional offices used to have their own teams; now teams are based on functionality. All TED staff report to Sarah, and are part of the TED team. All the D/HH specialists are supervised by Marie. Staff are in a better position to support each other and learn from each other. The regional manager positions were eliminated which allowed the division to add more staff who work directly with consumers. Anne Janckila, is serving the north/central region. She has identified a lot of people in that area who have never received services from the division. In January, Calla Kevan was hired for the southern region, she is housed in Rochester. Jerry Geist was hired to work in the northwest region out of the Moorhead office. One specialist, Jeanne Kolo-Johnson, was hired as the lead specialist. She will be assisting with advisor committees and project

management work. We also recently hired a communications coordinator- Rosa Ramirez. She is working to revamp our communication and promotional materials and is responsible for the division's social media.

We are moving towards a centralized information and referral system (I&R). The plan is to streamline the division's statewide phone numbers and have all calls be directed to one voice and one VP number. The person hired for this position will screen calls and refer them to the appropriate regional staff. Depending on the volume of calls received, there may be a second I&R Specialist hired.

The division's website is being updated and will be much more user friendly and feature several ASL video. MNCDHH passed legislation that allows DHHSD to have this stand-alone website.

New Business

New Division Fact Sheet and Specialists Highlights from 2018

We have a new fact sheet that identifies the division's services and accomplishments. This was handed out during the meeting.

Another document handed out listed some of the accomplishments achieved in 2018 by statewide DHHS Specialists.

FY '19 DHHS Grant contract review

One of DHHSD's programs is overseeing contacts and grants. A video was shown to members that explained the various types of grants awarded. The video specifically did not list all specific vendors, so that it doesn't get outdated. Video can be watched here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9dEJohOMw&feature=youtu.be>

Seeking member feedback regarding use or non-use of CART services

Last year the legislature directed DHHSD to study the supply and demand of CART services. Phase 1 is completed and included surveying CART providers, educational programs that offer CART training and CART referral agencies. Groups surveyed so far said there aren't enough CART providers. Schools that are training court stenographers aren't doing a good job letting students know that CART is an avenue for them to pursue. In Greater Minnesota, doing remote CART can be troublesome because technology sometimes fails and audio isn't always reliable.

Phase 2 of this study will start soon and target consumers who currently use CART services or those who think they may in the future. Marie was asked to gather names of members who would be willing to take the survey.

There was a question about whether or not CART can be provided to students in schools. Marie suggested this be asked when completing the CART survey. Access needs related to the educational environment could possibly be addressed during a DHHSD-lead QUAD agency, of which the MN Department of Education is a member.

Seeking member feedback to redesign of DHHS website

DHHS is redesigning its website, and we would like people to test it and provide feedback. Diane, Michelle, Jamie and Shane are willing to provide feedback.

Upcoming meeting dates: preferred days and times to meet

Going forward, the division may have one of the advisory committee meetings be a community meeting, which would provide for expanding feedback from a broader group of stakeholders. Advisory committee members will be asked to be involved. Members were asked to complete a form to update their contact information, preferred meetings dates and times, etc.

Fire Safety and Smoke Alarm Project

The American Red Cross created the Home Fire Campaign to reduce deaths and injuries by house fires by 25% over five years. The website www.Getasmokealarm.org takes viewers to an electronic form that can be filled out and submitted. The Red Cross and its partners will purchase and install a limited number of free smoke alarms for those who are not able to afford them. They ask that this is only for financially needy individuals. DHHS and MNCDHH are working with staff from Department of Public Safety to see if funds for smoke alarms can be dedicated to people who have a hearing loss. This group may apply for a FEMA grant to obtain funds to distribute smoke alarms.

Member input regarding gaps and needs in the community

Ongoing, DHHS wants to gather information from advisory committee members regarding their regional needs and gaps in service. DHHS may be able to address some of these gaps, bring them to the QAUD team or refer to another agency. Several members shared that more certified interpreters are needed- within the educational arena and in the community. Members also shared that Greater MN lacks certified interpreters.

Michele shared that the African Community needs more education and awareness related to the education system. Many families do not have a good grasp on education processes. There seems to be a lot of miscommunication and misunderstandings. On April 27th, the district is offering an "IEP Basics 101" event to teach the African community how to be involved in IEPs, and to educate them about the difference between a clinical and educational audiologist. The plan is for this to be a series of events.

There's a big communication gap between the administrators and the parents at all levels of education, including with Itinerant programs, the IEP process, etc. Diverse groups of parents who have children that are D/HH, don't understand the services offered within the education system or what services their children are receiving, or could receive. Reaching out to diverse groups can be very challenging. This is also an issue with the Hispanic culture in the Cold Spring area. It's not that parents are unwilling to get the information, but there are language barriers that impede the process. Sometimes school personnel do not listen to the parents, and that is frustrating as well.

MCDHH

MNCDHH Updates, Michelle Isham

Mary Hartnett is retiring and her last day is September 3rd. The Commission is in the process of working on recruitment and posting of the position. Minnesota Management and Budget is helping with this process. Mary may be able to help with the transition if the person is hired before her departure date.

The board itself is also going through changes. Historically, the executive director decided agenda items for the meetings, but accountability for this under the new governance will be the responsibility of board members. It's a new learning process, and members have to get through this before they set up a strategic plan. As the current annual plan reflects, their work does focus on education, employment and civic engagement. The board has openings for two members at-large, and a representative from the SW advisory committee. Michelle is on the committee that reviews new applications. When appointing new members, the board needs to consider appointing not only people with different types of hearing loss, but also culturally diverse people. Michelle has testified at two hearings in the past week to get more funding for the commission. The board want to ensure that their meetings are accessible to everyone, and accommodations are expensive.

Announcements

Member announcements

There was a bill introduced to see up a Board to oversee sign language interpreters. This bill has received mixed reviews, and there is a lot of misunderstanding about the purpose of the board.

There will be a captioned movie shown on April 19th at 1:05. The movie is "The Breakthrough." There is a group of community members working to offer captioned movies ongoing. At least 10 people need to show up for the April movie. The committee wants to show there is sufficient community interest. Members were encouraged to attend if possible

Reminders

You can be reimbursed for your mileage and parking.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND INPUT!