

## East/West Central Joint Advisory Committee Meeting

June 13, 2017 2:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Paynesville Area Center, 1105 W Main St. Paynesville, MN 56362

**Members:** Melinda Brown; Carla Buzzeo (via phone)

**Absent:** Shane Grom; Jean Euteneuer; Mary Bauer; Diane Schiffler-Dobe; Kristin Francois; Omar Ibrahim; Judy Leach; Michele Isham; Rosanne Kath; Rebecca Thiesse

**Staff:** Tracy Bell-Acting St. Cloud Manager and Mankato Manager; Diane Leonard; Christina Costello; David Rosenthal-Director of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services; Gia Vitali-Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Community Supports Administration

**Interpreters:** Anne Janckila; Beth Schultz

**Note taker:** Kris Hulett

**Guests:** Brenda Hommerding

Meeting called to order by Tracy Bell.

### Director's Update:

David announced he is retiring on June 23, 2017. He will still be in Minnesota for another week and then off to North Carolina. He said he will miss Minnesota and the people he works with currently.

A transition plan is in place for the division. Amy McQuaid-Swanson is the temporary Assistant Director and will take over as the Director once David leaves. Jan Radatz has stepped up to take over for Amy while she is the temporary Assistant Director and the acting Director.

There are plans to find a regional manager in the St. Cloud office on a full-term basis. Once the Director is hired, the position will become more permanent. The position for Director has been posted nationwide. The goal is to have a new Director hired by September 1, 2017.

Our budget bill has passed. Please refer to the Power Point for more details and how this changes things for us. The Quad agency has been around for a while and will be advising Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. The Quad agency is made up of Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and State Services for the Blind (SSB), along with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS).

Our current website is under the Department of Human Services (DHS) and is more limited. Under the new bill, we can create our own website now and choose what is added to it. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services currently has five regional offices and one satellite office. The office locations are: Moorhead, Duluth, St. Cloud, Mankato and St. Paul. The satellite office is located in Virginia, Minnesota.

Therapeutic Services Agency (TSA) is now able to be continually funded. Deafblind Consumer Directed Services (DBCDS) will no longer be offered through the DHHS regional offices, but instead through an outside agency. As it stand now, DHHS will decide how the money is divided between all of the services and grants.

There was a question on if additional funding was provided to Lifetrack. The answer was yes and Lifetrack decides how to divide up the money they receive. More information should be available by August. The goal of the increased funding is to reduce and possibly eliminate the waiting list.

#### Administration Update:

Gia Vitale was able to attend the meeting in person. Gia is the Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Community Supports Administration (CSA) under the Department of Human Services (DHS). CSA has five divisions:

1. Alcohol and Drug Abuse
2. Mental Health
3. Disability Services
4. Housing Services
5. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

The strategic plan is not yet finished (about 60% finished), but was aimed at finding commonalities between the five divisions. The team consisted of 25 people and found three key initiatives:

1. Equity
2. Person-Centered Focus
3. Operational Excellence

The Director position will be open until July 7, 2017. Gia is hoping to start interviews in mid-July. There will be a second round of interviews and possibly a third round also. This process will go through summer and into fall. The plan is to have an interview last one and a half hours and each candidate would spend half of the interview time with an internal staff panel and the other half of the time with external stakeholders.

Stabilizing the St. Cloud office with regards to management has been made a top priority. We are also integrating the Mental Health and Alcohol and Drug Abuse Divisions by hiring one division director to oversee both divisions.

#### MNCDHH Update:

The Minnesota Commission of Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing individuals (MNCDHH) has been very busy with the legislative session. They have gone through the process of screening the issues and set up goals within their legislative plan. Please refer to the update from MNCDHH for more detailed information. There was a surcharge of \$300,000 from the TAM

fund that is now required from DHHS. MNCDHH has been very active and we thank them for advocating for us in this legislative session. The Department of Human Services (DHS) has been very supportive to us in this legislative session as well.

### Member Updates:

**Carla:** Recently went to the Midwest Conference of Deaf Education on June 8-9 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. There were many partners of education there, including teachers, parents, audiologists, and superintendents. Rachel Coleman was one of the presenters. Rachel has made several signing DVDs called "Signing Time" and has currently developed free ASL classes to parents of deaf children, age 0-3. These can be taken online at [www.mydeafchild.org](http://www.mydeafchild.org) and click on application. Once you are approved, you will be sent a code to enter for your classes. You can also purchase ASL classes at [www.signitasl.com](http://www.signitasl.com).

November 2-4 is the Minnesota Collaborative Experience.

The southwest and west central Co-op are hopeful for an event in regions 6 and 8.

A new training that is offered are modules on being a Deafblind intervener. Carla strongly encourages people to take this workshop. It is very good. There will also be a one day workshop on understanding deaf blindness and understanding the role of the intervener on August 16. Kathy Lyle from the metro ESCU will be presenting.

**Melinda:** We (Volunteers of America-VOA) have recently received a grant for a videotape project called "Healthy Boundaries". It will hopefully be posted soon. A week was spent out in California to do the videotaping. There are five different scenarios that show the right and wrong way to handle a situation. The ages of the participants ranged from elementary all the way through high school. This was a wonderful opportunity to create a tape in ASL.

**Brenda:** There have been many changes with Minnesota Hands and Voices. Candace Lindow-Davies left to go to the National Office. Laura Godfrey has now moved up to replace Candace, and Brenda has also moved up to the Side-By-Side Coordinator position to replace Laura. There is currently an opening for a parent guide. In order to qualify as a parent guide, there are two criteria that must be met. They are:

1. Have a deaf or hard of hearing child
2. Live in the five county coverage area

Minnesota Hands and Voices is also still looking for an ASL and Spanish speaking parent guide. If you know anyone who may be interested, please send them our way.

The Minnesota Hands and Voices annual event is coming up on August 3 at the Como Park Pavilion. Anyone can volunteer as a professional. Some people choose to dress up in costumes. The event itself is free and a meal will be provided.

Brenda is hoping to have a family event in Buffalo. The goal is to do two activities per year.

If anyone is interested or knows someone who is interested or needs more information on educational advocacy, Minnesota Hands and Voices has a book on advocating for your child.

**Judy (update given by Diane Leonard):** Since Judy was not able to attend the meeting, Diane gave an update on Judy's behalf:

1. Interpreters in the East Central Minnesota area have been working hard to set up workshops, conduct meetings, and share information about opportunities around the state. We want all West Central Minnesota interpreters to be aware that they are more than welcome to join in!
2. Since the last meeting in late January, we have continued interpreter meetings monthly where we discuss various topics such as interpreter fashion, ethical/safety concerns, and we have also partnered with Minnesota's Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDIs) hoping to learn to work together more effectively and see CDIs utilized more in out-state Minnesota.
3. Interpreters in Central Minnesota have been busy attending workshops for professional development including:
  - a. Vicarious trauma
  - b. Power and privilege-understanding our impact
  - c. Performing arts
  - d. Ally-ship
  - e. Supporting the efforts of the E2E grant program with workshops on mental health, etc.
  - f. The spring MRID conference in the metro-variety of topics
  - g. A van full of interpreters from our area attended the Deaf Missions Conference in Omaha, Nebraska-variety of topics
  - h. Omar's presentation on working with the Somali community put on by DHHS and ASLIS
  - i. SIL is offering a linguistics course open to interpreters in late July, DHHS has the information if anyone is interested and it's open to all-statewide!
4. Volunteers and Anne from DHHS are in the process of planning a two part training in mid-July for interpreters and Deaf professionals expanding on the March Power and Privilege workshop-this will look more specifically at work with the LGBTQ+ community. This workshop will be advertised soon and will be held in St. Cloud.
5. With changes in staff and roles at CentraCare, Cynthia has been working hard to encourage policy updates and hear what is/is not working well regarding interpreting services. Hopefully soon we will hear about the permanent positions and their staff at CentraCare. Hopefully we can continue to collaborate (interpreters, the DHH community, and health care providers throughout central Minnesota) to continue to improve services around the state, not just in St. Cloud.
6. Following the merger of Z and Purple VRS-The St. Cloud ZVRS center will be closing within the next year.
7. Sorenson Communications is opening SCIS. This will be a community interpreting division. Some of the interpreters will work only community, some interpreters will choose to continue with VRS work only, and others will have the opportunity to do both. Sorenson is NOT attempting to come into our community and establish a competitor for other referral agencies-rather, the focus will be on specific contracts. If interested, interpreters can apply on the Sorenson website.
8. ASLIS has had the grant for trying to bridge services and meet gaps throughout greater Minnesota. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the workshops, or their

services, please contact the local DHHS office and they will direct you to the right people to hear those concerns regarding grant work.

- a. One concern is funeral funds for interpreters. There needs to be ASLIS staff going to the funeral homes across the state to explain what is available so that the funeral homes have this readily available for families and churches they work with when those situations arise. Many family members and professionals don't know ASLIS exists or that there would be such a grant, so they don't know to access this in their time of loss. Personal visits, information sharing, a brochure-maybe not just the web information, is needed to truly meet the needs of the state and increase the appropriate use of these funds rather than families or deaf consumers paying out of pocket.

### Mental Health Update:

The legislative session provided some good news and some not so good news for mental health. The mental health specialist position in the Moorhead office will continue for another year with the funding received. Hopefully this will soon become a permanent position. The not so good news is that mental health lost the post-doctoral position. Colleen's last day with the division will be June 30.

Some exciting news for mental health is that for the first time ever, mental health has a fully licensed staff. Tobias will be licensed in July, Christina received her license June 1 and Amy from the Duluth office has submitted her paperwork for her license.

### Open Discussion:

At this time, we would encourage ideas on how to make meetings more appealing to members and also future meeting topics that anyone has.

1. WIOS-They help people get into competitive employment rather than sheltered programs.
2. Possibly doing meetings using Vidyo for higher attendance success rates.
3. Cued Speech
  - a. Not as familiar in out-state
  - b. Enhancement to English language
  - c. Also not as accessible in out-state
4. CentraCare needs to improve interpreters in the Emergency Room.
5. Many Deaf people struggle with the permit and license tests.
  - a. They may have an interpreter or CDI present.
6. The waiting list for the out-state deaf mentor program is very long.
7. Not much access to CART in schools.
  - a. Some of the teachings are videos and the students can't see the teacher.
  - b. Videos don't have captions on them
  - c. Students are needing to go home, watch the video and then go to school the next day to be involved in the assignments/discussions related to the video.

8. Access to hearing aids for those without insurance through the hearing aid bank.
  - a. St. Cloud just closed their hearing aid bank in March
  - b. Minnesota Hearing Aid Bank is not accepting applications
  - c. Vocational Rehabilitation services can start about 10<sup>th</sup> grade
  - d. Anyone covered by MA should be able to get a hearing aid
  - e. DHHS has some financial resources.
    - i. If the parents have insurance, children under 18 should be covered.
    - ii. Diane also has information on how to write letters to insurance companies.

Meeting Adjourned 4:20 pm