

SE Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
December 7, 2007
Rochester Office

Present: Terry Schwalbach, Amy Deneen, Doug Marquardt, Sue Gensmer, and Ann Peterson

Staff Present: Jeff Erickson, Danella Bohland, Tracie Henning

Notetaker: Dawn Crowson

Meeting was called to order at 1:30pm

Staff Work Reports:

Danella Bohland DHHS Consultant: On November 15, 2007, the Rochester DHHS sponsored a Fire Safety Training. Fifteen deaf consumers attended this training. Fire Chief Vance Swisher from the Rochester Fire Department was the presenter. Due to this workshop the local fire department preceded to look for grant money to purchase smoke alarms for the deaf and hard of hearing individuals. The grant has been written and waiting to hear if it has been approved.

Three consumers are in the process of acquiring their Naturalization papers to become citizens of the United States. Danella has been working closely with these individuals and their attorney.

A new DRS consultant has been hired. Liz Smith will be taking the deaf and HH caseload. Danella will be meeting with Liz in the near future.

SEMCIL has four deaf peer visitors that have been matched up with four deaf consumers. This is a joint project between Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services and SE Minnesota Center for Independent Living.

Danella visited a FEMA site that was set up from the August Flood. Our office helped purchase some equipment for an individual who lost some things due to the flood in Southeastern Minnesota.

Tracie Henning TED Specialist: Tracie drafted a letter to the flood victims from the August flood in Southeastern Minnesota. Dawn sent this letter out to all of the TED clients who were affected by the flood to see if they needed their phone/equipment replaced. Tracie heard back from one individual who needed a phone.

Tracie continues to provide presentations to local dining sites/assisted living centers as well as local health fairs.

Tracie is piloting a new A50 phone in the southeast area. If this phone is well received by individuals, it will be added to the inventory.

Jeff Erickson Regional Manager: Jeff informed the members our office is in the process of hiring a Mental Health Consultant for the Rochester/Mankato office. This person will be housed in Rochester and will spend one or two days a week at the Mankato office. Teri Schwalbach informed Jeff when the new person is hired she would be willing to introduce them to other agencies.

Jeff informed the members we are also in the process of hiring a staff interpreter for the Mankato office. We have posted this position with several agencies, i.e., DeafNet, HireDeaf.com, tcdeaf.com. Dawn and I worked closely with Mary Jane Cowden from the Workforce Center in posting this position on their web site.

Commission Report by Amy Deneen. Amy has attended one meeting since she has been approved to serve on the commission. She attended the September meeting. The bills that the MN Commission Serving Deaf and HH People sponsored have been passed/approved by the legislation. There was a name change to MCDHH where they included deafblind. The next commission meeting will be in Jan. 2008. Amy would like to see our office sponsor a “family signing class” and possibly host a “technology fair” here in Rochester.

Jeff mentioned that the “Deaf Mentoring” project will be starting up again soon. \$40,000 was approved for this project and families must apply to be accepted into this project. Right now nine families have applied.

New DHHS Web Page: Jeff asked the members to view the new DHHS Web page and to give their feedback. Jeff handed out a list of questions for the members to answer. The members viewed the web page using DHHS staffs’ computers in the Rochester office.

Meeting adjourned 3:45pm.