

# Advisory Committee Meeting

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*Southeast*

*ABC Inc. 1911 14<sup>th</sup> St NW, Rochester, MN 55901*

*Tuesday, December 12, 2017*

**Members:** Chandra Petersen (remote), Missy Brehaug, Lloyd Ballinger, Wes Brandenburger, Ridge Euler, Jaimelyn King

**Guest(s):**

**Absent:** Nettie Peters, Kim Hicks

**Staff:** Tracy Bell

**Interpreter:** Jenna Murphy and Mike Provanca

**Note taker:** Natalie Regenscheid (remote via CART)

## **Community Updates:**

Lloyd Ballinger:

- Greg Jahn passed away 3-4 months ago, he was a key person in the Rochester area. Jody is going to take over the activities in the deaf community however everyone is still waiting on what will be happening at this point.

Ridge Euler:

- Banquet for the Deaf-Blind was last month on November 26. They celebrated their 36<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. This year there was over 200 people that attended. Everything is accessible, SSP (Service Support Providers) and interpreters were available.

Chandra Petersen:

- Not very many updates to share.
- Circling back to communication access, have been working with Tracy Bell in providing appropriate communication access for all consumers. There is an increase in numbers of deaf refugees, especially in the Rochester and Faribault areas. VR is partnering with DHHS and Think Self in the Twin Cities to help bridge together the English language and Sign Language education.
- VR applied for a grant to receive additional funding to remove consumers for the waiting list. The waiting list are consumers waiting to receive services from VR.

- VR Counselor in the Faribault office, Holly Johnson, will be taking over my load as I am out on maternity leave. If there is anything you need or questions, Holly is the person to contact.
- Tracy shared that when working with refugees, strongly encourage them to apply right away to receive Social Security benefits. There is a seven year period in which you can obtain the Social Security benefits. If you wait too long, you miss your chance of receiving the benefits. If the deadline was missed, you can encourage them to apply for U.S. citizenship.

Missy Brenhaug:

- No new updates.

Jaime:

- Referrals have been coming in, mental health has been awesome with the kids and everything.
- Jaime notes a struggle with communication access in the SE MN area, seeing a lot of kids that do not sign. She is working with a lot of parents who speak Spanish, for the children that are deaf or hard of hearing, it can be challenging to communicate with the families.
- Tracy encouraged Jaime to refer families to DHHS if they experience barriers with communication access as DHHS can try to help remove barriers.

## **DHHS Updates:**

Tracy Bell:

- Will leave the Text-to-911 to Lloyd to share.
- Our team hosted an all-day training on November 8. About 20 people attended, and about half of them came from the St. Peter Regional Treatment Center. Our team recapped the day at our last team meeting and we agreed that it was long (6 hours) and overwhelming with information. The feedback from the audience was positive. For the next training, our team will attempt to split the training into two sessions, first in the morning and the second in the afternoon. These trainings will focus on different topics (ie: hearing loss, technology, communication modes, ASL and access, mental health, etc.) and give attendees the option of attending one training or both. We are considering providing the training in the Rochester area, and will keep AC members posted.
- Hearing Aid Bank Updates: we continue to have a waiting list of ten or more people. When funds become unavailable, we plan to do a trial run of offering the people on the list the option of staying on the list and wait until funds become available or offer for them to buy their own HA at MA rates.
- Tony and I are starting to see more consumers from other countries – Somalia, Burmese, Guatemala, and Mexico. We will need to have some diversity training soon.

- Technology in our office continues to be a major asset in providing services to consumers – when consumers try equipment “hands on” (versus via pictures or video), their confidence is increased and their motivation to purchase equipment becomes apparent. Having technology also helps service providers get an idea of the type of equipment to purchase for or recommend to their consumers.
- Tony and Nancy hosted a booth at the annual Veterans’ Standdown event in Mankato this month which has been happening every year for the last several years. About 50 people stopped by the booth and Tony and Nancy demonstrated equipment including telephone equipment, hearing aids, Roger pen, microphones and this gave the attendees and hands on experience and this helps people “get it” rather than show pictures. Tony is still grateful to have the technology and he has seen it benefit consumers, and consumers are more confident in accepting (and purchasing) equipment to enhance their lives. He said 3-4 people stopped by to thank him and Nancy for their services in the past. Nancy said that the fact that DHHS and TED are being visible helps in “getting the word out” about our services. CVSO (County Veterans Service Office) services staff from counties stopped by the booth and learned more about telephones and other technology besides Captel. Staff are familiar with OEI (Outreach, Education and Installations) that provides Captels, so it was good that staff are aware of other technology besides Captels.
- Tony and Nancy also manned a booth at a technology fair held by ARC in Rochester. People who stopped by the booth learned about technology at the booth, and this led to a referral to a consumer in a nearby city to demonstrate a smoke detector.
- We will have our ice skating event on November 21, 2018. We are seeking sponsorship from HyVee, McDonald’s, Gaylord Sertoma Club and Mayo Clinic.
- Staffing updates – the Division Director Position was posted until 11/30/17. Hopefully interviews will be set up soon. We currently have three RM positions vacant in Greater Minnesota – St. Cloud, Moorhead and Duluth. They are temporarily filled for the time being. The second specialist position in Mankato is vacant, and I am waiting for approval to fill the position – hopefully we can post it in January.
- Will be needing a chairperson for the SE Advisory committee. It has been a long time and we would like for the committee to have their own chair instead of having me run the meetings. If anyone is interested, let me know.
- A website workgroup is currently in the process of looking for a vendor to do the design for a DHHS website. DHHS will have a separate, stand alone website from DHS with flexibility to provide information and resources on the website.

### **MNCDHH Updates:**

Lloyd Ballinger:

- Recently was appointed on the Technology communication access program to provide to the deaf and hard of hearing service. TTYs are phasing out. The community has been working with DHHS and department of commerce in utilizing finances to develop a program on how we can improve the TED program.

- Text-to-911 is designed for people who are deaf or have a hearing loss. Hearing persons can use the text feature if they are in a domestic violence situation or hiding and needs emergency assistance but primarily it is for those with a hearing loss or deaf or hard of hearing. As of now, only three states in the U.S. use text to 911 statewide, and regions/counties in nine other states use the text to 911 program.
- Working with Mary Hartnett about emergency management to make it a priority and to develop a guideline or policy in Minnesota should there be a major natural disaster, such as hurricanes, fires, flooding, etc. It would be nice to have a live qualified interpreter visible on the news screen to interpret the natural disaster occurrences to keep deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the loop. Captioning should not cover the banner or crawl on the news.

## **OTHER**

- David Springer from KAAL will be joining the next meeting. Lloyd mentions that David is very easy to work with, especially if captioning is not working. Lloyd will give him a call or email and two minutes later, boom, captioning is working again.

## **FUTURE MEETING DATES:**

- Tuesday, Feb 2, 10am-12pm meeting at KAAL Rochester Station, 1320 Salem Road, SW, Rochester, MN 55902
- Tuesday, June 5, 10am-12pm meeting at ABC Inc, 1911 14<sup>th</sup> St NW, Rochester, MN 55901
- Friday, October 5, 10am-12:30pm meeting at Owatonna Public Library, 105 N Elm Ave, Owatonna, MN 55060
- Tuesday, December 4, 10am-12pm meeting at ABC Inc, 1911 14<sup>th</sup> St NW, Rochester, MN 55901