

## Meeting Minutes: Advisory Committee Meeting, South

Date: 10/05/18

Minutes prepared by: Sara Kreiling/Marie Koehler

Location: Owatonna Public Library, Owatonna, MN

### Attendance

- Marie Koehler/ DHHS
- Sara Kreiling/ DHHS
- Dan Millikin/ DHHS
- Chandra Petersen
- Mike Goodlander/ Faribault VR
- Roberta/ VR Employment
- Nettie Peters/ MSAD
- Emory Dively/ MNCDHH
- Sarah Arana/ MNCDHH

### Agenda

- Introductions, communication
- Voter Outreach, Sarah Arana and Emory K. Dively (MNCDHH)
- Updates, Dan Millikin and Marie Koehler
- Member and MNCDHH updates
- Closing remarks

### Meeting Notes

#### Introductions, Communications

- Marie introduced herself as the newly appointed DHHS Supervisor and Dan Millikan, as the new Director for DHHS.
- Dan shared that he starting working for the Division on April 2 – it snowed that day! He is impressed with the level of services in Minnesota compared to Wisconsin, where he worked for two years with the

Bureau of Aging and Disability Services –Deaf and Hard of Hearing office. Dan’s most previous position was working for Video Relay Services in Colorado.

- Marie acknowledged and thanked Tony Davis, who has been with DHHS for 7 years. He will soon move back to North Carolina. Tony’s made significant contributions and his knowledge and expertise will be missed.
- Tony said he really enjoyed working with all of the advisory committee members and consumers and service providers from the southern region.
- Sara Kreiling was introduced as the new DHSS Specialist working out of the Mankato office.

## Voter Outreach

- Marie introduced Emory K. Dively, who presented on Voter Outreach Education for MNCDHH. He is one of 6 individuals the Commission has contracted with to offer education related to voting and the election process. He stressed that voting outreach takes a village.
  - They have offered workshops statewide and to many schools and organizations
  - Their goal is to empower and motivate people with hearing loss to get out and vote
  - A video clip of “Why we Teach Voter’s Education” with Zack Virnig and Shawn Vriezen was shown.
  - The curriculum for their workshop includes: Am I registered to vote? How do I register? Where is my polling place? What are my rights as a voter? Why is it important to vote? Where do I find information on candidates? What dates are important for voting? Is voting accessible? This is important for DeafBlind who can bring Support Service Providers (SSPs) along, but many SSPs are unfamiliar or not used to the voting process.
  - The Secretary of State’s website has a lot of voting information on their website, as does the MNCDHH website.
  - MNCDHH has worked with DeafBlind Services Minnesota (DBSM) to help coordinate rides to the poll for DeafBlind voters.
  - Emory encourage members to share information about the Commission’s Voters Outreach Education with others and to share personal voting stories on their website.
  - On March 6, 2019 MNCDHH is hosting Lobby Day at the recently renovated State Capitol. He explained why it is important for consumers to remain engaged in the political process and connect with their legislators. This is an ongoing process.

## Updates, Dan and Marie

- Dan addressed the redesign that is occurring within the division. The current model has been in use for 40 years, since the DHHS Act was enacted. It has worked well but over the years many things have changed i.e. technology, resources, our population living longer, immigrants moving to Minnesota, etc. The redesign focuses one:
  - Eliminating “silos” of staff working regionally, and having staff work by “functionality.” For example, all of the statewide DHHS Specialists will work as a team and be supervised by Marie Koehler. All of the statewide TED staff will be aligned as a team and be supervised by Sarah

Maheswaran. The statewide Mental Health staff are already grouped as a team and will continue to be supervised by John Gournaris.

- New positions with this redesign include: Two Lead Specialists to work closely with Marie; they will oversee the day-to-day work of the DHHS Specialists. The division will hire two Centralized Information and Referral staff to streamline the I&R process and make it easier for consumers to contact the division. We will have designated 800 numbers for Voice, VP and TTY callers. The I&R Specialists will triage all statewide calls. The division also plans to hire a Communication Coordinator. The person in this position would oversee outreach and help with our stand-alone website that is under development.
- Dan works out of the Central Office, in Operations/Administration. Staff located her function as the “control tower.”
- The advisory committees will continue, and the Lead Specialists will work closely with the Advisory Committees to develop the agendas and coordinate the meetings. Instead of members meeting 4 times a year, they will meet 2 times, with a possible 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting utilizing a different approach.
- DHHS staff will be more widely dispersed throughout the state and use technology more, such as teleworking. There's no need to keep a person in the office all day. We are also looking at having drop-in offices, co-location spaces, etc. The division does want to place a staff person in Rochester to meet the needs in the southwest. DHHS staff is working with Facilities Management to find alternative work spaces.
- Chandra suggested that there is enough work in Faribault alone to warrant a Specialist there. Tony said he believes that a Specialist is needed in Rochester. Sara said the southern region could benefit from 3 Specialists. Nettie and Chandra concurred that the number of consumers in the southern region is growing.
- Chandra mentioned Rice County Human Services does not provide good services to consumer with hearing loss. Tony said the key is to connect with the right people and to follow through with them. Marie noted that in 2019, the DHHS office plans to implement a statewide county survey project, this could help identify gaps and improve services at the county level.

## Member Updates

- Nettie shared that Rice and other counties ask MSAD to provide and pay interpreters for meetings at MSAD for students, when the agency (agencies) should pay.
- Chandra says she often sees people fill out Medical Assistance (MA) insurance papers etc. without help, even though they have asked for it. They also don't receive any interpreter services. Some counties don't provide services; they know they should, but they don't.
- Tony again reiterated that the DHHS Mankato office has developed some good relationships with several people at the various county programs. These people can help advocate internally to ensure that accessible services for consumers with hearing loss are provided. (Tony developed a great list of county contacts; Sara and Marie both have copies of this list.)
- Chandra and Roberta talked about the complexity of social security forms and getting services through SSA.

- Chandra and Roberta shared that the redesign that VR is going through is also impacting the south. VR had 3 service centers in the South region, now it has 4 centers. More information will be forth coming.
- Nettie shared information on Pathways at MSAD.
- Chandra shared that there is a real lack of services in the south from VR due to staffing issues, so they have been trying to tap into Minnesota Employment Center (MEC) resources and JM Davis.
- Chandra mentioned new ABE class in Faribault. Many deaf immigrants have been attending.

### **Closing remarks, Adjourn**

- Marie thanked all for coming.