

## Meeting Minutes: SW DHHS Advisory Committee Meeting

Date: 3/5/2019  
Minutes prepared by: Nikki Peterson  
Location: DHHS Mankato

### Attendance

- Marie Koehler/DHHS
- Sara Kreiling/DHHS
- Calla Kevan/DHHS
- Nikki Peterson/DHHS
- Jacqui Shasky/Teacher of Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Howard Rosten/SMILES Center for Independent Living
- Krista Blood/MN Hands and Voices
- Jessica/Interpreter
- Jenna/Interpreter

### Agenda

- Call to Order, Introductions, Welcome New Members, Meet Calla/Marie Koehler
- Acceptance of October 5, 2018 Meeting Minutes/Marie Koehler
- DHHS SW Update Report/Sara Kreiling
- TED and MR Update/Marie Koehler
- Old Business/Marie Koehler
- New Business/Marie Koehler
- MCDHH/Marie Koehler
- Announcements/All committee members

### Next Meeting

Date: TBD  
Time:  
Location:

Agenda items: (submit proposed agenda items to Marie Koehler)

## Meeting Notes

### Call to Order/Introductions/Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. Members were welcomed.

### Acceptance of October 5, 2018 Meeting Minutes

No one present was at the last meeting so the minutes were not formally approved.

### DHHS SW Update Report

With the redesign, DHHS is looking at the number of annual advisory committee meetings held. There are eight advisory groups with four meetings a year, which is a lot to coordinate. It is proposed that we downsize the number of meetings to two or three. The second or third meeting would be combined, advisory committee members and community members. Members seemed to agree this would be a good idea. They stated that historically one of the meetings was with the advisory committee members from Rochester and was typically held in the fall.

There used to be a requirement that a set amount of time need to pass between a committee member's appointment and another term. This limit was removed by the legislature last year.

Roberta Johnson was the southwestern representative for MNCDHH, but she stepped down. Members did not think they currently had a representative. Members were encouraged to consider applying for this position.

Sara Kreiling provided a brief update. She's worked in Mankato for about ten months. Tony Davis resigned in October. Calla Kevan then joined the division in January. Sara and Calla have been doing a lot of brainstorming and they've decided how they will split up the southeast and southwest regions. Sara will be responsible for the southwest, for cities like Waseca and Faribault. Sara will also cover Rice County even though it is in the southeast. Calla will take care of Rochester and the remainder of the southeast region. This division of areas is not set in stone and can be readjusted if needed. Sara and Calla are committed to working together as a team and sharing work if needed. This flexibility in areas a specific specialist covers is part of the division's redesign.

Sara has been working on a lot of different things. She presented at MSU, to address assistive technology and Deaf Culture. She also presented to different area nursing staff, demonstrating some assistive technology. Additionally, Sara participated in the Aging Eye Initiative through State Services for the Blind (SSB). DHHS has collaborated with them to assist people with dual hearing and vision loss. This program covers individuals 55 years or older, who are not working. The program distributes vision loss devices, such as a check sign guide, a large kitchen timer, and a talking alarm clock so one can hear the time. DHHS staff participating in the program can also give out Pocketalkers, which are popular with senior citizens. This is a pilot program. SSB has many partners statewide who are participating, but DHHS staff are the only ones able to distribute Pocketalkers. Marie is meeting to see if SSB is willing to design a flyer that specifically shows pocket talkers are available.

Sara Kreiling will be presenting on text to 911. This is already an option in all of Minnesota. The motto is “CALL if you can, text if you CAN’T”. Texting is for callers with hearing loss or for people in situations that would be dangerous for them to use their voice; example, domestic abuse callers. When using the text option, it is important for consumers to state that they are deaf or hard of hearing. Krista shared that she tried texting to 911 last week and they told her to call. Krista will let Marie know the details about this incident so she can call her Department of Public Safety contact person. If any other members have feedback regarding this service, please share it with Marie, Sara or Calla.

Sara shared that she is also working on an internal work group that is developing content for an online video training that addresses dual hearing and vision loss.

DHHS also has the traffic communication cards available to distribute. Many police departments have requested copies so they can keep one in each vehicle. These have been distributed to thousands of people. Even people from other states and countries have requested these cards so they can use it as an example when creating their own.

## **TED/MR Update**

### *New Minnesota Relay Booklet*

The TED Program is under the Department of Commerce. For years, they had outdated materials. They recently came out with booklets to replace their outdated brochures. These new booklets contain simplified language that is helpful to people who are not familiar with MN Relay. These booklets are also much broader and address all types of relay services such as video relay and internet relay. There is also a booklet on amplified and captioned telephones. Extras brochures were available for members to take and distribute. To find electronic copies of *Minnesota Relay* and *Amplified and Captioned Telephone* booklets, visit the [Minnesota Relay website](http://www.mnrelay.org) (www.mnrelay.org) and scroll down to the “Brochures” tab.

### *Staffing*

Nancy Karkoska, the southern TED specialist who worked in the Mankato office for many years, is now working as a vocational rehabilitation counselor. Her position will soon be posted; the location will be either Mankato or Rochester. The TED OASI, Nikki Peterson, is moving on. She received a promotion within DHS. The TED OASI position will be posted soon as well. Marie will forward the posting information for both positions so members can pass it along to anyone they think may be interested.

### *iPhone/iPad Pilot 2*

We did an iPhone/iPad Pilot a couple of years ago. The Department of Commerce asked us to do a phase two because they want to know how much individuals will use these devices for telecommunication purposes before determining if the program can distribute this type of equipment on an ongoing basis. This second pilot is very limited to telecommunication. The participants will be required to give regular feedback. The pilot will last three months and then a report will be written and submitted to the Department of Commerce. Commerce will then

make a determination as to whether or not the program will continue. The individuals partaking in the second phase of the pilot for the southern region will receive their training tomorrow.

### *Legislative Update*

The TED Program has a proposal in the governor's budget to look at modernization. One proposal is to add additional technology, like multifunctional devices. For example, something that not only alerts one to the phone ringing, but also the doorbell ringing or smoke alarm going off. The TED program would provide the transmitters and consumers would be responsible for purchasing other non-telephone related receivers. The program is also looking into giving out Bluetooth streamers to pair with hearing aids.

## **Old Business**

### *Update and Progress related to DHHS redesign*

The division redesign is the result of a few different things that occurred. First, the division hired two outside groups to study the TED Program and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. There was also a group formed to identify gaps in services. These three groups made recommendations on how to update DHHS programs and operations. Changes in the division's legislative mandate also impacted the redesign. In the midst of all of this, a new division director, Dan Millikin, was hired. He's been charged with moving these changes forward.

The redesign has more to do with organizational changes related to staffing and does not involve the type of services DHHS offers. The division is now organized by functionality. Staff in regional offices used to work as a team; however, now staff from each of the offices are being aligned with similar staff in other offices. There are DHHS Specialists that do direct client work, provide training and consultation to agencies, and now these staff are all a team.

Staff were initially nervous about the redesign, but their positions haven't significantly changed. One recommendation of the study groups was that DHHS staff should not take on work that other agencies already provide. Instead, we'll work with other agencies and organizations to educate and advocate on behalf of consumers so that they receive the necessary communication access to be served by those agencies. DHHS is a small division; staff cannot handle all of the work. The goal is to have specialists look for appropriate resources, make referrals and work with existing resources through training and consultation.

Also with the redesign, we are finally going to have a centralized information and referral center. Instead of having multiple numbers for many different offices, the plan is to have one number. Of course we'll have one number for each method of communication; voice, videophone and TTY. The division will also go to one main email address instead of having separate email addresses for each office. This is not to take away work from staff in the regional offices. This will go much further to ensure the phones will be answered during normal business hours. There will be some exceptions, like when statewide meetings are held.

Another addition related to the redesign is that we hired a communication coordinator, Rosa Ramirez. This position is critical for social media. Rosa has been here for about two months. She will work with all statewide staff to promote events and the new centralized information and referral center.

Lastly, the division is creating its own standalone website. The design will be different and much more user-friendly. There have been ASL videos created for this new website so we will finally have more culturally appropriate material.

There was discussion and members asked if the ice skating event would continue like it has in the past. Many students in the south really enjoyed it. Usually about 30 or 40 kids participated. Hopefully DHHS will be able to provide an event for students in the future, but it will be a different event, something fun but also with an educational component.

Teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing realize the importance of these social events; however, they're getting more challenging to have with less time and less funding resources. Students need more than one or two opportunities to meet other deaf and hard of hearing students since just one event doesn't give them an opportunity to form strong relationships. In the future, different agencies and organizations will have to collaborate to pull them off. Since Calla and Sara are currently developing an outreach plan, they will try to brainstorm ways to help connect the different groups and areas. The events might be different than what they were in the past, but it would be good to continue to find ways to get together.

## **New Business**

### *New Division Fact Sheet and Soaring High Highlights from 2018*

Two documents, *Accomplishments from DHHS Specialists* and *DHHS Fact Sheet for CSA Open House*, were distributed. *Accomplishments from DHHS Specialists* has examples of two or three accomplishments from 2018 for each deaf and hard of hearing specialist. *DHHS Facts Sheet for CSA Open House* provides an overview of what we do. It talks about services, grants, who we serve, and success stories.

Both documents are available below:



Accomplishments  
from DHHS Specialis



DHHS Fact Sheet  
for CSA Open House

### *FY '19 DHHS Grant contract review*

Some people are unaware of the grant dollars DHHS gives out. These grants are overseen by people in our administrative office. They seek out vendors with Requests for Proposals and then different providers and vendors respond. Plans submitted to DHHS are reviewed and then grants are awarded. The grants team made a video, [DHHS Grants 2019](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9dEJolhOMw&feature=youtu.be) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9dEJolhOMw&feature=youtu.be>), to explain the different grants for 2019.

### *Member Input regarding gaps and trends in the SW region & strategies to address*

Jacqui shared that in Region 9 other teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing are wondering who will be available to do trainings and presentations that Tony did. Depending on the county, either Sara Kreiling or Calla

Kevan could be contacted about these. Calla suggested doing presentations to both teachers and students explaining the different services available through DHHS and demonstrating some equipment available.

Howard, who works with veterans and the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV), recommended someone from DHHS should attend a Stand Down for Veterans event. In the past, DHHS staff has attended with good results. Howard will forward the contact information for the events.

### *Fire safety and smoke alarm project*

DHHS is seeking stories from individuals who have experienced fire or carbon monoxide incidents due to a lack of smoke alarms or carbon monoxide detectors. We're also looking for federal grant dollars to distribute these devices to those in need. Members were asked to let Marie know if they had stories to share or are aware of potential grant dollars available for this.

Howard stated that six or seven years ago the city or county had an expo at the downtown mall with police, firefighters, and state patrol officers. It was recommended that DHHS speak with local firefighters to let them know about smoke alarms for deaf and hard of hearing. Local fire departments also might be able to tap into FEMA grants to help distribute accessible devices.

The below handout regarding Smoke Alarms was distributed:



SmokeAlarmsDisabilitySafetyTips.pdf

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

The division is studying CART services. First, DHHS surveyed CART providers, schools that provide training, and referral agencies, to find information regarding supply and demand. It can be difficult, especially in greater Minnesota, to find CART providers. When providing CART services remotely technical issues often arise; however, asking a provider to appear in person usually means added travel expenses. Since barriers to providing CART services have been found, the division is trying to develop strategies and find solutions.

During the next phase of the study, users or potential users of CART services will be surveyed. Since DHHS really wants to utilize committee members' expertise, we're asking if members who have used CART services in the past would be willing to participate.

Jacqui used CART in college and some other situations and stated she would be willing to take the survey. Krista has experience using CART services for work meetings and would also be willing to take the survey. Howard could be a future user of CART services so he also agreed to take the survey. Marie will also ask committee members not present for this meeting to participate. She may also ask all members to forward the survey to other people who might be current or potential future CART users.

### *Seeking member feedback to redesign of DHHS website*

DHHS is creating a new, standalone website. We're asking if advisory committee members would be able to review the website at two different times; to give feedback and then to review the updates made. DHHS won't be able to address all feedback provided due to some restrictions, but everything will be strongly considered. Jacqui and Howard stated they are willing to review the new website and provide feedback.

### *Member update form, Upcoming meeting dates: preferred days and times to meet*

Stepping in after staff has left is difficult since Marie doesn't have up-to-date contact information for members or their preferred days and times to meet. In an effort to collect this information, members were asked to complete the below form, *FORM to Collect Advisory Committee Member Information*, and submit it to Marie.



FORM to Collect  
Advisory Committee

It was discussed that in the past meetings were usually held on Fridays, and 10:00 - Noon is typically a good time. Usually one of the meetings is held at the end of May or in early June.

## **MCDHH**

### *MNCDHH Updates*

It was recommended that members sign up for MNCDHH updates. The document, *MNCDHH 2019 Legislative Agenda*, was distributed and is available below. This year there is a hearing aid bill, but we are unsure how far it will go. It would be something we all could be excited about.



MNCDHH 2019  
Legislative Agenda.c

## **Announcements**

None

## **Reminders**

You can be reimbursed for your mileage and parking expenses.

If you are unable to attend the meeting, please let Marie Koehler know at [marie.koehler@state.mn.us](mailto:marie.koehler@state.mn.us)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND INPUT!