

## West Central Advisory Committee Meeting

February 7, 2017 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm  
Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services- Room 2055

Members: Rosanne Kath; Christine Schiroo  
Absent: Ernie Watson; Cindy Bjur; Rebecca Thiesse  
Staff: Christina Costello, Tracy Bell-Acting St. Cloud Office Manager and Mankato Office Manager  
Interpreter(s): Anne Janckila, Kris Haffley  
Note taker: Kris Hulett  
Guests: Carla Buzzeo

Meeting called to order by Christina Costello.

### Community Update:

**Rosanne:** Currently considering being the Commission rep for the West Central area. She has been in contact with Mary Hartnett and has the forms to fill out.

**Carla:** Recently invited a Phonak rep (Stacy Michaels) to present to teachers. This event was thrown together rather quickly, but they did talk about the technology available to kids and the hearing aids they are fit with. This was really nice because teachers normally don't get the information but see the kids show up with the technology. One new hearing aid that I thought was cool is the RIC or receiver in the ear hearing aids. These hearing aids condense high frequency sounds so they are now accessible. Roger is a new touch-screen FM system that is now being used. There may be a Webex on these. There was a total of 4 teachers and myself at the presentation. If there had been more notice, attendance probably would have been higher.

As a region, we are trying to have Building Identity Events for deaf and hard of hearing kids. Last time an event was done, they went to Worthington Technical and Community College (about 2-3 years ago) and saw the play "Deaf Duckling". One of the problems they are running into is that school districts will not support using a bus for a separate event. One idea is to possibly do a spring picnic in Redwood Falls.

There has been some disappointment in the Deaf Mentor Program and this region's access to it. Applications have been sent in and people have heard nothing. At the time, the program was about a year out for a waiting list. This was confusing because at one time Carla was even contacted to see if she knew of families to use up the region's money. There isn't any blaming, but more curiosity as to if the money is divided into regions. If so, we have needs in our community. Carla knew of 2 mentors in the area (one for sure, but possibly two).

The Midwest Deaf Education Conference in Augustana is June 8 and 9. The interpreter conference is right before or after. They have presenters from all over the U.S. and they normally hold two workshops at the same time so you can choose which one you want to attend.

**Christine:** Right now it is just a wait to see where funding is at with the legislature. Many times hearing loss is not being caught in the over 65 population until they get hearing aids. Christine would like the opportunity to be able to do some of the little things for people, such as a pocket-talker, before they go straight to hearing aids. The biggest challenge so far seems to be the populations (Somali, for example, may not like using devices).

#### Director's Update:

Seven focus areas were listed in the legislative report (on the paper handed out). The report is now available for the public. Kris will e-mail out the report to the committee and you can feel free to look it over and contact Tracy with any questions.

A director's update was also handed out. Again, contact Tracy if you have any questions and she will answer what she can.

#### MNCDHH Update:

Please sign up for their e-mail updates if you have not already done so. They need your support to continue to provide services. Lobby day is March 8.

The educational symposium has been moved from spring to fall and is now scheduled for November 2-4. They are currently working on additional funding to maintain buildings for the MSAD campus.

The legislative agenda will include education, age-related hearing loss, and assisted living facilities.

DHHS has received funding for 2 years from the Commission for Mental Health. This funding was for:

1. Northwest Mental Health Specialist
2. Mental Health Post Doc Position
3. Deafblind Specialist

The Post Doc does free psychological evaluations for adults across all of Minnesota. Children are covered under a different grant. In the northern part of Minnesota, they use Therapeutic Services Association (TSA), but we use Volunteers of America (VOA). Unfortunately with cost of living has increases, the budget stays the same.

### Regional Update:

Diane has been doing presentations and outreach in the West Central area, mostly to county staff. If you know of any service provider who would like a presentation, please let us know!

Deafblind Consumer Directed Services is still going – some regions have open slots for those who would like to maintain their independence as a deafblind individual. Persons with hearing and vision loss may contact any DHHS office for more information and how to participate.

The TTAP (Technology and Training Access Program) is up and running. The program is ideal for those who are deafblind and not a fit for DBCDS. This program will allow consumers to access technology, equipment and training in order to become self-sufficient. The more funds used for this program, the better for planning. The legislative session will determine if TTAP will be funded beyond this fiscal year (ending on June 30, 2017). If you are interested, please contact the St. Cloud office to get an application.

The TED program did an iPhone/iPad pilot program and the last day they accepted applications was February 1. Results since the program started last summer through January 17: 141 people in Minnesota received a device. You may find these numbers interesting – most people who received devices are 40 years or older: 40-59: 49 devices; 60-79: 49 devices; and 80+: 12 devices. Other age groups were: 25-39: 12 devices; and 10-24: 15 devices. It is unknown if the program will continue. They are still collecting surveys and it will be determined at a later date if the TED program will begin distributing such devices.

Somali presentation on April 11 in St. Cloud at Apollo High School – watch for flyers. St. Cloud office staff are working on offering an all-day training throughout the region. The topic is “Dispelling the Myths”. The training generally includes information about hearing loss, technology, and communication. This is a FREE training. One is scheduled in St. Cloud on May 4 at CentraCare. Another all-day training will be offered in the fall in the West Central area/Willmar. Watch for a date coming soon.

A workshop is scheduled for sign language interpreters in St. Cloud on March 25. The topic is “Power & Privilege: Understanding our Impact as Interpreters” with Alex Nelson presenting.

### Mental Health Update:

Mental Health program is seeking certified interpreters in Minnesota who are interested in interpreting in mental health settings to attend the Mental Health Interpreting Institute in Montgomery, Alabama this summer. Financial assistance is available and applications are due on March 6.

HWP Spring Workshop is on Friday June 2. The topic is “Informed Trauma and Resiliency in Children and Adults”. The presenter is Candace Tate from Georgia.

Joint Committee Meeting:

In the southern region, once per year there is a joint advisory committee meeting. Tracy and Craig would like to do the same with the Central region. We would have the combined meeting on our June 13 meeting date. The location would be in Paynesville so that it is halfway for both advisory committees. All members present were in agreement to have a joint meeting. The best time frame is from 2:00 – 4:30 so there is still enough travel time for everyone to get home if they have children or other activities.

Our next meeting is scheduled for June 13 2:00-4:30 in Paynesville at the Paynesville Area Center. More information will be sent out at a later date.