

# STATE OF COLORADO



**Colorado Department of Human Services**

*people who help people*

**OFFICE OF PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**  
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Bill Ritter, Jr.  
Governor

Karen L. Beye  
Executive Director

**COLORADO COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**  
**COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**  
**January 10, 2008**

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the Regular Meeting to order at 3:10pm.

## 2. ROLL CALL

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Commissioners Joe Benedetto (Chair), Susan Elliott, Debbie Mohney, Terry Sims, Shelley Strickfaden, and Vickie Thomson,

### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Nancy Jean Eubanks

### **CCDHH STAFF PRESENT:**

Cliff Moers, Director, and Cheri Davis, Legal Auxiliary Services Program Manager

### **INTERPRETERS/CART REPORTER:**

Kirk Neuroth, Darlene Ensenat, Richard Blankis, Interpreters  
Claudette Mondragon, CART Reporter

## 3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Chair announced that Cheri Davis would provide the report on the Interpreter Committee for Nancy Jean Eubanks. Without objection, the agenda was approved.

#### 4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

There were a number of corrections to the minutes from October 25, 2007. Commissioner Elliott provided feedback to the secretary. The minutes will be revised, disseminated to the Commissioners, and voted on at the meeting on March 6, 2008.

#### 5. REPORTS

##### **Report of the Chairman, Deacon Joe Benedetto**

- The Chair welcomed the Commissioners, Staff and the public to the quarterly Commission meeting.
- The Chair extended thanks and appreciation to the interpreters and CART reporter for their professional services.
- The Chair extended a special note of thanks and appreciation to the DHS Staff and our Commission Staff for their dedicated service.
- The Chair stated that the challenge before the Commission is to unite with the new Director and the CDHS and to work together for a future of enhanced services and new programs for our Deaf/HH Citizens.
- The Chair announced the presenters for this afternoon's presentation: Sheryl Muir, Danelle Jansen, Rachel Naiman, and Kim Ann Wardlow

##### **Report of the Director, Cliff Moers**

- The Director introduced Luke Adams who is serving as an intern from the Rochester Institute of Technology. Luke grew up in Colorado and went to school at the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind. He will be working in the Commission office for the next two to three months.
- A six-month temporary administrative assistant will be hired. This will help to document the Commission's need for an administrative assistant on a permanent basis. The temporary assistant will be working with Luke to develop the Community Resource Directory and other.
- The Commission will also be hiring a staff interpreter.
- The website is up and running. The Monthly Bulletins will be posted on the website.
- Cliff would like several Commissioners to assist him in further defining the Strategic Plan that was drafted at the retreat.
- Cheri and Cliff will be meeting with Karen Beye, Executive Director of the Department of Human Services to discuss the strategic plan for the Commission.
- Cliff will be meeting with Jenise May, Director of Office of Human Resources, Regulatory and Compliance Affairs, to address the issues of ensuring access to communication in the Department of Human Services. Cliff would like to develop a policies and procedures that could be used by all state agencies.
- Vittoria Parkes is the Commission's new main accountant and is reviewing the December 2007 budget.
- The Director announced that on January 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. the State Board would be reviewing the rules of the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEPD). Anyone is welcome to attend.

**Legal Auxiliary Services:** Legal Auxiliary Services Program Manager, Cheri Davis reported they are averaging 125 requests per month and an average monthly payment of \$25,000. Cheri has proposed rate increases to reward the interpreters for obtaining certification.

There will be three workshops. The first will be in January in Colorado Springs hosted by the Pikes Peak Colorado Registry for the Interpreters for the Deaf (CRID). The second will be in February with Carla Mathers, a nationally known legal interpreter. The third will be held at the CRID Convention in Grand Junction in April.

Cheri is working on new software to update and maintaining the scheduling for the legal interpreter services.

Commissioner Elliott recommended that Cheri have the capacity (funding and time) to travel to all the CRID chapters to share the importance of the Legal Auxiliary Services.

**Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEPD):** Dr. Robert Baldwin explained his role with Marion Downs Hearing Center. He is the Director responsible for overseeing the Consumer Support Services for the Center, under which the TEPD program falls. There were contract delays in December that are now resolved. During October and November there were 171 pieces of equipment distributed. There were 149 applications sent out. There was an increase in CapTels due to the Sprint advertisement. Outreach activities were provided at the Colorado Academy of Audiology Conference, Deaf Symposium, Telecom Pioneers, Hearing Loss Association of America, Silent Athletic Club and Qwest.

**The Chair announced a short recess prior to the presentations.**

**Deaf Education Reform Plan Presentation, Sheryl Muir, Ed.D Department of Education**

Dr. Muir explained that Deaf Education Reform was developed due to the unsatisfactory academic outcomes of children who are deaf and hard of hearing. The Deaf Education Reform Committee wrote the Blueprint for Closing the Gap and Colorado Quality Standards. These both can be found on the CDE website at [www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped). One goal of the plan is to ensure excellent programs for children statewide regardless of their degree of hearing loss or method of communication. Efforts are underway to create regional list serves of service providers in each school district working with children who are deaf and hard of hearing. These list serves will provide updated information on access, new technology, and training. A recent training was held for all the educational interpreters to increase their level of interpreting. Committee members are providing Deaf Education 101 to administrators in education so they are knowledgeable about the challenges children who are deaf and hard of hearing face in school. Dr. Muir will also be meeting with the Colorado Association for the Deaf. She would like the Commission, other agencies and individuals to work collaboratively with the Deaf Education Reform Committee. Through these partnerships, needed reforms can become a reality in Colorado. There was further discussion about the mental health needs for children and the added stress of meeting academic standards. Everyone agreed this is an issue that needs to remain a high priority. Dr. Muir closed by stating that it is important there is a unified voice to legislators about the importance of deaf education reform.

**Colorado Quality Standards for Interpreters Presentation, Danelle Jansen (CRID) & Rachel Naiman (CAD)**

The goal of CQSI committee, under the Colorado Association for the Deaf (CAD) is to improve the quality of sign language interpreters. CAD partnered with CRID. Several attempts to license interpreters have failed in the past. The Committee is returning to the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) this legislative session to again propose licensure. DORA is requesting information to collect data related to the number of incidences where people ~~that~~ have been harmed by poor interpreters. This information is typically anecdotal and not compiled by any one agency. Requests have been sent out to the community to describe any instances of harm. Commissioner Benedetto raised the issue if whether we could bypass DORA and license interpreters through the Commission. Commissioner Elliott recommended the Commission provide a letter of support at the minimum, and the Director should continue to collect information related to individual harm.

**Audio Information Network Grant Request Presentation, Kim Ann Wardlow**

The Disabled Telephone Users Fund provides a grant to the State Library, which in turn funds audio broadcasting for the blind, visually impaired or print disabled. The most common forms of broadcasting are from local newspapers and magazines. This is broadcast via the television typically on Channel 6. Television and Pod casting are available on their website. Starting February 2009, the new federal mandate will require the switch from analog to digital, and the current receivers will no longer work. There is an increased demand for these services and now all the receivers will need to be replaced. As a result, the State Library has requested an increase from \$150,000 to \$200,000/year to cover these additional expenses. The Audio Information Network wants to keep the Commission informed of their request. Ms Wardlow recommended that CCDHH and the Audio Information Network work more collaboratively to support people who are deaf and blind.

**Committee Reports**

**Standing Rules Committee, Chair Susan Elliott**

Commissioner Elliott did not have a report but would like clarification on the standing rule number 9 discussed at the last meeting. Commissioner Benedetto will request that Commissioner Eubanks update us at our next meeting.

**Finance Committee, Chair Terry Sims**

Commissioner Sims reviewed the new budget format.

**TEPD Program Committee, Chair Debbie Mohny**

Commissioner Mohny reminded everyone of the rules meeting on January 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am.

**Interpreter Committee, Legal Referral Specialist Cheri Davis**

Ms. Davis explained that the trainings mentioned above are being co-sponsored by DOVE. The Advisory Council will be meeting to develop policies and training materials.

**Legislative Committee, Chair Vickie Thomson**

Commissioner Thomson will schedule a meeting with the Director, Chair, and Mary McGhee to determine the next steps for the Commission's sunset review process with DORA.

**Mental Health Task Force, Co-Chairs, Durity & Garry**

The task force has outlined a strategic plan to improve mental health for people who are deaf and hard of hearing. The strategic plan has six phases. The first phase is to develop a stakeholder group to pursue the development of a strategic plan; Phase II is to conduct research with focus groups to identify the issues; Phase III will draft the plan and write a white paper on the issue; Phase IV is to invite community and policy leaders to a forum and engage them in steps to move forward; Phase V is to finalize the plan; Phase VI is to develop legislative policy. The Commissioners were very appreciative and impressed by this hard work. Cliff is investigating possible funding to support the work of the Task Force. This project will begin as soon as funding for this project is available.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Kanene Knox had concerns and questions about the availability of interpreters at the Presidential caucuses. B.J. Woods, a guest, offered to assist him in understanding his needs as she is becoming involved in the presidential campaign.
- B.J. Wood expressed concerns about the meeting room such as poor visibility in the room and difficulty hearing the interpreter. Ms. Wood was also concerned about the TEDP rules requiring a family or individual must earn less than \$50,000. For families with several children the income level should increase accordingly. She also pleaded that insurance be covered for wireless products.

**6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- Commissioner Thomson explained that the hearing aid legislation has undergone several revisions with suggestions from Commissioners and the community. The bill will be read soon and available to the Commissioners for review.

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

- Commissioner Elliott expressed concerns regarding the lack of standards for the ASL classes that are being taught in lieu of the foreign language requirement. She will share information with the Commission at the next meeting.

**8. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Commissioner Elliott announced a free carnival to be held at Cresthill Middle School on February 11<sup>th</sup>. She will send a flyer to be disseminated. Everyone is welcome!

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:39pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Vickie Thomson, Secretary