



## **Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Monthly Bulletin February 2008**

### **VISION**

Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, in concurrence with the Colorado Department of Human Service vision, seeks to become the nation's leader in empowering Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals, families, and communities to become safe and independent.

### **MISSION**

To promote the interests of our constituents and to work to ensure the quality of communication access for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing living in the state of Colorado.

### **About Vickie Thomson, Secretary of the Commission**

Vickie is the State Audiology Consultant and Coordinator of the Colorado Infant Hearing Program for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. For 25 years she worked as a clinical audiologist in the Denver/Boulder area. She received her Masters degree in 1978 from the University of Northern Colorado and has completed her PhD through the University of Colorado. She was actively involved in the Marion Downs Hearing Center's original task force whose focus is to implement an infant hearing-detection program in the State. Colorado has become a model in that regard to other states.

### **About Lloyd Skougor, Temporary Administrative Assistant**

Mr. Lloyd Skougor came to the Commission with a wealthy background in management and organizational development, and interests. Mr. Skougor started his career working with the deaf and hard of hearing kids at Kendall School on the campus of Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. in late 1960s. In between, he was mainly in a role of managing and directing purchasing, materials planning and product development. Mr. Skougor was also involved in sales as well as consulting many firms on their organizational needs. He participated in the New York City Marathon and skied as frequently as possible while maintaining a very busy schedule and still skis every weekend. Welcome aboard Mr. Lloyd Skougor!

### **Legal Auxiliary Services Program**

The two day advanced ethics training for court interpreters, which was held at Marriott Park Meadows in Lone Tree during the weekend of February 9, was a smashing success! Everyone (20) who registered came and participated fully. Comments made by the participants were all positive. They appreciated the group activities and interactive nature of the workshop.

The workshop was presented by Carla Mathers. She is a certified legal interpreter (SC:L) as well as an attorney who serves as General Counsel to Viable, Inc., a next generation video relay interpreting service in Rockville, Maryland. In 2006, Ms. Mathers published *Sign Language Interpreters in Court: Understanding Best Practices*, a text for interpreters, attorneys and courts to understand the principles underlying court interpreting.

The Program looks forward to providing more high quality workshops and trainings in the future as often as possible.

The Program Advisory Council met again to break into work groups and begin the actual work of developing policies, procedures and training curriculums and materials as well as other projects. The areas they will be focusing on are:

- 1) Referral System-how service providers are matched with assignments and clients.
- 2) Policies and Procedures-internal working policies. (re: rates, cancellation policy, etc.)
- 3) Training-training of service providers.
- 4) Outreach-training of stakeholders. (re: court clerks, judges, deaf and hard of hearing consumers)
- 5) Benchbook-reference materials for courts

### **Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program**

The new Rule was, unanimously approved by the Department of Human Services State Board on February 1! The new Rule will become effective on April 1, 2008. That is one big step forward.

All of our main changes were made, but you may want to note that the income qualification part was modified. It is now read as:

The applicant's income must be less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines based on family size as indicated by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Copies of the Federal Poverty Guidelines may be reviewed by the Director of the Commission during normal business hours, at the Colorado Department of Human Services, 1575 Sherman St., Denver, CO 80203; or at any state publications library. No amendments or later editions are incorporated.

The applicant must demonstrate proof of annual gross income by providing a copy of his/her Federal Income Tax Return (front page only).

300% of the 2008 HHS Poverty Guidelines based on family size will be:

- \$32,200 for one person
- \$42,000 for two persons
- \$52,800 for three persons
- \$63,600 for four persons

This will not be the last piece of work for the Commission. The Program will continue to be enhanced with possible legislative actions and Rule changes in the future.

### **Mental Health Task Force**

We are pleased to announce that the Commission Mental Health Task force has just received funding for the activities of the Task Force. The critical task of transforming and reforming mental health services for our deaf and hard of hearing citizens in Colorado has begun.

As you may already know, the Commission has created a Mental Health Task Force. Ric Durity and Ami Garry have been appointed Co-Chairs of this Task Force. They have outlined, with the Commissioners and the Commission Director, a plan for the remainder of fiscal year 2008. The intent of this proposal is to develop a strategic mental health services for the deaf and hard of hearing plan for the State of

Colorado, with an approach for engaging policy makers, community leaders and key stakeholders committed to implementing the plan.

The Commission is currently building a dynamic team (Task Force) of members to move this sorely needed project forward, and to improve access to mental health care for deaf and hard of hearing citizens of Colorado. It is anticipated that the members will make their total commitment to the project for the next four months, for the work will be intensive. The funding will expire on June 30, 2008.

Keep your eye open for our updates and announcements regarding focus groups and statewide community forums in the next few months!

### **Job Announcement**

The Commission is currently seeking an interpreter for a temporary state position to provides high level interpretation for complex one-on-one or group meetings and discussions, lectures, announcements, conversations, events and other situations. This person is expected, if possible, to provide support to the Legal Auxiliary Services Program with its legal interpreting needs and resources related to training or mentoring for legally qualified interpreters and participate in planning and execution of high level training opportunities for legally qualified interpreters. Assisting the Commission in completing special projects and related tasks will be part of the job description.

Please note that a permanent .3FTE Interpreter position (12 hours a week) with salary and benefits is in the process and will be available in the summer of 2008.

If interested, please contact the Commission Director, Cliff Moers, at [cliff.moers@state.co.us](mailto:cliff.moers@state.co.us) or 303-866-4734 (TTY), or 303-866-4824 (voice).

### **Notice of the Commission Meeting**

The next Commission meeting will be held from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 6, 2008 at the Gill Foundation in Colorado Springs. The address is 315 East Costilla Street, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903.

See you there!