



Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Monthly Bulletin October 2007

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.

Cliff's Notes

Welcome to the Commission's second Monthly Bulletin! The Commission is pleased to share the news with the community and State people. The Monthly Bulletin will outline all of our activities during the month of September 2007.

As always, you are welcome to share your thoughts with us or to participate in any of the Commission activities. The Commission is committed to building a strong future for the deaf and hard of hearing citizens in Colorful Colorado, but it cannot be defined without us all (deaf and hard of hearing community, the Commission and the State) being part of the whole process. The activities you are about to learn are only part of what the Commission is doing. These will also be joined by future activities. With these activities and time, who knows how influential they will become.

Opportunities have always been here for us, but this is a season of changing! We welcome you to be part of it and enjoy the colors!

About Mary McGhee, Director of the Division of Boards and Commissions

Mary McGhee serves as the Director of the Division of Boards and Commissions, which is located within the State Department of Human Services. In this role, she manages a staff of 21 as well as 5 Governor appointed state level boards with members totaling 65. Those bodies include the: Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (which includes and two direct service programs that serve the deaf and hard of hearing community), State Board of Human Services, Juvenile Parole Board, Developmental Disabilities Council and, the newly created Colorado Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

The Division manages two legal review units including the Child Abuse and Neglect Dispute Review Section and the Office of Appeals. The Division also provides Department program areas with technical legal assistance as well as policy development & analysis. Mary has been involved in crime victim rights, public policy and legislative efforts in Colorado and at the national level for the last 25 years. Prior to her current position as the Director of the Division of Boards and Commissions, her career has included serving as: a women's counselor in a domestic violence shelter; a victim advocate in a large metropolitan DA's office; a state and federal grant manager, policy analyst and legislative liaison within the Colorado State Criminal Justice planning agency.

Mary has two bachelors' degrees and has completed work toward a Masters Degree in Public Administration. She is trained in beginning and advanced mediation and serves as a mediator for the State Mediation program. She has received extensive training related to Community Crisis Response and serves as a community crisis responder. Mary was called on to assist during the Oklahoma City bombing trial, the Columbine tragedy and again when the Hurricane Katrina evacuees arrived in Colorado.

Mary is involved in multiple non-profit organizations whose primary purpose is to serve crime victims as well as public policy boards. She currently serves as board member for: the Colorado Organization for

Victim Assistance; the Colorado Forum for Restorative and Community Justice the Domestic Abuse Assistance Program funding Board and the National Victims' Constitutional Amendment Network Board.

Mary has received recognition for her efforts on behalf of crime victims including: the Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance award(s) for Exemplary Leadership and the President's award, for outstanding contributions. In 2006 she was recognized, as part of the Colorado Department of Human Services Hurricane Katrina response team, with a Governor's award for Outstanding Citizenship.

Mary lives in Denver where she shares her home with her three "spirited" black dogs: Hope, Hank and Henry as well as her very vocal cat Muffler. Mary comes from a large family and is close to her 5 nieces ranging in age from 9-22 years. She is an avid cyclist who completed her sixth "Ride the Rockies" bike tour, this past Summer. She keeps very busy with friends, family, travel, dog training and a number of other volunteer commitments.

Legal Auxiliary Services Program

The rules for the Legal Auxiliary Services program were presented to the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) State Board for second reading and approval on September 7, 2007. The rules were approved for adoption and will be in effect as of November 1, 2007! Several of the people who were involved in this rule-making process were in attendance as well as members of the Commission and the community.

What this means, is that there will be new requirements and higher standards for sign language interpreters and Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) providers in legal settings. The new rules also establish a formal dispute resolution procedure so there will now be oversight of the quality of the service providers.

Hearty and hearty thanks go to Cheri Davis, Legal Auxiliary Services Referral Specialist and Legal Auxiliary Services Advisory Council, for their hard work, time, energy and support. They were "bogged down" with this important task for months and months. Now, the "fun stuff" can begin.

The Advisory Council met on September 16, 2007 to celebrate and to make a plan for the next phase of the program which is to develop policies. It was decided that the Advisory Council could accomplish the most by breaking into work groups with each work group having a specific task or goal, such as the use of remote technology for rural areas, workshops/trainings, CART issues, and other. At the next Advisory Council meeting next month (date and time to be determined), the Advisory Council will get their work groups started and hope to have some new and exciting news to share with you as they move "ONWARD AND UPWARD"!!

If you would like to have additional information or a copy of the Legal Auxiliary Services rules, please contact Cheri Davis, Commission Legal Auxiliary Services Referral Specialist, at 303-866-4734 (TTY), 303-866-4824 (voice) or cheri.davis@state.co.us.

Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program

The Commission through the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) Committee has revised and submitted the rules to the CDHS State Board. TEDP was originally designed to make telecommunications equipment (TTY, amplified phones, speaker phones, ring signaling devices and specialized telephone equipment for deaf-blind citizens) available to citizens of Colorado who are deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, or deaf-blind and who meet the financial eligibility guidelines, currently set at 185% of the Federal Poverty Level. Upon approval of the pending rule changes, the poverty level requirement is no longer required by the state and additional telecommunications equipment such as videophone, pager and other will become available. Revisions will be effective April 2008 if all goes well. The DHS State Board will hold two readings before the new rule changes could be approved.

If you would like to have additional information or need a copy of the proposed rules, please contact Cliff Moers, Commission Director, at 303-866-4734 (TTY), 303-866-4824 (voice) or cliff.moers@state.co.us.

Mental Health Services Task Force

Work on mental health services for deaf and hard of hearing consumers has begun!

Ric Durity and Ami Garry of the Mental Health Center of Denver have agreed to lead the Commission Mental Health Services Task Force. The Commission will provide the Task Force the support it needs. The Commission Task Force's first order of business is to submit a report with recommendations regarding overall mental health services for deaf and hard of hearing consumers in the state to the House Joint Resolution (HJR) 1050 Behavioral Health Task Force for their consideration. The HJR 1050 Task Force was created by the joint House resolution during the 2007 legislative session. The HJR 1050 Task Force is studying to prepare for their report to the state legislature before the 2008 legislative session begins. Janet Wood, Director of CDHS Behavioral Health Services, who serves on the HJR 1050 Task Force has met with the Commission Task Force and will "represent" the Commission Task Force's with a report.

There are other tasks the Commission Task Force need to tackle, such as serving on the HJR 1050 Task Force's funding and services sub-committees and advising the 208 Commission which is the Blue Ribbon Commission for Health Care Reform. It was created to study and establish health care reform models for expanding coverage, especially for the underinsured and uninsured, and to decrease health care costs for Colorado residents.

If you are interested in serving on the Commission Task Force or need additional information, please contact Cliff Moers, Commission Director at 303-866-4734 (TTY), 303-866-4824 (voice) or cliff.moers@state.co.us.

"New Office"

Come and visit the Commission's "brand new" office! The office was re-configured in the same area. The work environment is now open and deaf-friendly. The cubicles no longer reside in the Commission "office." The Commission staff shares the space together with a conference room attached to it. The Commission's address is:

Colorado Department of Human Services
1575 Sherman St., 2nd Floor
Denver, CO 80203

Commission Meeting Notice

The next scheduled meeting for the Commission is at 3 p.m. on Thursday, October 25, 2007, at the Colorado Department of Human Services building. The address is 1575 Sherman St., 6th Floor, Denver, Colorado 80203. There will be a public comment period available to the public during the meeting. This is an opportunity for our citizens to address the Commission. If there are documents that you would like to share, please contact the Commission Director, Cliff Moers, at 303-866-4734 (TTY), 303-866-4824 (voice) or cliff.moers@state.co.us in advance so that your information may be included in the Commissioners' package of materials.

Attached is the meeting notice.

Presentation or Communication Access Session Available

A presentation about the Commission and its functions or a session on information and technical assistance for communication access in any setting is available. Please contact the office to schedule a presentation or communication access session.

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