

February 19th, 2009

Springfield, Illinois

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ILLINOIS DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING COMMISSION

The forty-eighth meeting of the Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission was held on Thursday, February 19, 2009, at the University Illinois at Springfield , Public Affairs Center (PAC) Building, 1 University Plaza, Springfield, IL 62703.

Call to Order:

Dennis O’Brien, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.

Members Present:

Tina Childress	Emma Danielson	Marc Siegel	Dennis O’Brien
Lisa Sesko	Tom Benziger	Hershel Jackson	Benro Ogunyipe

Members Absent:

Mindy Joy Mayer	Jenny Singleton	Vacant
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Interpreters:

Sheila Chapman	Marilyn Corlett
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CART:

Kathy Smith

Public:

Paula Chance	Tom Chance
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Staff Present:

John Miller	Janet Lambert	Brandie Belford	Brandy Hayes
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Thomas Benziger moved to accept the February 19th, 2009 minutes as corrected. Seconded by Hershel Jackson. Motion passed.

Dennis O’Brien	Yes	Emma Danielson	Yes	Lisa Sesko	Yes
Marc Siegel	Yes	Hershel Jackson	Yes	Tom Benziger	Yes
Benro Ogunyipe	Yes	Tina Childress	Yes		

Special Report/ Presentations:



Guide by Your Side (GBYS) presented by Carrie Balian.

GBYS is a collaborative effort between the following organizations/agencies: Illinois Hands & Voices Chapter, CHOICES for Parents and the Illinois Newborn Hearing Screening Program. The program is designed to provide emotional support and specialized knowledge from trained parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The PowerPoint presentation described the purpose, the background, history and goals/timelines for Illinois. Currently, GBYS fundraising efforts include “Shop with Scrip” program, additional information is available at www.shopwithscrip.com. GBYS is planning to participate in the annual Walk4Hearing to be held this October in Chicago. GBYS has started recruiting parents who may be interested in attending the training to become a GBYS Guide. The areas of greatest need in recruiting parents are the Central and Southern regions of the state.

Communication Options Taskforce Communication Options presented by Mary O’Brian:

The Communication Education Options Taskforce submitted its final recommendations for communication access in the educational system. The final report was distributed to members of the General Assembly in accordance with the House Joint Resolution. The report in PDF format is posted on IDHHC’s website.

5 Year Strategic Plan presented by Director Miller

Director John Miller presented to the Commission members the goals and objectives for the next 5 year strategic plan.

Chairpersons Report:

Chairperson, Dennis O’Brien, reported the Commission hosted a 5 year strategic planning meeting in October. The Commissioners reviewed the previous 5 year strategic plan, the Vision, Mission and Value statements and reviewed comments from the town halls hosted throughout the State. The purpose of the town halls was to gather feedback from the community on communication barriers in Illinois. The Commission visibility is increasing throughout the state and the Chair believes it is due to the web broadcasting of the Commission meetings and interpreter licensure.

Director’s Report:

Director Miller reported that the Commission has a new contact, Ryan Croke, in Governor Pat Quinn’s office. The Governor’s office stressed its commitment to IDHHC and its support for communication access for people in Illinois with hearing loss. Specifically, Governor Quinn remains committed to providing affordable access to high speed internet for communication access. Governor Quinn’s office has asked all agencies to reduce spending for items such as out of state travel and large purchase items. The Commission will continue to work with the Governor’s office regarding its current budget as well as the FY10 budget.

Tom Benziger expressed concerns about the impact on the budget and the goals developed by the Commissioners for the next 5 years as well as potential impact on the provision of providing cart and interpreter services. Director Miller emphasized that IDHHC will not allow cuts to impact any reasonable accommodation requests such as interpreters and Cart services for Commission meetings, or any other cuts for staff's reasonable accommodation needs. At this time the Commission has been asked to reserve an additional 1% of the FY09 budget. Our current 3% reserve is set at \$23,664 and this additional 1% will increase that amount by an additional \$7,888.

Interpreter Coordinator position:

IDHHC Interpreter Coordinator position has been re-posted to the CMS system. If all goes well, interviews will be scheduled over the next several weeks.

Staff Professional Development:

Professional Development completed by the staff for the last quarter included training on the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the annual seminar on the American with Disabilities Act provided by the Illinois Council on Employees with Disabilities (ICED).

Commissioners' Term:

The following Commissioners' terms are expired, but the members will continue to serve until either reappointed or replaced by the Governor:

- Tom Benziger – Eligible for another appointment
- Tina Childress – Eligible for another appointment
- Dennis O'Brien – Eligible for another appointment
- Jenny Singleton – NOT eligible for another appointment
- Cliff Pearce, Resigned

Interpreter Licensure:

At the previous Commission meeting, IDHHC reported Sorenson Communication requested all video relay interpreters working in Illinois be exempt from the law. A meeting was held with JCAR, IDHHC Director Miller, Legal Counsel, Assistant Director, Licensure Board Chair and Vice Chair, representatives from Sorenson Communication, Sorenson legal counsel and Representative Sara Feigenholtz on November 14th, 2008.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Commission reiterated its position that interpreter licensure applies to all interpreters working in Illinois regardless of setting in which that interpretation takes place. As a result no further changes were recommended to JCAR and the rules were approved on November 19, 2008

In order to start accepting licensure applications and fees, IDHHC developed a new database, procedures to deposit application fees with the Treasurer's office, and designed licensure cards. On November 24, 2008, IDHHC began accepting Interpreter Licensure applications. All completed applications received prior to December 31, 2008 received email verification within 48 hours which allowed them to continue providing interpreting services until their license was issued.

IDHHC is pleased to report that currently Illinois has a total of 548 licensed interpreters. The following is a breakdown of licenses by levels:

Master	-	167
Advanced	-	123
Intermediate	-	171
Provisional	-	87

In accordance with the requirements of the law, IDHHC will provide workshops throughout the State to the deaf and hard of hearing communities. These workshops will help educate the community on the requirements of Interpreter Licensure and what it means for the consumers. IDHHC has presented 2 workshops in the Chicago area and more presentations being scheduled.

The Commission is revamping the website to include a new searchable licensure database, licensure application forms, and in the coming weeks a complaint form will be available as well as brochures and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

Legislative Update:

The Commission continues to monitor legislation that may impact on people with hearing loss in Illinois. The following bills are being monitored this legislative session:

- SB29- Vehicle Code regarding Text Communication. This bill will amend the vehicle code prohibiting use of text pagers and other devices while driving. This bill provides a violation that is considered a petty offense and punishable by a fine of \$75.00. If the violation occurs at the time of an accident an additional fine of \$200.00 can be given.
- SB40- Disabled Hiring Incentive, this bill will amend Central Management Services Law of Civil Administrative Code to implement plans to increase the number of individuals with disabilities to be employed with state government ,
- SB68- Insurance Code – Hearing Aid Coverage, this bill would amend the insurance code to provide up to \$2,500 in benefits every 36 months. Per hearing aid per ear.
- HB343-Amends the Income Tax Act and creates an income tax deduction for individuals that purchase a hearing aid that exceeds \$2,000 as an income tax deduction.
- HB655- Creates a taskforce to analyze programs and policies of the State to remove barriers to competitive employment opportunities with the state.
- HB725- Amends the school code to encourage boards to implement ASL courses into school foreign language curriculum.

IDHHC Next Quarter Calendar

- Statewide Finger Spelling Bee – April 24, 2009
- Annual Conference – May 29th and 30th, 2009
- Finalizing plans for the FY 2010 Budget submission
- Statewide Interpreter Licensure Workshops
 - ISU (2/25)
 - Deaf Coffee Chat – Starbucks (3/6)
 - DSSP Central Meeting (3/10)
 - Rock Island (3/13)
 - NIU (3/27 & 28)
 - Several requests but not yet scheduled
- IAD Board Meeting
- ISHI Annual meeting IDHHC will present Interpreter Licensure requirement for schools
- Annual ITHI Conference
- Quarterly DSSP Central Meeting
- Quarterly DSSP North Meeting
- North of 80 Conference for Parents
 - Presentation on Deaf Culture in the home
- South of 70 Conference
- Presentation to UIS – ASL Class
- Annual Early Hearing Detection Intervention Day (formerly UNHS)
- John A. Logan (JALC) – Deafest Day
- Deaf Idol (Peoria)
- Quarterly SILC Board Meeting
- Continue working with DHS on planning the Annual ADA Celebration Committee

Break: 3:20 p.m.

Reconvened: 3:35 p.m.

New Business:

Thomas Benziger moved that the new five year strategic plan change from calendar year to follow the state's fiscal year. Seconded by Tina Childress. Discussion followed. MOTION PASSED.

Dennis O'Brien	Yes	Emma Danielson	Yes	Lisa Sesko	Yes
Marc Siegel	Yes	Hershel Jackson	Yes	Tom Benziger	Yes
Benro Ogunyipe	Yes	Tina Childress	Yes		

Dennis O'Brien moved IDHHC provide numbers associated with the 5 year strategic plan at the next commission meeting. Seconded by Benro Ogunyipe. MOTION PASSED.

Dennis O'Brien	Yes	Emma Danielson	Yes	Lisa Sesko	Yes
Marc Siegel	Yes	Hershel Jackson	Yes	Tom Benziger	Yes
Benro Ogunyipe	Yes	Tina Childress	Yes		

Emma Danielson moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2010 meeting dates for August 20, 2009, November 12, 2009, February 18, 2010,-and May 20, 2010. Seconded by Thomas Benziger. MOTION PASSED.

Dennis O'Brien	Yes	Emma Danielson	Yes	Lisa Sesko	Yes
Marc Siegel	Yes	Hershel Jackson	Yes	Tom Benziger	Yes
Benro Ogunyipe	Yes	Tina Childress	Yes		

Open Discussion:

Chairperson, Dennis O'Brien shared information with the Commission members about the Hearing Aid Action Committee. During the last general assembly House Bill 5600 was proposed to require insurance coverage for hearing aids. However, no action was taken on the bill. In this legislative general assembly, a new bill was introduced by Senator Ira Silverstein SB68 to allow up to \$2,500 of coverage within a 36 month time period coverage for each hearing aid for each ear. This bill has several sponsors currently and recently there have been some groups who have voiced opposition to this bill. Recently, an amendment was proposed to limit the coverage from birth to 18 years of age. It is important for everyone to communicate with their legislator that the original bill should include all citizens of the state and not limit it to birth to 18 years old only.

If you would like additional information about Hearing Aid Action (HAA) their website is www.hearingaidaction.com The next meeting of the HAA will be March 8th at 1:30 p.m. location is to be announced via the website.

Chairperson, Dennis O'Brien inquired if anyone has heard about the status of the vacant position within the Department of Mental Health Services and the position of the Statewide Coordinator for the Deaf? Hershel Jackson stated this position has not been filled for several years and that numerous organizations had inquired to the Department as to the status of the vacancy but that the Department did not respond to any inquiries. There are concerns from organizations that when issues arise throughout the state regarding access to services that the Department lacks a key staff person to resolves these issues. Benro Ogunyipe shared that there is a person at the Department of Human Services under the Division of Mental Health who works at the Chicago Reed facility.

Election of Officers:

Thomas Benziger presided over the election of officers.

Tom asked Tina Childress if she would like to continue to serve as the Vice Chair of the Commission prior to accepting any nominations from the floor. Tina accepted, Tom asked if there were any other nominations from the floor. No nominations from the floor. All in favor of Tina Childress as Vice Chair.

Dennis O'Brien	Yes	Emma Danielson	Yes	Lisa Sesko	Yes
Marc Siegel	Yes	Hershel Jackson	Yes	Tom Benziger	Yes
Benro Ogunyipe	Yes	Tina Childress	Yes		

Tom asked Dennis O'Brien if he would like continue to serve as the Chair of the Commission prior to accepting any nominations from the floor. Dennis O'Brien accepted, Tom asked for any nominations from the floor. No nominations from the floor. All in favor of Dennis O'Brien as Chair of the Commission.

Dennis O'Brien	Yes	Emma Danielson	Yes	Lisa Sesko	Yes
Marc Siegel	Yes	Hershel Jackson	Yes	Tom Benziger	Yes
Benro Ogunyipe	Yes	Tina Childress	Yes		

Lisa Sesko moved to go into closed session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) of the Personnel Code. Seconded by Emma Danielson. MOTION PASSED

Dennis O'Brien	Yes	Emma Danielson	Yes	Lisa Sesko	Yes
Marc Siegel	Yes	Hershel Jackson	Yes	Tom Benziger	Yes
Benro Ogunyipe	Yes	Tina Childress	Yes		

Closed Session: 4:15 p.m.

Reconvened from the closed session at 4:43 p.m.

Announcements: NONE

Adjournment:

Emma Danielson moved to adjourn. Seconded by Marc Siegel. MOTION PASSED

Dennis O'Brien	Yes	Emma Danielson	Yes	Lisa Sesko	Yes
Marc Siegel	Yes	Hershel Jackson	Yes	Tom Benziger	Yes
Benro Ogunyipe	Yes	Tina Childress	Yes		

Adjourned -4:44 p.m.

Chairperson _____ Date _____

Executive Secretary _____ Date _____

ILLINOIS DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING COMMISSION

Vision Statement

All Illinois residents with a hearing loss will enjoy the benefits of a fully accessible society enabling each person to participate in and contribute to all aspects of life.

Mission Statement

The Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission, as an executive agency of the state, shall advance the interests of all Illinois citizens with a hearing loss by advocating for systemic improvements, promoting cooperation and coordination among entities serving people who are deaf and hard of hearing, and disseminating information to eliminate negative stereotypes surrounding hearing loss.

Value Statement

Assuring, Equality, Respect, Accessibility and Independence for All Individuals with a Hearing Loss.

Approved

Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission **5 Year Strategic Plan (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2014)**

PREAMBLE: The following goals are intended to improve communication access for the deaf and hard of hearing community & promote hearing loss awareness.

GOAL # 1: To empower deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind individuals and families to advocate for themselves, by providing targeted materials that address advocacy issues and hearing loss awareness.

Objective 1: IDHHC will develop training materials in three (3) different subject matters for consumers to download from the IDHHC website.

Objective 2: IDHHC will provide a minimum of fifty (50) trainings and/or workshops statewide to consumers focusing on rights of deaf and hard of hearing consumers.

GOAL # 2: To enhance the Commission's visibility and the resources available to the constituents of Illinois.

Objective 1: IDHHC will identify various groups who are not familiar with IDHHC or the effects of hearing loss. IDHHC will develop educational materials to distribute along with IDHHC promotional items to increase awareness of IDHHC and various methods of communication access.

Objective 2: IDHHC will develop interactive materials on IDHHC's website which will engage "visitors" and provide educational information regarding IDHHC's Mission Statement.

Objective 3: IDHHC will increase interaction with local deaf and hard of hearing community groups and organizations by attending local events and/or meetings.

GOAL # 3: To identify and decrease the barriers to communication access.

Objective 1: IDHHC will continue to develop working partnerships with entities essential in providing services to individuals with hearing loss. Through these partnerships, IDHHC will identify communication access barriers and implement statewide solutions.

Objective 2: IDHHC will develop “train the trainer” materials in five (5) different subject matters for groups that provide direct services to deaf and hard of hearing. These trainings will enable them to provide training to consumers and service providers within their community.

Objective 3: IDHHC will develop ten (10) specialized outreach materials for service providers educating on the legal responsibilities to provide communication access. Additionally, the materials will provide resources and information on how to arrange interpreters, CART, or other auxiliary aids.

Approved