

Vermont Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing/DeafBlind Council Meeting Notes

January 18, 2024

9:30am-12:00am

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Welcome/Housekeeping/Announcements

Spenser listed the folks that were not attending or that would attend at some point in the meeting. Megan is now Interim Commissioner for DAIL as Monica White has left her position for a new role.

Vermont Emergency Management – Eric Forand

We asked him to come in and provide an overview of operations and allow for a question-and-answer period. A slide presentation was shown to the Council. The slides are available on the council's [website](#). The SEOC is organized under the National Institute of Management System, NIMS, it's a FEMA structure. We're outlined in the state emergency management plan. That gets updated every 5 years and is being updated this year. [Vermont Emergency Management](#) Outlines the sections, the structures, our responsibilities, how we respond to events, all of that is outlined in the SEMP, the State Emergency Management Plan and it breaks down into some sections about response and recovery. ICS is the incident command post and runs the direct response. We coordinate and support the incident.

Program/Organizational updates

Val Hughes- VCIL- Deaf Independent Coordinator at Vermont Center for independent Living (VCIL)

I work statewide providing services to deaf and hard of hearing consumers. VCIL's COVID Coordinator is Kate Larose, she collects all of the COVID tests and distributes them for free. If you need COVID tests and or N95 masks, contact VCIL at any point in time. I am working with a lot of clients in general who are struggling with getting social security and the homeless population. I'm also helping by partnering with other organizations to make sure all of our people get what they need.

Jessica Hutchins- VANCRO lead program manager for Interpreting Services

Sarah Collins Regional Program Manager for VANCRO is taking the lead for our Cohort 1 VANCRO Interpreters Apprenticeship program had 3 people relocate to Vermont. We're hoping at least one or two will stay after their experience. Cohort 2 is starting tomorrow, and we have 3 participants. The Vermont SSP program needs more SSPs. We are capped, currently, at deafblind folks who receive SSP services, and we do have a wait list. WCAX reported on our program last night with Vice President Cory Bruner (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tj_mZORbmCE). We have had both hearing interpreters as well as deaf interpreters move to VT. Our Outreach continues, we have biweekly training at one hospital in Brattleboro and other locations.

David Krueger – President, Vermont Association of the Deaf

January 6th, we had a presentation on Restorative Justice. February 11th, we are holding our elections- I will not be running for President this time. At this time, we also have a Superbowl showing on a 40ft screen at Vermont State University in Randolph. So, share this information and come and vote as well. At some point we would like to have somebody come from the National Association of the Deaf to educate us about how to do more work as an association of the deaf at the state level. In terms of bills, we're going to hopefully have Rebecca Lalane come from DVAS to talk about the Bill of Rights, how you put forth a bill and what that process looks like. Rebecca stated that Senator Hashim has introduced and submitted the Bill of Rights legislature. Our Town Hall Meetings over the summer in St. Johnsbury, Bennington and Rutland revealed Zoom meetings technology is not folks forte and confusing. We need to do training.

Deb Charlea Baker – HLAA

January 30th from 12:00 to 1:00. And she's going to be explaining the SSP program. On two different levels. One for our members who do also have vision loss along with their hearing loss. And 2, members who may be very interested in, in providing services, getting training, and providing services. Our Winter Quarter Newsletter is coming out shortly. The Annual Convention for the National HLAA this year is going to be in Phoenix, Arizona. June 26th to the 29th.

Linda Hazard - Program Director EHDI/Director D/HH/DB ESP

EHDI is in grant season right now.

- We have applied for the HRSA5 year grant and are in the process of the extension of year 5 for the CDC grant. They decided not to do a new round but just to extend the current.
- We have been partnering and have supplemental funding from HRSA for Language Assessments for our birth to 3 populations. So primarily at age 2, 2.6 months and 2.11 months prior to children going into Part B Services.
- We are partnering with the University of Colorado Odyssey program, which is a CDC special project. They are looking and hoping that maybe we can extend into 4- and 5-year-olds. Which aligns with the Bill of Rights that introduced to look at kindergarten readiness.

Kate Parrish – HireAbility Vermont

HireAbility Vermont is focusing on apprenticeships and training for participants, while preparing accessible and have accommodations ready. We are focusing on improving or increasing referrals from schools, for transition services and transition age youth who are deaf and hard of hearing to our CD counselors. Connecting with students to provide more services for them to plan for their future.

Break

Sharon Henry - Co-Chair of the School Age Subcommittee

- We had a provider and parent education session back in November. Around 48 or 50 attendees with Cheryl DeConde Johnson as our keynote speaker.
- The School Age Subcommittee (Sharon shared a PPT) has undertaken an effort to begin a data standardization format so the Council can get data that would be meaningful and would help us answer important questions that we as a Council are legislatively mandated to assess services for the school aged children.

- SAC are looking at these Data fields: related to demographics, diagnosis, communication mode used by the students, the technology, the type of student plan that is in place, student services, including the number of hours and the type of service, age at identification, whether or not the child has participated in early intervention, educational assessment both the state standardized testing and reading, writing, and math and language assessment that is done by the qualified professional who is working with that student.
- We will send the Council the finalized recommendation of data set so a vote can be made by the Council in March. If Council members have data field suggestions, please let me know.
- This data is only IEP data, there's no data connected to 504s or ESTs, which ESTs are Vermont specific.
- Will reminded folks that FERPA guidelines and cell size defaults N of 10 must be suppressed.
- March 26th is an education session for both parents and providers on the checklist. Please share the save the date flyer.
- We met the New State Special Education Director Heather Willis-Doxsee who came from Florida to Vermont and has experience that will help us move the data effort forward.
- UVM CARES Patty Dickman Hodgdon and Pam Hoover will be joining the Subcommittee.

Deb Charlea Baker – Subcommittee on Emergency Communications Access

Our committee, Bill Hudson, Laura Siegel, Michelle John, Val Hughes, Kate Parrish, and myself. And Kate McCarthy from FEMA has also joined our discussions, which has been really helpful. Our primary focus has been to discuss how to make clear what the issue is, give concrete examples, provide a visual illustration. We want to compile some recommendations and push for protocols. We wanted to write a report for hearing folks who really have no clue. Please review the report that is included in the legislative report.

- We need some clarification on the role of the subcommittee within an advisory council in terms of we want to identify key players, where does the buck stops? Who can we inform and educate and support? are we going outside of our role in doing that in a face-to-face direct kind of way? Is this supposed to be coming through the Council? Is this something that our subcommittee can get out there and make those contacts and grow those protocols and do the actual on the ground level work?
 - Spenser responded: I see no problem for any individual on the council and anybody outside the council who has their hands on this report to advocate for this.
 - Senator Ruth Hardy of the Government Operations Committee is looking for people to come in and testify next week on this exact thing. I think it's best they hear from members of the subcommittee and the chair of the subcommittee.

D/HH/DB Director's Report

D/HH/DB Director Update – Laura Siegel

- I was just appointed to become the co-chair for the Policy and Procedures Committee under HireAbility.

- I was just invited by the UVM 2 Scholars who are going to do some research around deaf and hard of hearing issues.
- Continue to be involved with the Digital Equity Core Team collecting information about people's internet access and connectivity and affordability of the services.
- The HAS Accessibility Committee will be hosting an all-day event March 13th. A number of agencies tabling, and workshops provided relating to educating state employees around sort of general disability issues.
- Future presentations- Nicole Weston in March from ACI, which is a cochlear implant organization. Zach Lafratta from Purdue University, an audiologist in May. Dr. Anne Minish who is the founder and CEO of Safe and Clear, the clear masks with the plastic in September.
- Still collaborating with the Department of Fish and Wildlife for their programming for this summer and next summer, we'll be doing a monthly series around outdoor activities and making sure that they've got accessibility services set. They've got accommodation and interpreters available.
- I have 10 or 12 presentations on the docket.
- The Communication and Marketing Committee. There are about 70 folks to talk to about how we can help their agencies and departments in making sure things are accessible with social media and website design and all of that just general communication access.
- In the past year, I've had over 209 referrals. 2nd week of January I have received 20 so far.

Will Pendlebury – AHS-DAIL VR

None

Commissioner's Report

Megan Tierney-Ward Deputy Commissioner

None

Agenda topic

9:30 – Welcome, Announcements, Reminders – **Spenser Weppeler/William Pendlebury**

9:35 – Vermont Emergency Management Overview and Q/A – **Eric Forand**

10:10 - General Updates (5 minutes each)

- a. VCIL – Val Hughes
- b. VANCRO – Jessica Hutchins
- b. VTAD – David Krueger
- c. HLAA – Deb Baker
- d. EHDI – Linda Hazard

10:35 – Break

10:45 – School Age Subcommittee Updates – **Sharon Henry**

11:00 – Captioning and Interpreting Subcommittee Updates- **Deb Baker**

11:15 - Director of D/HH/DB Update – **Laura Siegel**

11:30 – Council Business - **All**

- a. 2024 Meetings
- b. Legislative Report
- c. Future presenters

11:55 - Public Comment

12:00 - Adjourn

Public Comment

None

Council Business/Conversations:

General Updates

- We will continue Council Meetings every third Thursday of every month.
- We are permitted to continue to operate remotely by Zoom, Laura and Megan will keep an eye on that.
- Open to having an in-person meeting, again, much like we did last May.
- The legislative report has been submitted. I took a different approach this time restructured and reformatted to make it more effective.
- Deb and Laura are going to go in and testify next week.
- Would like to solicit ideas from Council members on future presenters.

Other Business/Closing

- Next meeting – March 14, 2024, from 9:30am -12:00pm

Council Attendance

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spenser Weppler (Chair)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Julie Porter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Krueger
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Will Pendlebury (Co-Chair)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kate Parrish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rebecca Lalanne
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bill Hudson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cassie Santo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracy Hinck
<input type="checkbox"/> Ralph Gallo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Megan Tierney-Ward	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rebecca Chalmers	<input type="checkbox"/> Leslie Davis	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sharon Henry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Linda Hazard	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amelia Briggs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deb Charlea Baker	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sherry Sousa	<input type="checkbox"/>

Guest Attendance

Name	Organization
Valerie Hughes	VCIL
Elizabeth Fox	Interpreter
Kristal	Interpreter
Pam Hoover	UVM CDCDI CARES
Jessica Hutchins	Vancro
Michelle John	Vt H&V
Diane Scott	White Coat Captioning Captioner
Laura Siegel	DAIL
John Pirone	UVM
Sabine Perry	AOE
Eric Forand	VEM