

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

Date: 11/17/2022

Location: Zoom

Welcome/Housekeeping/Announcements

Spenser reiterates that he will pin the interpreters so they will be seen on the screen. 9 Council members are present to start meeting. Due to delays in other members the agenda was changed to start general updates first.

Program/Organizational updates

Val Hughes- VCIL- Deaf Independence Coordinator at Vermont Center for independent Living

Outreach was done to the Red Clover building where disabled and/or older people and a few Deaf people reside in that facility and will return again in December to share some information about the resources and services that we can provide. Working with Rebecca Lalanne from DVAS to make a Q&A informational video around mental health funding involving the grant Vancro received and what the funds can be used for. VCIL has hired a new information and referral (I&R) specialist (Nick Morlan) who will oversee the equipment distribution program (EDP). He has been the assistant to the executive director, Sarah Launderville and taking on his new role starting on Monday. VCIL continues to help with housing issues but unfortunately families continue to receive eviction notices.

Jessica Hutchins- VANCRO Integrated Interpreting Services

Vermont Deaf Blind Hearing Inclusive plus Community Day will be held on April 29, 2023, at Vermont Technical College in Randolph. The Mental Health Equity Access Grant has been extended for another year up to the year 2024. Currently doing presentations, outreach. Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous donations continue to be sizable at this point and they to disseminate information to spread the word ASL interpreting coverage are still available for AA and NA meetings and we are fully confidential.

Elena Shapiro - Vermont Association of the Deaf

VTAD has updated their website due to many people not being on or having access to social media. Goal is share all information on the website and on social media. It will serve as a central location for all activities, meeting minutes, bylaws, and announcements for upcoming events, legal issues, and concerns in the community. The upcoming elections will be held in September of 2023 and the association decided that Larry Daniels will be the interim secretary replacing Mary Sloan until then. For [Vermont Shares Program](#), we have added ourselves to their list for donations. State employees can donate toward our organization. It has been a challenge to maintain sustainable funding for the Yolanda Henry Community Fund. There has been an appeal made to all VTAD members in the State to collaborate with the community fund and with VANCRO and think about donating, perhaps, \$25 or \$50 a person on a recurring basis (this is a tax write off for people) and established a limit on how much interpreters can bill for community fund events. Brattleboro Deaf Club hosting an event on November 19. An update will

be provided at that event. The Annual Soup Festival hosted by DVAS/VTAD will be on December 3rd. We will have Santa Claus for the children. VTAD's next general meeting will be on February 4th. The National Association of the Deaf Regional Meeting will be on April 29th (Region 1 Caucus). It will take place on the same day as VTDBHI plus day so we hope we can have a space to participate virtually on the regional meeting at the same venue.

Deb Charlea Baker – HLAA

Steering Committee Meeting in October created project ideas. 1) a directory will be created for hearing accessible places around Vermont and asking everyone to contact Carol Gose if they know of places in their area that have a loop or FM system, which has increased discussions for the need of this service. 2) Spreading the word about HLAA through brochures and other advertisements. HLAA VT Chapters has changed their meetings to the last Tuesday of the month. Encourage everyone to sign up for the newsletter. Contact information for our chapter is Vermont: Vermonthlaa@Yahoo.com. One October 25th- Laura presented on over the counter hearing aids and January 31, 2023 is the next HLAA meeting.

Michelle John - President, Vermont Hands and Voices

Michelle is Chair of the Vermont Coalition for Deaf Hard of Hearing NASDE guidelines which includes, multiple Vermont associations, including Vermont EHDI, as well as UVMC, Deaf Hard of Hearing, Educational Services Program, the UVM CDCI CARES team and some independent providers and audiologists, Vermont Hands and Voices and individuals who identify as Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Primary goal was to create an awareness and understanding of the NASDE guidelines in hopes of eventually getting to the point where the State of Vermont implements the same guidelines but modified for Vermont. The group continues work with AOE and Kathy Satori. Vermont Coalition collaborated with Dr. Cheryl Johnson Co-Editor of the NASDE guidelines and worked with her to plan four one-hour sessions to review the Guidelines and best practices. These took place October 19th, and November 2nd, 9th, and 16th, Recordings are available until February 16th. Registration link is in the chat.

Linda Hazard - EHDI/PIP

Vermont Early Hearing and Detection and Intervention program early November submitted the de-identified 2021 birth data to the CDC. CDC provided feedback and couple of questions for additional information but stated that the data looked good. Year 3 performance report for HRSA is currently being written for all activities over the past year while preparing the budget for year 4. They will also be doing the same with the CDC guidance. Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program Conference is in Cincinnati, March of 2023. Vermont EHDI program and Vermont Hands and Voices submitted an abstract for the conference notification whether or not they have been accepted will come soon.

School-Age Subcommittee- Sharon Henry and Sherry Sousa

Quality Indicator tool has been with the Agency of Education since June and the subcommittee is awaiting feedback and the AOE has done an initial internal review. In late October the AOE met with UVMHN/CDCI regarding the piloting of this tool in the field partnering with special education directors and school districts. Not only an accounting system of programs but a communicational framework on what to base conversations on. Next School Age Subcommittee meet is November 28th. Dr. Johnson is

also working with the subcommittee, and she was very impressed with how we're implementing NASDSE. The tool will be presented on at Vermont Superintendent Association conference in May

Cassie Santo- Agency of Education

Special Education Rule Changes are impacting eligibility for special education, which were expected to take place in July 2022, and they were delayed till July 2023. As part of change Vermont will no longer utilize the discrepancy model to determine eligibility. Met with UVMHN/CDCI about piloting the Quality Indicator Tool but noted the AOE does not have jurisdiction over how the tool is utilized by the vendor, nor do we mandate school districts to use it. AOE is now soliciting feedback on the tool from external stakeholders. That feedback will be aggregated and de-identified and provided to the Subcommittee.

Linda Hazzard – Vermont Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind Partnership (UVMHC/CDCI Cares)

It's been a year of learning, change and developing a single point of entry for referral and intake so that districts are less confused about where students should receive referrals. There is agreement between UVMHC and CDCI Cares to assess the Evaluation tool to refine it to a place where they are able to proceed to pilot the tool sometime beginning in January 2023 at two school districts receiving DHHDB educational services. They had the National Technical Resource Center for EHDI at Utah State University and their director and one of the staff members who are evaluators look at the tool to provide general feedback and will share with the council and subcommittee once they receive that.

Laura Siegel - D/HH/DB Director's Report

Hearing Induction Loop System - The hearing induction proposal has landed on BGS' commissioner's desk. That means there will be discussion among their agency to determine where, who cover the costs, how to implement a project. I proposed we started with one of the conference rooms at the WSOC where the council used to meet regularly pre-COVID. Right now, no updates but will keep posted.

Hearing Induction Loop Working Group - Department of Tourism, VT Community Foundation, VT Arts Inclusive, and VT HLAA and I have met at least once. We are in the process of finalizing a survey to send out through VAI and Dept of Tourism's newsletters to collect information about accessibility. I've already had one consulting session with Christine Scales (outreach and education coordinator) from Billings Farm in Woodstock about this exact thing. She recently reached out to me that they had already implemented some of the suggestions I've made.

Over the Counter Hearing Aids - There is a one pager available onto my website. Kate Parrish and I have created an informational interview which is incorporated as part of the one pager. Right now, we are in the process of discussing adding a disclaimer to the procedure and policy manual for HireAbility on hearing aid coverage. Two presentations have already been provided – one for the HOH liaisons VR counselors and one for VT HLAA. Majority of the audience were from HireAbility and VT Assistive Technology. Another presentation lined up on this topic at the end of December.

DBVI - SSP Pilot Project: Fred Jones and Laura have partnered to locate funding through Administrative Community Living which consist of a grant that offers about \$120,000.00 (two-year grant cycle). This provide support for both signers and non-signers with dual sensory loss. SSPs will be trained Vancro was awarded with this grant. They will create vlogs making their upcoming announcements.

DD Services - Director of the Division of Developmental Disability Services, Jennifer Garabedian and I are working to expand our workgroup on ensuring whoever applies for the housing applications will create homes that will include an inclusive (such as a signing environment for deaf or hearing but non-verbal). The steering committee (H.720) does not have anyone representing the Deaf or signing communities. They have met three times so far. Jennifer is assisting to ensure that our workgroup's contribution is being shared with them. We did send out a survey but only received 4 responses. Jennifer had suggested that one of the four parents could provide a presentation to one of her monthly meetings with the designated agencies that provide services for individuals with DD/ID. Also in process of setting up a series of three workshops for designated agencies. Same idea I did for adult services last fall.

Division of Adult Services - A survey was sent out on my behalf to gather information to see if nursing homes (short term or long term) had any interested in communication kits. We have received 10 responses. That will help us determine our next steps.

Mental Health workgroup - Just learned from DVHA that they sent out 19 surveys and received no responses. They're going to resend that. The goal is to gather information about where the gaps are in terms of accessibility for mental health services.

Healthcare workgroup – Focusing on ramping up a policy template I've created. Our goal is to finish this template by March and distribute to all healthcare facilities to ensure better of accommodations and meeting patients who are DHHDB expectations. Recently attended on October 20th, UVM Health Network's all-day Health Summit. There were 600 attendees either present in person or remotely. They had a variety of speakers and workshops, including DEI diversity equity and inclusion, a variety of topics related to racism, and accommodations for communication access. It was quite a successful event. They plan to make it annual.

DCF - DCF is currently in process of creating an effective communication policy. AHS' long term goal is to distribute that policy across to other departments under AHS. There are currently five states: Connecticut, Florida, New Jersey, Kansas and Massachusetts that have a policy on effective communication through their Department of Children and Families Services.

ANR - The Agency of National Resources are working on a language access policy and in the process of collecting feedback. In process to approach and see if changes can be made toward Green Mountain Passport. You're familiar with All Access Pass. Both are very different from each other.

[Vermont Laws](#) – Green Mountain Passport and [Senior, Military, Access or Other Passes - US Park Pass](#) – All Access Pass

Laura asked if anyone one on the council would like to assist her on two things:

Community Needs Assessment has been shared by Oregon and Colorado; we would like to develop a Vermont version.

Deaf Mentoring Program two organizations The National Deaf Center and Gallaudet University Regional Center have contacted me on this topic

Legislative Report update: Continue to still lacking demographic and services data and now we really want to do something about it and we want to utilize DAIL and possibly Vermont Department of Health to try to create a needs based assessment survey for the deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind and have some sort of funding allocated to at least DAIL to help oversee the process.

Action Items/Topics to Address

- Centralized Over the Counter Hearing Aids PowerPoint for next year
- Spenser requests AOE summary of feedback that's received on the Quality Indicator Tool
- How do we attract special educators for our state to meet the needs of our most vulnerable kids
- Next meeting January 19, 2023 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 (Elena Shapiro)
<input type="checkbox"/> Will Pendlebury (Co-Chair)	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pam Hoover
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rebecca Chalmers	<input type="checkbox"/> Leslie Davis	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Sharon Henry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Linda Hazard	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Amelia Briggs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deb Charlea Baker	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kelly Decker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sherry Sousa	<input type="checkbox"/>

Guest Attendance

Name	Organization
Lianne Moccia	Interpreter
Jane (last name?)	Interpreter
Val Hughes	VCIL
Jessica Hutchins	Vancro
Michelle Johns	VT H&V
Laura Siegel	D/HH/DB Director (DAIL)