

**DRAFT**

## **Vermont Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing/DeafBlind Council**

### **Draft Meeting Notes**

November 18, 2021

Zoom Video Conference

Physical location- Waterbury State Complex – Oak Room

#### **Welcome/Housekeeping/Announcements**

Sabine Perry from the Agency of Education will be working with the Council for admin duties to replace Liz Perreault on most duties, Liz will continue to process Council stipend payments.

Administrative duties for the Council are split between the Health Department, AHS, DAIL and the Agency of Education. Welcome Sabine.

Co-Chair Will Pendlebury is on vacation.

#### **9:30 – Featured Discussion: FMAP/ARPA Discussion – All (Guest Bard Hill, DAIL)**

Continued discussion from last meeting where Megan Tierney-Ward provided us with updates on federal funding. Also known as FMAP Grant Funding at DAIL

Guest - Bard Hill, works at the Department of Disabilities Aging and Independent Living in the Commissioner's Office. He is 1 of 2 representatives the Agency of Human Services group which gives advice to the Secretary about uses of this enhanced Federal Funding.

**Background:** Briefly, we generate money, the Federal Government gives us an extra 10% of federal funding as match for certain kinds of services in the Medicaid program. And then that creates kind of a bank account of money that can be used in a number of different ways.

The decision-making process is input from departments and stakeholders to the Agency of Human Services, the Secretary kind of controls the money, but the legislature also has to approve the use of the money and the Federal Government has to approve the use of the money. There are several moving parts in approving the use of the money.

In terms initiatives or projects from this group, I would consider this just one possible funding source. But I will say in the past, a lot of the initiatives have come through the legislature. If I go into the distant past, it was in the, I think, something like 1978 when a group of people with physical disabilities went to the legislature and said, we need something other than nursing homes. We want to live in the community and the legislature at that time created something called the attendant services program. I'd only share that story because it's interesting history. But also, it illustrates those initiatives, sometimes, come through the legislature.

**Timeline:** We generate the money through March 2022, I think. And then, we have another 2 years to spend the money. We generate the money in 1-year period. And we have a total of a 3-year period

spend the money. It is one time money which means there is the -- a stated preference for **one-time expenses**. But it doesn't absolutely limit us to one-time expenses. What it means is if we're going to do something other than one-time expenses. That we have some sort of plan on how we will continue funding after that.

We might start seeing money flow by next calendar year, maybe February/March because of the process that's involved between the Secretary, the legislature. The high-level spending plan is \$100 million dollar-the overview table represents of the ideas that have come forward and have been proposed to the Federal Government.

**Attached document:** Bard shares an overview document of the categories that can be identify for use of funding so far. The legislature decided to use a lot of this money to increase payment rates, a number of programs received 3% payment rate increases. A broad category of the current plan is to spend about \$20 million on new or additional services.

**Advice-** Start fleshing out ideas into what look like your strongest, highest priority, highest impact services. Just start with everything and then, it will shake out over time. Council will be able to bounce these ideas off Bard. People submitting proposals, should be thinking about, making sure that you have at least an idea and a draft plan in place to flesh out once a more concrete timeline is finalized around the application process and how the dollars will start to flow out from AHS for the pilot programs.

One way to stay in the loop is to go to the DAIL advisory board meetings. And Agency of Human Services Stakeholder Engagement coming out soon.

Council Discussion regarding presentation and thoughts regarding needs in Vermont. Interpreters are aging out and retiring. Training programs are also dwindling. We had some discussion about the possibility of setting up an Interpreter Training Program in Vermont it would serve Vermont and the New England northeast. Or have a pilot research. Workforce Development and Training has been discussed for funding. AURL Rehabilitation and the Audiologists. Equal access of communication. Mobile van. High level recommendations around focus areas using the money and the legislative report. Council will form a subgroup.

**Legislative Report-** legislative report is we know that training and workforce development should be in there. People can send Spenser a note on the side.

### **10:30 - Program/Organizational updates**

#### **VCIL – Will Pendlebury (written update)**

Val Hughes is VCIL's Deaf Independent Coordinator.

#### **VANCRO – Will Pendlebury (written update) Jessica Hudson presents**

With the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf re-orienting itself and new national testing for Interpreters not ready, Vancro has been looking for ways to provide support to local interpreters and consumers. They were just approved for a number of grants that will allow them to lead and partner with some training initiatives that will help interpreters obtain skills to be ready for credential attainment or increase the skills of already credentialed interpreters. It is also hoped that this process will help draw some young professionals into the field & stay here in VT. The Vancro Advisory Council

continues to meet every six weeks. We're currently working on ensuring that the Yolanda Henry Community Fund continues via a MOU between Vancro and VTAD. The YHCF pays interpreters to do work not covered by the ADA, and money comes from both fundraising and funds from VCIL. VCIL has been housing YCHF for the past few years and they've done a great job maintaining funds. The community is hoping that YCHF will be co-managed by Vancro and VTAD by January 1. Vancro kicks off their mentorship Program for VT interpreters January 1 and continues to offer 20 hours of training opportunities annually for rostered interpreters.

January - Yolanda Henry Community Fund is going to come under the offices of VIS VANCRO and the VTIS is going to be taking that over.

Vermont Association of the Deaf -will start our Mentoring Program (providing 20 hours training) on January 1st

### **VTAD – Elena Shapiro**

October- had our VTAD State Conference.

We're working on new Boards- until if it official- we will continue with the past president and then I'll continue as past president with the new board as a support person.

We have had some updates to our bylaws - will be working on finalizing that and getting approval for the changes at the next general meeting

### **HLAA – Deb Baker**

They meet every other month first Wednesday from 12:00pm-1:00pm. 2022 will be second Tuesday of the month.

HLAA is working with the HearHear Coalition folks and AARP, which is continuing to send around the petition. We're getting some good numbers and we're getting some really personal and heart wrenching stories and may share some of the constituent stories with the legislators. AARP sent a mailer to 60,000 Vermont members to get the word out regarding the coalition.

December 1, 2021- Chapter Meeting – will be hosting a pre-tape of Dr. Beth Wilson from the National HLAA and Massachusetts HLAA regarding Facing the Holidays with Hearing Loss. There has been discussion of the Chapter meetings and the Massachusetts Boston group pooling our resources and presenters and topics and having a broader discussion for the New England region.

What is the protocol for our members to sit in on these Council meetings? [These meetings are public meeting, anyone can attend. Folks can reach out to Spenser, Laura, Will or Sabine. Note: they would be considered public and can comment during Public Comment time.

There is 1 hard of hearing vacancy position on the Vermont D/HH/DB Council.

### **EHDI/PIP – Linda Hazard**

EHDI reauthorization bill has been reintroduced to Congress. There's a little bit of change in the funding. My counterpart in North Carolina met with the American Speech and Language and Hearing Association to discuss some concerns regarding funding, expectations of our federal partners.

October 22, 2021- EHDl submitted our first de-identified Patient Level data for the 2020 births. This was a test file; the final file will be due in early March. This was a big lift for EHDl we normal submit aggregate data and were asked to submit patient level this year, which 179 fields were added to our reporting.

Our Health Resources Services Administration, Federal Agency is asking EHDl to have a plan in place for screening children 6 months of age through age 3 by the end of next year: We have several opportunities are in place between our early head start and head start programs. We're working with Children's Integrated Services, we have Primary Care who provide acoustic emissions screening for children, our Health Department collects information on early childhood screenings. And the providers can do direct entry into our database.

We now have 30 employees that consist of Educational Interpreters, Sign Support Instructors, Communication Facilitators and Teachers of the deaf and Educational Audiology.

We provide services to 98 children, 78 are in the 3 to high school graduation that includes some consulting, direct instruction, sign support, communication, facilitation, and teachers of the deaf who are providing direct instruction to students. 20, we have 20 children in the birth to 3, we average 27.

It continues to be a funding and sustainability issue, which I'm working closely with Danielle Howes. We've been investigating some Medicaid match and other things

#### **UVM/CDCI Update – Margaret Overman**

We have a new name- CDCI Cares team. CARES stands for Consultation for Access Resources and Equipment Support.

We have consultants who have a variety of backgrounds, their master's degree or higher in teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, we have audiologists, we have a speech language pathologist on staff and an ASL instructor. And we identify the needs of the individual team to work with the students and provide resources, equipment support, ideas on access and assessment.

3 big focuses this year- Consultation Services, meeting with school teams, collecting data to comply the National Guidelines and report back on academic progress.

Started a Statewide Professional Working Group this year. Developing a Communication Plan

Started an Advisory Committee for our own services that meets quarterly.

357 active student enrollments and various phases of enrollment. 75% are requests for Consultative support are around FM systems, speaker systems and troubleshooting equipment in the schools

Let's update our accommodations- ensure access and do we need to use clear masks? Do we need to have a classroom speaker system? We're trying to reach across organizations to collect data. We really need parent permission, which we're working hard to get now.

Near future there will be a training to help clarify, what are the roles of these different providers and how to use them in the school setting? We are working with Laura Siegel.

Low Incidence, 5 to 10 teams right now but it's important to note when there's needs for resources and training when evaluating students and what tools to use.

Connecting with Laura with thinking about the qualifications of interpreters and communication facilitators and ways to implement some tools around that.

Linda Hazard and Margaret will meet regarding substitutes for communication facilitators sign support or educational interpreters.

### **11:00 - D/HH/DB Director Update – Laura Siegel**

BEI – (certification program used in Texas) would be to screen all interpreters. Suggestion is that it is housed under DAIL for the oversight, regulation, regulatory function and so forth. VANCRO would lead with the testing and payment.

Department of Fish and Wildlife close to finishing our recorded presentation for their 250 volunteers.

State employee trainings and accessibility - discussing developing an ASL video about protocol. It needs to be interpreted and voiced over. Soon all state employees will be able access a newly launched E-learning System.

Question to Council- Should the Vermont Department of Health use resources to set up clinics that would be COVID distribution for deaf people? Email Laura thoughts if you like.

An ASL video describing vaccines for children ages 5 to 12 about getting COVID shots was recently released.

Vermont Women's Commission panel presentation- includes a discussion with interpreters and has captioning, being released next week. Yesterday, a presentation with a group from Howard Center. Upcoming presentations with Washington County schools on how to work with deaf and hard of hearing, deaf/blind community.

Working to talk about the communication, what the differences are in the roles between an interpreter, communication facilitator, sign supported.

Agency of transportation and I've been working together to see for policies change around transportation and having better communication there. And I will also be working with the Vermont School Safety Center to help them with resources. They have no policies, we're going to be working with Gallaudet, and RIT, Rochester Institute of Technology.

### **Questions/comments solicited from the Council-**

DHHDB educational service program provides most of the sign interpreters and educational interpreters wants to partner with Laura.

Requesting Town Clerk Offices work Laura has done- the presentation is available online, it's free, you can sign up and register and access it via the internet. Suggestion was made to share with Vermont Leagues of Cities and Towns.

### **Legislative Update – All-**

Spenser will email members for their sections of the report to be submitted for this year.

## **Public Comment**

Member of the public John Pirone commented that he read through the rough legislative report. And one thing important to differentiate. When you use the term hearing loss, in itself, is fine, but you have to clarify a person who has lost their hearing over time. And is not someone who was born without hearing so there's just that differentiation. Different experience, different needs and it's important to make that hearing loss, certainly there's a connection between isolation and other, maybe dementia as an older person.

If you don't have access to language, that can certainly cause detrimental health effects and that in and of itself is a loss of access to language. But I wanted to make that differentiation between the term of hearing loss and deaf and those experiences. So that's all. Thank you.

Spenser asked that a note about this and some language along that get sent to him- Agreed

No further Public Comment was made.

## **Other Business/Closing**

### **Council's Next Steps:**

- ✓ Spenser will go through the chat, send out an email, regarding follow ups for the subcommittee expect emails from Sabine, Laura or I around getting that scheduled. He will be reaching out to others around the draft legislative report for your respective sections. A final sign off by the Council
- ✓ A poll will be sent out to schedule next year's meeting schedule.
- ✓ Non-Council members will send ideas to be considered by the sub-committee for FMAP funding consideration.
  
- ✓ The idea of recording meetings was posed to the Council as a way to increase access and transparency. Transcripts currently are available, but ASL access is needed in addition to transcripts. Discussion reveals a little bit of technology problems to be discussed/worked out however there was general agreement that the council okay with meetings being recorded and posted on the Council website. Spenser will work with Laura, and DAIL legal counsel to figure out specific requirements around notifications and disclaimers and a general review process.

This is the last meeting this year. Happy holidays, Happy Thanksgiving. Be safe.

12:00 - Adjourn

### Council Attendance

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spenser Weppler (Chair)	<input type="checkbox"/> Julie Porter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elena Shapiro
<input type="checkbox"/> Will Pendlebury (Co-Chair)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kate Parrish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rebecca Lalanne
<input type="checkbox"/> Bill Hudson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alex Langevin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracy Hinck
<input type="checkbox"/> Ralph Gallo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Megan Tierney-Ward	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laura Siegel (Director)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rebecca Chalmers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Danielle Howes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sabine Perry (Staff)
<input checked="" 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"/> Kelley Decker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sherry Sousa	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Guest Attendance

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Bard Hill	Agency of Human Services- Director of Policy Planning and Analysis
Margaret Overman	UVM/CDCI Cares team- Co- Director of School Age Consulting Programs
Darren McIntyre	UVM/CDCI Cares team- Co- Director of School Age Consulting Programs
John Pirone	Public
Dianne Scott	White Coat Captioning
Michelle John	VT Hands and Voices
Lianne Moccia	Interpreter
Kristel Hier	Interpreter
Jessica Hutchins	Vancro
Val Hughes	VCIL

**\*For word for word meeting minutes please refer to the transcript**