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

July 14, 2022
9:30AM to 12:00 PM
Remote Zoom Meeting

Welcome/Housekeeping/Announcements

Greetings. A reminder, if you are not speaking or don't have a question, if you could just turn your video off, I'll be pinning the interpreters and the presenters. The agenda was sent out today to folks. Meeting was scheduled for July 14 rather than next week due to scheduling; this too will be a small group meeting.

Cassie Santo is our new representative from the Agency of Education (replacing Alex Langevin). She will introduce herself today. She has worked with the School Age Subcommittee prior to her first day at the Agency- thank you Cassie. Spenser will be sending all necessary documents needed as part of the general Council role.

Program/Organizational updates

School-Age Subcommittee- Sharon Henry and Sherry Sousa

Sharon Henry-We have met since the spring and shared our updates all of you, they are also on the [DAIL Website](#). Also 2 summaries were sent in March and May. We have taken the NASDSE Guidelines and converted them into Indicators, so the provider will submit evidence to support that they are needing or to what extent they are meeting that particular Quality Indicator. Our hope is the AOE vendor for this 22-23 cycle will give feedback to improve the tool.

We have submitted our cover letter to the Agency with recommendations. The Agency will review and respond back to us- it may take some time for them to do this. Cassie will keep us keep us informed as things progress or questions needing to be addressed.

I would also like to have a vote at our next meeting of endorsement from the Council supporting the use of the tool. One of the recommendations to the AOE is to come up with an implementation plan to have this tool be used across the State. And that could be a very important role for our Council to do. The Cover letter submitted to the AOE was parking lot items that were not in the scope of work. Very importantly, one of them was the service delivery model for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deafblind services and then ensuring that the documentation that's used, the IEP 504 documentation allows for accurate data collection on these children who are receiving services. Right now, the AOE does not have current and updated information. And then once the data are collected, having robust reporting to stakeholders so that they know what's going on.

Acknowledgment of the commitment of the subcommittee was echoed by Sherry and Sharon. 2 questions were asked to add Deafblind to Indicator 7 and the elements of ADA are incorporated into the assessment tool.

Spenser suggested a 1-hour workshop as a comprehensive walk through for Council Members that are interested in September.

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Commissioner's Report

Megan Tierney-Ward- Adult Services Division Director

System of Care Plan for Developmental Services – is required by Vermont law to support people who are in our home community-based services programs across the State, it is a three-year plan, which is due to be renewed by January 2023. There is a group parents of adult children who are deaf that did a presentation for the Council and they had a lot of concerns around how to support their adult children as the parents themselves age into the future. A big priority from the department is housing.

The 3 main priorities are- expanding housing options and alternatives, paying parents with Medicaid funds to be taking care of their own children and the third one is increasing supports specific to the needs of adults with Autism.

Developmental Disabilities Services Division has held some forums to get stakeholders' input during the month of July. And one of those forums was intended for families with adult Deaf children. They were able to get great feedback and information from those family members. August forum is for paying parents. General open forums in September, while having feedback from State Program Standing Committee. Open Comment period will be October. The goal is to have the draft completed by December.

The housing alternatives and housing options, the feedback for the State System of Care Plan will also apply to Act 186 which is an Act specifically instructing DAIL to work with the Steering Committee to look at how to pilot some housing option alternatives for people in the developmental services program, about half a million dollars associated and a limited staff position. If anyone on the Council wants to give input, contact Megan.

Updates:

Val Hughes- VCIL

July 26, 2022, at the Capitol Plaza in Montpelier, we will host an ADA forum with Vermont Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and VCIL will be meeting U.S. Congress candidates and celebrating the anniversary of ADA

August 14, 2022, in Vernon, VT in the park. We are partnering with DVAS, ASL Vermont, Brattleboro Deaf Club to have a community Signing Day to get together in-person and to see each other and really enjoy that face-to-face contact.

Jessica Hutchins- VANCRO

Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deafblind inclusive Community Day at VTC was a success. 70 participants and 18 vendors. Next year it will be April 29, 2023.

August 27, 2022- VANCRO workshop on Deafness and Deafblind culture and oppression from 11- 1 virtually. Contact Jessica for more information.

Deafblind training will happen September 29, 2022 – October 2, 2023, in Northern Vermont.

Yolanda Henry Community Fund and the AA Fund - utilizing a good amount of money every month. Still putting the word out there that we can provide interpreter access to those 12-step meetings for that in

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their recovery. **General Community Fund**- money is getting short and we are thinking of fund-raising ideas.

CALi- Center for Atypical Language Interpreting, Northeastern University – through a grant they received they will provide training from October – August. CALI work is to really focus on elderly Deaf citizens, Deafblind folks. Folks who have different types of language use. Immigrants who not native users of ASL nor English and how we can utilize those lessons in our interpreting.

Health Equity Grant - under the Vermont Community Fund and the Vermont Department of Health. We will make the public announcement we received the grant today. Money will be used in 3 parts: training counselors who are not Deaf, Licensed mental health counselors, therapists, training them on how to work with Deaf, hard of hearing, and Deafblind patients and clients including how to work with an interpreter in those cases should there be one. The second part is training for folks who don't have their mental health certification for interpreters including out of state interpreters getting licensure in Vermont and to know how to interpret for mental health cases. 3rd paying interpreters in any counseling session. This is a 1-year program, and we will try to get State funding to continue to fill this need for the mental health field while continuing Medicaid conversations of changing reimbursement rates.

David Kruger- Vermont Association of the Deaf

National Association for the Deaf Conference in Orlando held discussions of rural States and priorities for Deaf people, one of the top priorities was to address mental health issues with Deaf youth. And then, providing equity and educational services and resources for Deaf babies, issues and concerns for Deaf senior citizens and the breakdown of everyday disparities that the community faces. These are topics that the Council can/may work on for next year. Spenser was in agreement -as was others.

Katie Parrish- HireAbility

New RCD- Joey Dutson covering the Eastern part of Vermont. **Open position**- Employment consultant position serving Deaf, hard of hearing and Deafblind individuals and collaborating with the counselor for the Deaf covering the whole State. Flexibility in full-time or part-time and partly remote and partly face-to-face position.

Deb Charlea Baker – HLAA

Vermont DBHI event- very please, we had a lot of traffic at our booth! We look forward to next year. **June 29**- was our last chapter meeting of the year, we had guests from the Upstate Hearing Loops LLC from New York State that talked about the basics of hearing loops. Which part of ADA to make your building accessible hearing-wise. Their PowerPoint will be posted on our website. You do not need to be a member to attend our meetings and encourage everyone to sign up for our newsletter.

The Research Symposium- was about Cochlear implants and available on the [Hearing Loss Association of America \(HLAA\)](#) website in August. I recommend if you're working with someone considering a Cochlear implant give them that resource.

September 16th to 18th, New York State HLAA Chapter-more information will be posted in our newsletter.

Break

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Linda Hazard - EHDI/PIP

Vermont EHDI updates- we have HRSA and CDC funding. I have been involved in meetings with the Office of Special Education and the Department of Ed at a Federal level, related to EHDI initiatives.

Services administration- going into grant cycle within the next 2 years, they ask for feedback on the current grant and what we think should be happening going forward-that's exciting.

Early Intervention Program, Parent-infant program- is receiving some additional funding through Children's Integrated services and DIVA to support our birth to 3. A future agenda item- how do we sustain the parent-infant services for Deaf, hard of hearing and Deafblind infants and young children? Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Deafblind services program, under the University of Vermont Medical Center- servicing 51 students for summer services and preparing for services next year. We have advertisements educational interpreters and communication facilitators; I have reached out across the US and have 1 ED interpreter to interview. we hired a new teacher for the Deaf and she is an audiologist and is fluent in ASL.

Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deafblind grant application- we have had some Collaborative Leadership Meetings (myself, Jesse Suter and Rachel Cronin at CDCI and agreement with the leadership teams of both CARES and the Deaf/hard of hearing -- Deafblind educational services program) and decided that we would put in a joint application this year. The application has been submitted to the Agency of Education, we hope to hear in the next week or so as far as the outcome of the grant application.

Tracy Hinck

Adventure Day at Lotus Lake, was on May 20, 2022. 45 students between 4th and 12th grade. Theme is rocks. We rock, you rock, we're going to paint rocks. Tremendous amount of support from stakeholders and community, donations from the CDCI CARES, Hands and Voices, 9 East network, UVMCMC.

Jacqui Kelleher- AOE

AOE new Council member -Cassie Santo is a professional educator with years of experience including with low-incidence populations, Deaf, hard of hearing/ hearing impairment and an expert on inclusive practices. She's our liaison to work with this Council.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing grant RFP- we have an external reviewer added to our review panel. Finalizing this within 2 weeks. Council letter is being reviewed by AOE.

Council letter-recommendation for using a Quality Indicator Tool has been received and is being reviewed- follow up will come from Cassie.

Hard of Hearing grant on a Communication Plan-/Hearing Impairment which is the terminology from IDEA. the difficulty with just moving forward and implementing a communication plan. It's just going to take some effort either on the legislative end or, you know, being able to determine that this fits under the rule that the Secretary can require a form.

[Special Education Rule Changes](#)- effective July 1st, 2022, and two rules that will go into effect July 1st, 2023. So, this website shows month-by-month the guidance, the tools, the checklists, the webinars that we have provided. We will host a virtual meeting August 2022- Parent Information Session on Special Education Forms: August 29, 2022, from 9:30-11:00 a.m. and 6-7:30 p.m. We will be promoting our 24/7 phone and email communication system for special education issues and Agency assistance.

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[Special Education Advisory Panel](#) has membership openings. They have had great input on Unmet Needs and 504. Office of Civil Rights intends to propose amendments to Section 504 public input ends in July.

Critical Shortage-the Agency has been working with districts and CEEDAR to come up with legal creative ideas to assist school districts being able to open their doors in August.

Local Special Education Determination (LSED) districts that are receiving Federal dollars for special education and related services by law each SUSD in the state is scored on compliance and results-based indicators and receive a status of Meets Requirements, Needs Assistance, Needs Intervention, or Needs Substantial Intervention. And so, by July 31st, those determinations will be released and [posted](#).

D/HH/DB Director's Report

D/HH/DB Director Update – Laura Siegel

Accessibility- working with AHS to be more accommodating, flexible in terms of running meetings, planning for meetings, staffing meetings, PowerPoints and documents can be very accessible for many, many disabilities including individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, and Deafblind. Also, an accommodations poster has been created and will be distributed by AHS Economic Services in their field offices

AHS-Economic Services Division-recently began to use on demand video remote interpreting services for walk-in clients only. The future goal will be to provide that kind of video remote access for walk-ins at the front desk to expand to other agencies that are under AHS.

Employee Trainings: LMS (our learning management system) for state employees that have access to my recorded training. As you recall, it's a 30-minute overview on how to best serve DHHDB. Last meeting, I mentioned 96 has completed it. 102 more people have completed the training since. There have been 119 new requests to take the training. Last meeting, I mentioned 70 viewed the YouTube video that was made available for external community partners. 151 more have viewed the video via YouTube. [Working with Deaf, HOH, DeafBlind People - YouTube](#).

Multi-Lingual Task Force- received grant money to produce five videos focusing on mental health which will also include ASL and other spoken languages.

Vermont Hands and Voices VT H& V for sent out an email to their subscribers about H.266 (hearing aid coverage bill) which include the link of my informational interview with Rep. Theresa Wood and Rep. Leslie Goldman. Since releasing that video, we have had 102 views in almost a month.

<https://youtu.be/Kp9DPVCRN8w>

Division of the Blind and Visually Impaired, DBVI:

Regarding the RFP, DBVI has received a proposal and a group of reviewers (not including me) are evaluating the bid. I am aware the Selection notification was due by 7/22 and the contract is scheduled to start on 10/1 and go until September 30th, 2024. The amount is \$121,000. Fred, do you have any updates on that front you would like to share? My next step on this is I am hoping Fred and I will create a video that will be uploaded onto DAIL's YouTube channel explaining the program and announcing the winner of the RFP.

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Agency of Natural Resources- continuously providing consulting services on how ANR can do more outreaching to make things accessible. Right now, they are working on something regarding PFAS substances - [PFAS Explained | US EPA](#)

National Association of State Administrators for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Conference- 3 priorities were identified: 1) SSP services, 2) healthcare access and 3) bringing the community events back to face-to-face.

Other Business/Closing

Next legislative session topics- Priorities that NAD has identified, a brainstorming session requested, health issue includes identification of hearing loss or the mis-identification of hearing loss and a age range when you need to be tested 40 or 50 what have you, Senior Care Programs staff are trained, people are identified and facility is accessible in terms of captioning, in terms of flashing alarms, in terms of appropriately caring for seniors. How we're going to assess services for adults, ideas of NAD around education. Email Will or Spenser ideas the work of the Council for the next one to three years or make note of it and we can continue the conversation at our next meeting.

Next Council meeting is September 15th. Spenser and Will will develop the agenda for that and follow-up on some of the topics that we talked about today.

Public Comment

No Public comment was made.

Links shared in meeting

<https://vcil.wufoo.com/forms/q1sij7zx0knkg6z/> ADA forum July 26th

<https://orlando.nad.org/2022-proposed-priorities/> Link to the list of proposed priorities mentioned during the NAD conference.

<https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/rule-changes> Special Education Rule Changes

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/reg/ocr/index.html> OCR request for public comment

<https://dail.vermont.gov/services/programs/deaf-hard-hearing-deafblind#Legislative> DAIL -Legislative

https://dail.vermont.gov/sites/dail/files//documents/2021_D-HH-DB-Council_Report.pdf The Vermont Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf/Blind Advisory Council Act 107 of 2016

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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 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"/> Pam Hoover
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rebecca Chalmers	<input type="checkbox"/> Leslie Davis	<input type="checkbox"/>
<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

Name	Organization
Laura Siegel	Director of D/HH/DB Services
Jacqui Kelleher	Director of Special Education
Sabine Perry	Council Admin (AOE)
Whitecoat Captioning - Diane	
Interpreter - Lianne Moccia	
Interpreter - Kristal Hier	
John Pirone	UVM
Jessica Hutchins	VANCRO
Michelle John	VT Hands and Voices
Val Hughes	VCIL