



## **Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Monthly Bulletin June/July 2008**

### ***VISION***

Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, in concurrence with the Colorado Department of Human Service vision, seeks to become the nation's leader in empowering Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals, families, and communities to become safe and independent.

### ***MISSION***

To promote the interests of our constituents and to work to ensure the quality of communication access for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing living in the state of Colorado.

### **About Nancy Jean Eubanks, Commissioner**

Commissioner Nancy Jean Eubanks began her term as a Commissioner in 2006 after she and her family moved to Colorado from Iowa. She was appointed as Chair of the Interpreting Services Committee because of who she represents, the interpreting community.

Commissioner Eubanks is from Florida where she received her interpreter training and graduated with honors from St. Petersburg College in Clearwater in 1996. She continued her education in Deaf Culture Studies and graduated Summa Cum Laude from North Central University in 1999. Nancy Jean has a decade of interpreting experience and currently works for the Cherry Creek School District. She is a firm believer in the value of education as well as the Commission's mission and has a strong commitment to excellence. She received her Masters' degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Colorado Christian University in 2008.

She is also an ordained minister with the Assemblies of God and is the pastor of Front Range Deaf Assembly. Nancy Jean and her husband fostered and adopted a deaf daughter and have two children of their own. They reside in Aurora.

### **Three Commissioners Honored at the Commission Awards Ceremony**

Three Commissioners were honored at the June 5, 2008 meeting of the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Commissioner Susan Elliott was selected as the first recipient of the Susan J. Elliott Award for Outstanding Service to the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The award was presented to Commissioner Elliott by Karen Beye, Executive Director of the Department of Human Services, for her role in the creation of the Commission through the Colorado General Assembly and for her six-year term as Commissioner.

Outgoing Commissioners Terry Sims and Vickie Thomson were recognized for their four-year terms of service as Commissioners with beautiful plaques.

Commission Chairman Joe Benedetto said that each of the honorees had dedicated their lives to unselfish public service and had improved the quality of life for our citizens. "Each of you has made a difference. Each of you has served with honor and distinction." "Susan," the Chairman said, "was our first Chairperson and led us through the difficult early years."

Referring to all of the honorees, he said that, "The State of Colorado and our citizens have been extremely fortunate to have benefited from your service and we give our heartfelt gratitude, as well as our deepest appreciation, upon the completion of your term."

The Susan J. Elliott Award was established in 2008 by the Commission to first recognize Susan Elliott's exemplary service to the Commission and then to recognize future individuals' outstanding service to the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

### **Vacant Commissioner Positions**

The Nominations Committee has sought at least three independent, enthusiastic and committed candidates for each of the open slots and was pleased with the pool of qualified and diverse candidates. They have made their recommendations to Karen Beye, Executive Director of the Department of Human Services, for the formal submission to the Governor's Office. The Governor will make the appointments himself.

The new Commissioners, who will serve four-year terms, as well as current Commissioners will advise on policies that direct the staff to take courses of action to meet the agency functions, mission and vision, to promote the interests of the deaf and hard of hearing constituents, and to ensure quality communication access. Additionally, the Commission evaluates how the goals, programs and policies are implemented and executed by the Director.

Keep your eye open for our new Commissioners in the future bulletin!

### **Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program**

There will be changes made to the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program starting in Fiscal Year 2009 (July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009).

The Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will operate the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program from the office after a transition from the Marion Downs Hearing Center (MDHC) to the Commission is completed during July and August 2008. A new permanent part-time TEDP coordinator located in the office will handle the process from the time a person applies for telecommunications equipment until delivery of the equipment. This person will also maintain the rules of the program, a database, and contracts with vendors, etc. A job announcement for this opening will be released shortly.

The Commission will contract with one vendor for outreach services and another vendor for telecommunications equipment for FY '09 and four additional one-year periods contingent upon funds being appropriated and other contractual requirements. A vendor for outreach services will be responsible for promotion of the Program and one-on-one service to consumers. Requests for proposals for these functions are posted at the state's BIDS website: <http://www.gssa.state.co.us/VenSols>. Vendors must be registered with BIDS to submit proposals on the RFPS. If a vendor wants to "see" the RFP elements without registering for \$40 to determine if they want to bid, please contact the office for a copy of the RFP.

This change was made mainly to have direct accountability of the Program and to build a consumer base. The Commission desires to expand from the network it currently has with the community and to keep itself aware of the issues among community members.

### **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Task Force Update**

The Task Force, with support from the Center for Systems Integration (CSI), has developed and disseminated a survey for the consumers and another survey for service providers and administrators.

The Task Force has been tremendously fortunate to have CSI's support. They work with top-tier quality and serve with professionalism. CSI is known to partner with communities, policymakers, leaders, and the general public throughout the state to find solutions to complex policy problems. The combination of community and stakeholder-driven research with practical, hands-on experience, allows for policy solutions that bridge across sectors, policy issues, levels of government, and diverse beliefs and values. Through the integration of diverse policy systems, the best solutions for all stakeholders can be identified and successfully implemented. CSI is also very familiar with mental health issues in the state through their other projects. Visit CSI at [www.csi-policy.com](http://www.csi-policy.com).

The Task Force cannot stress enough for the need to gather input from the community, especially in the rural areas. Your assistance in completing either survey or both and disseminating the surveys to others would be greatly appreciated.

The survey asks about how you get help for mental health or substance abuse needs. The survey is anonymous - we do not ask for any names! The survey results will be used to develop a plan to provide services that are accessible, directly or indirectly, to deaf and hard of hearing consumers.

Please take the survey by July 11th. It takes about 20 minutes. The survey link is:  
[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=f\\_2bxssNk8Se9lqULAPNi9NQ\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=f_2bxssNk8Se9lqULAPNi9NQ_3d_3d).

Also, if you want the survey results or Task Force information, you can email Jewlya Lynn of the Center for Systems Integration at [research@csi-policy.org](mailto:research@csi-policy.org).

Thank you!

### **Hearing Aid Legislation**

On June 3, 2008, Governor Ritter signed Senate Bill 57, which is a legislation on health insurance coverage for hearing aids at a signing ceremony at the Children's Hospital in Aurora. It was one of the 11 healthcare-related bills the Governor signed at the ceremony. The hearing aid insurance legislation mandates health insurance companies to cover hearing aids for children ages birth to 18. For more information through articles by Wordpress and Colorado Chapter of Alexander Graham Bell, go to <http://hearingaidaction.wordpress.com/2008/06/25/colorado-governor-signs-hearing-aid-mandate/>.

The Coalition who made this a reality refused to give up after Governor Owens vetoed this bill during the 2006 legislative session. They came back with the same intent and renewed vow to carry it to Governor Ritter's desk for his signature. They deserve a long round of applause!

**Federal Communication Commission Ruling of June 24, 2008**

Please click this website: <http://www.goamerica.com/10digit/> to learn about the historic Federal Communication Commission (FCC) ruling on a real, 10-digit phone number for any type of videophone. Kelby Brick, Vice President of Regulatory and Strategic Policy of Go America, will explain the ruling and how it will affect videophone users and hearing people.

This is a historic moment for the deaf and hard of hearing community. It is what equality is about!

**Colorado Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

The Colorado Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CCBVI) met for the first time on May 23 and again on June 25. A deaf-blind representative, Mark Wedgle, sat in the meeting. They met to cover the CCBVI statute, plans for appointment of the Commission Chair, priorities, and other issues. The Division of Boards and Commissions has hired a couple of temporary employees to start the office and carry the Blind and Visually Impaired Commission's directives. The Commission will hire a new executive director sometime in the fall. For more information, please don't hesitate to contact Jean McAllister at 303-866-5063 [jean.mcallister@state.co.us](mailto:jean.mcallister@state.co.us).

**Thank you for your support and happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July to you all!**

