



Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Monthly Bulletin October 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.

"Cliff Notes"

There has been constant confusion regarding the administrative authority the Commissioners and the State Department have over the office of the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I would like to take this opportunity to, again, clarify this matter.

The Commission was established as a Type II state agency and put under the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services of the Self-Sufficiency and Independence Office within the Department of Human Services. During fiscal year 2003 (July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003), the office was transferred to the Division of Boards and Commissions under the Office of Human Resources, Compliance, and Regulatory Affairs within the Department of Human Services. The Office of Human Resources, Compliance and Regulatory Affairs was called Office of Performance Improvement at that time.

As defined by the State, Type II agencies fall under the umbrella of any State Department that has to adhere to a departmental protocol. For example, the office is unable to proclaim a position on legislation until it is processed through the departmental protocol. This and other developments such as budget increase requests or additional staffing requests have a protocol. Often, it takes six months to process it all. Sometimes it takes less than six months. Sometimes it requires more than six months. It depends on what the proposal entails. Any proposal of significant impact goes out of the office to the Director of Division of Boards and Commissions for review before it goes to the Director of the Office of Human Resources, Compliance and Regulatory Affairs for a decision. Every approved proposal by the Office goes to the Department of Human Services' Executive Management Team for team review. This Team receives legislative initiatives from within the Department to prioritize and decide what initiatives to carry to the Governor's Office. The Department Executive Director has a close working relationship with the Team; however, the Executive Director has the final say. The Governor's Office evaluates all proposals and may inquire about additional information from the Department before they make changes to the proposals or make final decisions. Some proposals find a dead end in the Governor's Office. Those that are not at the dead end go to the State Legislature or Joint Budget Committee for the final leg of journey. That is basically what a departmental protocol is. The Commissioners are not, at all, part of this process. The Commissioners are here to provide support to the office staff with any issues or needs presented by

the community and to give guidance to the office as an advisory committee. If needed, it will work with the community for legislative efforts or any other Commission related work outside of the office because of the office's status (Type II). Support and guidance can include determination of the office's mission and purposes, development of goals or priorities for the office, development of policies, and such. It also assisted the Division of Boards and Commissions with selection of the Director, nomination of the Commissioners, evaluation of the office, etc. The Commissioners also act as ambassadors of the office. The Division of Boards and Commissions and the Department of Human Services have the administrative authority and accountability in hiring, evaluation of personnel, approval of policies, overseeing programs, budgeting, and other functions. Regardless of types of authority each of the three entities (the office, the Division and Department, and the Commissions) have, they understand they have to work together with mutual respect and trust, but the Department has the ultimate responsibility for the office.

Several State Commissions for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing have a different level of authority or bureaucracy. Some of them deal with the Legislature directly and has authority that our Division and Department have. However, they still have a protocol to adhere to. The protocol we deal with is not our barrier. Our attitude is. We chose to deal with it if we want to prosper.

One trick to help deal with it is to plan ahead all the time. Because of this, we are requesting that any proposals made by the community be submitted to us at least six months in advance. This will not only assist us, but will benefit the community in the long run.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or additional information about our procedures.

Thank you!

New Faces at the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Governor Ritter has appointed three new Commissioners to serve four-year term ending June 30, 2012, and also re-appointed Commissioner Shelley Strickfaden, who has been representing parents of deaf and hard of hearing children, for a four-year term. The new Commissioners are:

Leslie Ralphe (late-deafened): Leslie is an adjunct English professor at Pikes Peak Community College. Leslie holds a Bachelor Arts degree from the University of Virginia, a Masters of Fine Arts from Washington University in St. Louis, and an Associates degree from the Interpreter Preparation Program at Pikes Peak Community College. She values her connections to the deaf and hard of hearing community in Colorado Springs. She also has the perspective of knowing the frustrations and challenges of communicating with a hearing loss due to developing Meniere's syndrome as a teenager. She and her husband, Greg, enjoy hiking with their dogs. They have two children, Amelia and Nathan, both at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Barbara Jenkins (professional): Barbara is a board certified doctor of audiology and has over 20 years of experience working with hearing loss. She is involved with Sertoma and is a co-founder of Mexico's first school for deaf children. The school has a USA affiliate program, The Tehuacan project, to provide funding for hearing aids and other supplies. She also works with the Coalition for the Homeless, heading the hearing program division of the health fair for homeless and needy children in Denver. She lives in Centennial and enjoys hiking, biking and roller blading. She has two grown daughters and a killer mini dachshund.

Jennifer Peterson (public): Jennifer was a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor with the Division of Rehabilitation under the Department of Human Services and is currently working as a mental health therapist at the Mental Health Center of Denver. She has served on the Commission Mental Health and Substance Abuse Task Force, an important system-level advocacy effort that the Commission is embracing, and will remain in this capacity with the Implementation Team. Jennifer also serves as board president of Dove, which provides advocacy for abused deaf and hard of hearing women and children, in Denver. She graduated from Gallaudet University with a Masters degree in Mental Health Counseling in 2004 and lives in Arvada.

The office has also hired a new part-time Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Coordinator, Rob Loveless. He is an alumnus of the Indiana School for the Deaf and Gallaudet University. Rob moved to Colorado to attend the Naropa University, majoring in Bachelor's program majoring in Visual Arts. He remained in Colorado after graduation. He is also a faculty member of the Interpreter Preparation Program at Front Range Community College. Teaching American Sign Language and Visual Gestural Communication has been his niche and equally as powerful is the sharing of his love at group homes for the deaf and various deaf schools across the country. He carries warmth and tranquility with him. He lives near Boulder with his two furry companions.

Legal Auxiliary Services Program

As you may already know, the Commission's Legal Auxiliary Services Program has taken over the responsibility of oversight of interpreters and CART Providers in the Colorado Courts as of July 1, 2006. We have been working hard to build the program and provide trainings and expand our list of qualified service providers so that deaf and hard of hearing individuals are assured of the highest quality and skill in legal settings.

The new regulations require that interpreters who want to become legally qualified must already be RID certified, have completed a 50 hour basic legal training AND get 35 hours of supervised experience with an approved mentor.

The best way to train interpreters for legal settings is to have them work with and be supervised by those with top certification, skill and experience. Currently, there are several people in training with RID certified legal (SC:L) interpreters who are serving as mentors. This training will be finished soon and you may start to see some of these protégé/trainees in legal settings. Rest assured that even though these interpreters are "in training", they are RID certified and bound by the code of ethics and can be trusted to behave professionally at all times.

Thank you for your support of this new and exciting program!

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Task Force

The Task Force wrapped up their work at their fourth and final meeting on October 15. They met to 1) finalize the action plan, 2) list people to serve on an implementation team, 3) set up a plan for information sharing, and 4) formulate a dissemination plan for action plan.

The Center for Systems Integration is currently finalizing the action plan with the feedback from the Task Force after it gathered information from the community. The action plan consists of the goals, strategies, and actions that center around a statewide system built on three essential legs of statewide capacity building which is goal #2 of the plan:

A Technical Assistance and Education Center to provide technical assistance and training, including working with providers to increase their access to and competency with technology that can assist in communicating with deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

A Statewide Service Delivery Network, to provide direct mental health and substance abuse services statewide to deaf and hard of hearing consumers and their families, using telemedicine and other technology to connect providers and consumers.

Early Outreach and Identification, using existing capacity in Colorado's communities to identify mental health needs among children and seniors who are deaf and hard of hearing and connect them to early intervention resources.

and;

support for three legs of the system that are essential components (goals #1, #3, and #4):

A Governance Structure (goal #1) ensure the successful implementation of the plan and long-term implementation, and oversight of systemic reform in the mental health and substance abuse systems to meet the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

Standards (goal #3) that assist providers in understanding how to best provide services to deaf and hard of hearing consumers, as well as allow the state to monitor the success of service delivery.

Consumer and Family Leadership (goal #4) from the deaf and hard of hearing communities, with participation from consumers and family leaders in the policymaking structures of the mental health and substance abuse systems.

While the action plan is being finalized, a core team of the Task Force will be assembling an implementation team. This implementation team will consist of key state agencies and deaf and hard of hearing leaders and be in charge of overseeing and supporting the implementation of this action plan, including a plan for information sharing and a dissemination plan for action plan, as advised by the Task Force.

News from the Colorado Department of Education

From Deaf and Hard of Hearing Listservs

By Tanni Anthony, Supervisor/Consultant on Blindness and Visual Impairment

October 7, 2008

The Colorado Department of Education's Exceptional Student Leadership is pleased to announce the hiring of Ruth Mathers as the new state consultant on Deaf/Hard of Hearing. Ruth will begin her new role on November 1, 2008.

Ruth is recognized in the field of education for children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing as a professional with unique depth and breadth in training and experience. She earned her Master's degree in Education of the Deaf from Washington University at Central Institute for the Deaf – St. Louis. Additionally, her early participation in the adult deaf community as a result of a close relationship with an older, profoundly Deaf sibling, and training in professional sign interpreting, reflects her broad skill set.

Ruth has extensive experience in private and public education settings. She taught in the Denver Public Schools for several years where she was the principal investigator for a study funded by the Colorado Department of Education to design and implement support services for students with cochlear implants in the mainstream. Her career has also provided her the opportunity to teach in classrooms using a total communication approach to facilitate learning.

Ms. Mathers is the recipient of a number of professional awards recognizing her exceptional teaching skills and her dedication to children and their families: Dan B. Davidson Award for Excellence in Inclusion in Education, Hands and Voices Families First Award, National Center on Low Incidence Disabilities Award for Teaching Excellence.

NOTE: The Exceptional Student Leadership Unit of the Colorado Department of Education has recently moved to 1560 Broadway, Denver, Colorado 80202. See http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_special.htm for more information about Exceptional Student Leadership Unit.

Commission Meetings

Our June 5, 2008 meeting minutes were approved at the October 16, 2008 meeting. Please contact the office if you would like to have a copy of the minutes.

Mark your calendar with the future Commission quarterly meetings! They will be held on the following:

Thursday, January 8, 2008
Colorado Department of Human Services
1575 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203

Thursday, March 5, 2009
Location to be announced

Thursday, June 4, 2009
Colorado Department of Human Services
1575 Sherman Street, 6th Floor Conference Room
Denver, CO 80203

* Every meeting is held from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN TO YOU ALL!

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