

# STATE OF COLORADO



**Colorado Department of Human Services**

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**OFFICE OF ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS  
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS DIVISION  
COLORADO COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

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Executive Director

**COLORADO COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
Independence Center  
729 S. Tejon St.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80903  
June 6, 2013**

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the Regular Meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

## **2. ROLL CALL**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Commissioners Debbie Mohny (Chair), Leslie Ralphe (Secretary), Liz Konkel, Amy Beckett, Mary Pat Graham-Kelly.

### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Kirk Neuroth (Vice Chair), excused; Lisa Weiss, excused

### **CCDHH STAFF PRESENT:**

Cliff Moers, Administrator; Cheri Davis, Legal Auxiliary Services Manager; Timothy Chevalier, Outreach Consultant for the Deaf Community; JoAnne Hirsch, Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Coordinator.

### **INTERPRETERS/CART REPORTER:**

Interpreters: Hillary Spahnle, Candace Stuck, Doris Tagliatela  
CART Reporter: Alicia Berg

## **3. COMMISSION CHAIR REPORT, CHAIR MOHNEY**

- To accommodate late-arriving commissioners, Commission Chair Mohny postponed approval of the minutes and the agenda until later in the meeting.
- Chair Mohny thanked the interpreters and the CART reporter for their services, and expressed appreciation to the Colorado Department of Human Services and the

Commission staff for their work, and to the Independence Center in Colorado Springs for hosting the meeting. The Independence Center recently installed an induction loop system in the meeting room, so people sitting in the carpeted areas will be able to pick up a direct sound feed if their hearing aids or cochlear implants are equipped with telecoils.

- Chair Mohny announced that after the regular meeting, the community forum will include an update on the Technical Assistance Summit by Rebecca Kahn from the Spark Institute, and a report on progress toward a Communication Access fund by Timothy Chevalier.
- The commission consists of seven members; the terms for the deaf, hard of hearing and interpreter positions will end June 30, 2014; the other four terms continue through June 30, 2016.
- Chair Mohny described her own experience growing up with a high frequency “ski slope” hearing loss. She developed coping skills, such as lip-reading and observation of body language. As an adult, she developed the confidence to advocate, which can be challenging. She cautioned against misguided advocacy which is ruled by emotion, particularly anger and frustration, and encouraged effective advocacy which channels that anger into positive action. The commission is composed of people who advocate for the needs of deaf and hard of hearing persons in Colorado. It provides telecommunications equipment for those who cannot afford it, and administers programs that ensure communication access to legal and mental health services. Citizens are encouraged to share their concerns with the commission office and work with the commission so that their voices are heard.

**4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was approved.

**5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The March 7, 2013 meeting minutes were approved.

**6. REPORTS**

**Commission Administrator’s Report, Administrator Moers**

- Administrator Moers introduced the staff members present, and explained that Mandy Turner remained behind to manage the office. He also announced that two staff positions are currently vacant, as Namati Katungu has resigned his position as Outreach Consultant for the Hard of Hearing Community effective June 1. In less than three years, Mr. Katungu has completed some critical projects, most notably the Communication Access Assessment, an online tool used to determine the access needs of community organizations, government agencies and businesses. This assessment tool will be an important part of the ongoing work of the outreach and consulting services of the commission. With Mr. Katungu’s departure, the commission plans to restructure the Outreach and Consulting Services with a new leadership position, followed by hiring a

- new person to serve the hard of hearing community. The staff had hoped to increase the FTE for the program, but the governor's office will not approve that at this time, since it is currently focusing on the child welfare program within the Department of Human Services. Administrator Moers will continue to work towards the goal of additional staff for outreach.
- Some staff members attended the second Hands and Voices seminar in April, which was an opportunity for attendees to discuss priorities for providing access to education for deaf and hard of hearing students in Colorado. Attendees agreed that Colorado needs to increase involvement of deaf and hard of hearing adults in education from birth through secondary school. Attendees also opposed limiting options for families; currently families find themselves forced to move in order to place their children in districts that provide the services they need, and this needs to change. Recruitment and retention of qualified staff was another priority, in addition to collection of data about students, and adequate teacher training. Administrator Moers reviewed the current data presented by Ruth Mathers, which showed numbers of deaf or hard of hearing students with IEPs by district. While many of these students live in urban school districts, an almost equal number of Colorado's deaf and hard of hearing students reside in rural districts with limited resources and options for them. Current TCAP scores indicate a number of these students are not proficient in reading and writing, and surprisingly, in math as well. This data supports the need to revisit the Blueprint for Closing the Gap. Administrator Moers hopes that the grant program this year can be used to support a collaboration of the CDE and CSDB to that end.
  - The CCDHH would like to present an annual legislative forum in which individuals and organizations can participate to learn how to promote the needs of deaf and hard of hearing persons in the state legislature. They hope to offer this forum in August.
  - JoAnne Hirsch, Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Coordinator, reported that the commission was chosen to run the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Program, also known as I Can Connect, which is funded by the FCC. \$161,000 has been provided for this program. Qualified applicants must have both hearing loss and low vision (20/200 or worse in the better eye). Ms. Hirsch described some of the equipment available for the program, including braille devices that work with smart phones, iPad technology and accessories for deaf-blind users such as signalers and screen readers for enlargement. Applicants must provide proof of their hearing and vision loss from audiologist, doctor or other service professional, as well as proof of income, to determine whether they qualify. Training is provided for individuals, and more trainer/assessors are needed to cover individuals all over the state.

### **Committee Chair Reports**

#### **A. Legal Auxiliary Services**

Cheri Davis reported that legal auxiliary service requests have far exceeded the budget this year, demonstrating the need for increased funding for deaf and hard of hearing services in the mental health setting. The commission is working closely with the mental health

institutes and the office of behavioral health to educate everyone involved about the importance of direct services such as interpreters for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Ms. Davis also announced that Matthew Ruggles has agreed to serve on the Advisory Council to replace Angela Tenorio, who is stepping down. Two vacancies, the law representative and a hard of hearing representative, have been filled. Two new vacancies have opened up with the departure of Lynda Rimmel and Pat Graves, and they will be advertising for people to fill those positions shortly.

**B. Bylaws Committee**

Chair Beckett said there was nothing new to report.

**C. Nominations Committee**

Chair Weiss was absent, so there was no report.

**D. Media Access Committee**

The commission voted to dissolve the standing media access committee, with the option of re-establishing it as an ad hoc committee, should the need arise.

**E. Grant Program Subcommittee**

Administrator Moers provided the revised grant application for the coming fiscal year. This year the commission plans to award the full \$50,000 for system support to deaf education and early hearing detection and intervention. The subcommittee is in favor of this. The application has been revised to require more information about how the money is to be spent. In order to be eligible, at least two organizations must collaborate, and the project must revisit the 2002 Blueprint for Closing the Gap. Deaf and hard of hearing persons must be a majority on the task force, strategic planning process and implementation teams; and the project must implement at least three revised blueprint recommendations by the end of the fiscal year. The project must also have a plan for sustaining the work and implementing the rest of the revised blueprint. Ideally, applicants would provide a matching fee of \$25,000, but it is probably not feasible to make that a requirement for the grant.

**7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Mary Pat Graham-Kelly gave an update on the vision statement revision process. The task force committee met and discussed the commission's vision. They concluded that the concepts of equality, linguistic diversity, sustainability and system advocacy were important. One possible draft is "To build and sustain a statewide network of purposeful engagement so that the people of Colorado embrace cultural and linguistic diversity." The task force hopes to provide a vision and mission statement at the September meeting.

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**9. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Chair Mohney announced that the September 5<sup>th</sup> meeting will be held at the Center for Independence, 740 Gunnison Avenue in Grand Junction, from 4 to 7 pm. The meeting room has a built-in induction loop.
- Chair Mohney also recognized Namati Katungu, and thanked him for his service and valuable contributions to the work of the commission.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Ralphe, Secretary