

**Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
121st Quarterly Commission Meeting
April 25, 2009 – Newport, KY
Campbell County Public Library, Conference Room**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Patricia Freeman, Ms. Betty Timon, Ms. Merle Williams, Mr. Roger Augè II, Ms. Melody Bock-Freeman, Ms. Susan Brown, Ms. Nina Coyer, Ms. Cristal Collins, Ms. Dodie Karr, Ms. Michelle Niehaus and Mr. Bob Stuckey

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Laurent Rawlings, Mr. Kevin Martin and Ms. Edie Ryan

STAFF PRESENT: Ms. Liz Hill, Ms. Virginia Moore, Ms. Rowena Holloway, Mr. Jim Rivard and Mr. Derek Drury

COMMUNICATION FACILITATORS: Ms. Rachel Payne, Ms. Rachel Morgan and Ms. Lisa Conley

VISITORS: Mr. Ron Haynes, Ms. Jean Haynes, Mr. Bruce Freeman, Ms. Morgan Collins, Mr. Ed Schickel, Mr. John Santini, Ms. Paula Esterle, Ms. Mary Behler Mr. Frank Pelsuo (Vice Mayor of Bellevue), and his wife Ms. Susan Peluso

The meeting was called to order at 10:25 a.m. Commissioner Williams, Secretary, called roll and as there was a quorum present the meeting continued. Dr Freeman, Chair, asked for corrections to the 120th Quarterly Commission Meeting minutes from January 23, 2009. No corrections were offered.

THE MINUTES FROM THE 120TH QUARTERLY COMMISSION MEETING WERE ACCEPTED WITHOUT CORRECTIONS.

REPORTS

Executive Board Report:

Board members reviewed minutes from the Executive Board meeting held on March 18, 2009. The Executive Board relayed community feedback following the series of Town Hall meetings. There was much discussion about the need for a commissioner/staff retreat to be held on June 5-6 in Louisville, KY. The retreat is an opportunity for Board members to evaluate how the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) will distribute wireless devices and to review the Request for Proposal. Board members

were advised that background materials and documents regarding these topics would be sent prior to the date of the retreat for review.

Legislative bills pertinent to the KCDHH, passed during the recent session, were discussed briefly and were to be discussed in detail during the Executive Director's review of the agency report.

One new project being considered by the Executive Board is establishing an account for the KCDHH with Facebook, a social-networking Internet website. The objective is for the KCDHH to branch out further into the community and develop connections with younger deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Staff is currently researching the feasibility of a generic Facebook account.

Other topics discussed during the meeting, including State Fair 2009, were covered during the agency report presentation.

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT WAS ACCEPTED WITHOUT CORRECTION.

Agency Report:

The Executive Director began the agency report by highlighting early intervention services, the theme of the recent issue of the agency newsletter, *The Communicator*. The KCDHH received positive feedback from government officials because of the quality information printed representing early intervention and mental health perspectives. Parents from across the state attended the Town Hall meetings expressing their concerns and stories regarding early intervention. Because of this emphasis the KCDHH is collecting and filming personal testimonies from parents to identify barriers preventing adequate early intervention services.

The Executive Director and Information Office Supervisor attended the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Conference in Dallas, Texas. Through networking and discussions with audiologists, speech-language pathologists, state team members, government officials, and deaf community members, they acquired an encompassing perspective on the link between early hearing detection and early intervention services. While at the conference, the KCDHH met with the Commission on Children with Special Health Care Needs (CCSHCN) to discuss how to improve follow-up services for children that are identified with a hearing loss. To parallel these efforts, the KCDHH also strongly supported House Bill 5 during the 2009 General Assembly session, which will set legal mandates for improving these services.

Resulting from parent feedback, the KCDHH has met with First Steps, a division within the Department for Public Health, to address inconsistent services being presented to parents after their child is identified. There is no universal oversight to govern what services and options are presented to parents by First Steps and it was agreed some guidance is needed. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) will be developed between KCDHH and First Steps to allow for improvement of services to children identified with a

hearing loss. KCDHH will develop an inclusive Parent Package, containing all available resources and options, for the CSHCN and First Steps to give to parents. The KCDHH will also work with the Communication Services for the Deaf to prepare the Parent Package for distribution.

Working with Hands and Voices, a parent-driven, national program that facilitates all options for dealing with hearing loss in children, is another method KCDHH will utilize to improve services. One consideration is to provide parent-mentors across the state. The mentors would be parents of deaf or hard of hearing children who have had the same life experiences when navigating through the decision-making process once their child's hearing loss was identified. The mentors would partner with parents of recently diagnosed children, to assist in their search for appropriate services.

The KCDHH also met with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) in order to push implementation efforts concerning the AIR report. A KDE representative will attend the 122nd Commission meeting to answer questions from the Board, and the KDE can advise the KCDHH regarding future plans and education initiatives.

The KCDHH maintained communication with the community by continually posting video weblogs (vlog) after each town hall meeting. Individuals that did not attend the meetings can view the vlog for a discussion summary of the meeting. Following the ice storms, the Executive Director posted a vlog instructing the public on emergency preparedness and cautioning how to safely use equipment during power outages. Additionally, the KCDHH contacted various news stations and pressed for televised emergency press conferences to be captioned and accessible to the deaf and hard of hearing population. There will be an ongoing watch to ensure these services are provided consistently.

The Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director met with Governor Beshear's Communications Office to advise of the need for licensed interpreters at press conferences during emergency situations. KCDHH will network the Governor's Communication Office with regional interpreters to ensure access at the press conferences. KCDHH also conveyed constituents' dissatisfaction with the Governor's weekly video messages not being captioned. These efforts produced tangible benefits as these videos are now captioned, including those on the YouTube website.

Personnel changes have taken place. The previous Information Office Supervisor took a position with the Kentucky High School Athletic Association. Following interviews for the position, one of the current Information Office Coordinators, Anita Dowd, was promoted to the vacant supervisory position. Angela Gahafer has recently been hired to fill the Executive Secretary II position.

The Deputy Executive Director informed the Board about the recent MegaDEAFConference that took place at the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD). This event, spearheaded by Clyde Mohan a long term instructor at KSD, linked 41 national and global sites with the KSD as the access point. Four KSD students (video jockeys)

hosted the event as six schools took turns sharing information, lessons, and experiences. There has been overwhelming positive feedback from participants, observers, educators, and the Governor's Office.

Working toward standardization, the Kentucky Hospital Association (KHA) is currently reviewing procedures for accommodating language services in hospitals statewide. As non-English speaking individuals visit hospitals more frequently, administration has seen a need for adequate interpreting services. The KCDHH joined this initiative to ensure deaf and hard of hearing individuals are receiving those same services. While live interpreters are always preferred, video remote interpreting is an option. A Request for Proposal will be completed for video conferencing vendors to come and present how they can provide the necessary services. The KHA will make recommendations to all hospitals in Kentucky to comply with the established procedures.

Upon request by the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, the KCDHH took the lead to establish an innovative, comprehensive, online resource library for interpreters. The website utilizes resources and links organizations, both local and national; to provide interpreters with a "one-stop-shop" for all resources needed to further the profession. Resources include the KCDHH Deaf Resource Library, Eastern Kentucky University Interpreter Training Program Outreach Library, KSD Special Education Cooperatives, KDE, Kentucky Board of Interpreters, and Kentucky Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, National Association of the Deaf, and the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. This website will be launched once final approval from all entities is received.

The KCDHH also met with a representative from the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) to discuss educational services for the deaf. While more highly qualified interpreters are needed in K through 12 settings, a more effective two-pronged approach should also include more deaf educators. Based on Commissioner and consumer feedback, the individuals educating deaf children need to be certified in the content area. Additionally, deaf individuals need more professional development opportunities to promote their success when taking the Praxis exam.

THE AGENCY REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Finance Report:

The KCDHH will absorb a four percent budget reduction during the last quarter of this fiscal year. All expenditures are on target for the final quarter as well.

THE FINANCE REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Town Hall Meetings Report:

Below are constituent concerns expressed during recent Town Hall meetings:

Madisonville, KY:

- Emergency preparedness
- Enhanced 911 services and emergency response procedures
- Inadequate services for deaf and hard of hearing children
- Filming parent testimonials sprang from this meeting

Danville, KY:

- Emergency Preparedness
- Developing contact lists for emergencies
- Improving education services for deaf students
- Contacting legislators in order to pursue legislative action

Prestonsburg, KY:

- Lack of qualified sign language interpreters
- Inadequate education services for deaf and hard of hearing children
- Lack of teachers communicating through sign language
- Establishing regional educational programs
- Telecommunications Access Program wireless distribution details
- Employment opportunities

The lack of adequate services for mental health issues was brought up all the Town Hall meetings, but consumers were reluctant to discuss the topic. This may be due to the stigma and stereotypes associated with mental health. The stigma must be eliminated in order for true progress to take place. KCDHH is working with other state agencies to improve mental health services statewide and remove the stigma for consumers requesting such services.

Legislative Report:

The KCDHH partnered with the CSHCN in support of House Bill 5 pertaining to early childhood hearing loss. Though it was a tough fight this bill passed through Senate Chambers the final evening of the legislative session, thanks to the efforts of two outstanding senators, Dan Kelly and Julie Denton.

House Bill 96, related to improving emergency notification for deaf and hard of hearing citizens, failed to pass in this session. However, through meetings held with the Chair of Veterans, Military Affairs Subcommittee, it was agreed that KCDHH should have input in a legislative task force implemented to investigate the most effective means of implementing a statewide notification system for all citizens.

Senate Bill 10 and House Bill 103 both focused on providing captioned movies in theaters with five or more screens. Although KCDHH met with sponsors of both of these bills, other Senators and Representatives were misinformed about the fiscal responsibility for providing captions and opposed the bills. Select theaters in Kentucky are providing captioned movies so the fiscal burden is obviously not too great and smaller theaters with less than five screens would not be required to provide captions.

KCDHH will gather and present legislators with accurate information prior to the 2010 session in order resubmit a legislative bill to require captioning. Commissioner Timon informed the Board that Northern Kentucky is providing captioning services in a variety of entertainment venues, and that the key is vigilance by consumers to advise of the desire for captioning so theater owners will realize the service is needed.

THE LEGISLATIVE REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

American Sign Language Teachers Association Study Group Report:

The American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA) study group met with the KDE to discuss implementing ASLTA certification requirements for K through 12 educators across Kentucky. Additionally, the study group will meet with the ESPB to discuss the barriers preventing deaf individuals from passing the Praxis. This study group will need to be extended through the next fiscal year to accomplish its goal.

THE AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Telecommunication Access Program Report:

The Public Service Commission (PSC) approved wireless providers to be added to the telecommunications surcharge in order to fund the distribution of wireless devices. Emergency regulations have been filed and are effective and ordinary regulations have been filed and are pending for comments from the public. The Request for Proposal (RFP) to acquire a vendor for the devices is close to completion. The TAP Advisory Board will meet on May 8 to discuss equipment choices for the TAP.

THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSESS PROGRAM REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The KCDHH and partnering agencies will again share a booth at the Kentucky State Fair 2009. Commissioners were asked to sign up on the volunteer schedule for the KCDHH booth before leaving today's meeting. Commissioners recommended providing more information regarding sign language courses since last year's supply was depleted before the fair ended. The KCDHH will secure more storage space at the fair in order to bring more materials. Board members were asked to consider what materials and equipment need to be available at the fair in order to draw in consumers, regardless of communication mode or preference.

Since the PSC approved funding for distributing wireless devices, the TAP is expecting a surge of requests for equipment. A waiting list for wireless devices, especially for reapplicants, may occur but orders for other equipment will proceed without delay.

NEW BUSINESS

Commission members elaborated on the need to research availability of captioning services in local movie theaters across the state. This is an instrumental initiative in furthering equal access to entertainment venues for deaf and hard of hearing citizens.

Commissioner Coyer (Commissioner Stuckey) MOVED TO ACCEPT establishing a study group to research the best methods of gathering and presenting information and needs to legislators regarding captioning service in movie theaters. The motion carried.

The Board further discussed the vitality of continuing the ASLTA study group in to the next fiscal year.

Commissioner Coyer (Commissioner Collins) MOVED TO ACCEPT continuing the current study group investigating reasons behind a lack of ASLTA certified instructors teaching American Sign Language courses in K through 12 and postsecondary settings. The motion carried.

The Chair announced the following term expirations effective June 30, 2009: Commissioner Patricia Freeman, Member-at-Large; Commissioner Dodie Karr, Kentucky Association of the Deaf (KAD); and Commissioner Merle Williams, Alexander Graham Bell Association (AG Bell). AG Bell has submitted three nominations for appointment to the Governor's Office. KAD is waiting for one more nomination before its recommendations can be submitted to the Governor's Office. Several applications were received for the Member-at-Large representative. After review, of the submitted applications the Executive Board recommended reappointing Dr. Patricia Freeman as the Member-at-Large representative.

The Commission Board accepted the Executive Board recommendation of reappointing Dr. Freeman as Member-at-Large representative.

Election of Officers

Dr. Patricia Freeman's term as Chair expires June 30, 2009. Commissioner Coyer and Commissioner Timon were nominated for Chair for the next term. Both accepted the nomination and gave a short speech indicating why they wished to serve in this capacity. Board members were called to vote.

The Chair announced that Commissioner Coyer was elected as the new Chair.

Commissioner Williams, Commissioner Bock-Freeman, and Dr. Freeman were nominated to serve as Vice-Chair for the upcoming term. All accepted the nomination and Board members were called to vote.

The Chair announced that Dr. Freeman was elected as the new Vice-Chair.

Commissioner Bock-Freeman was unanimously nominated for Secretary for the upcoming term. Commissioner Bock-Freeman accepted the nomination.

Commissioner Bock-Freeman was voted the new Secretary by acclamation.

The commissioner and staff retreat is scheduled for June 5-6 in Louisville, KY. Board members were asked to submit items they wished to discuss to Dr. Freeman, to be added to the agenda. Materials for discussion will be distributed to Commissioners in advance of the meeting date.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The 122nd Quarterly Meeting will be held on July 17, 2009, from 1:00pm – 4:00pm at the Transportation Cabinet in Frankfort, KY.
- Commissioner Niehaus announced several upcoming Mental Health outreach events that will be taking place statewide, and asked to be contacted directly for additional information.
- Commissioner Augè introduced Newport Vice-Mayor Frank Peluso and his wife, Susan. Vice Mayor Peluso welcomed the group to Bellevue and announced a local festival taking place June 11 -14, 2009.
- Members were encouraged to stay for the Town Hall Meeting to be held following today's meeting and interact with the local community.

Board members voted to proceed with a closed Executive Session to discuss personnel issues and moved to another room at 1:30 pm.

Upon completion of the Executive session, **Commissioner Stuckey (Commissioner Timon) MOVED TO ADJOURN.** The meeting was adjourned at 2:03 pm.



Dr. Patricia Freeman, Chair



Merle Williams, Secretary