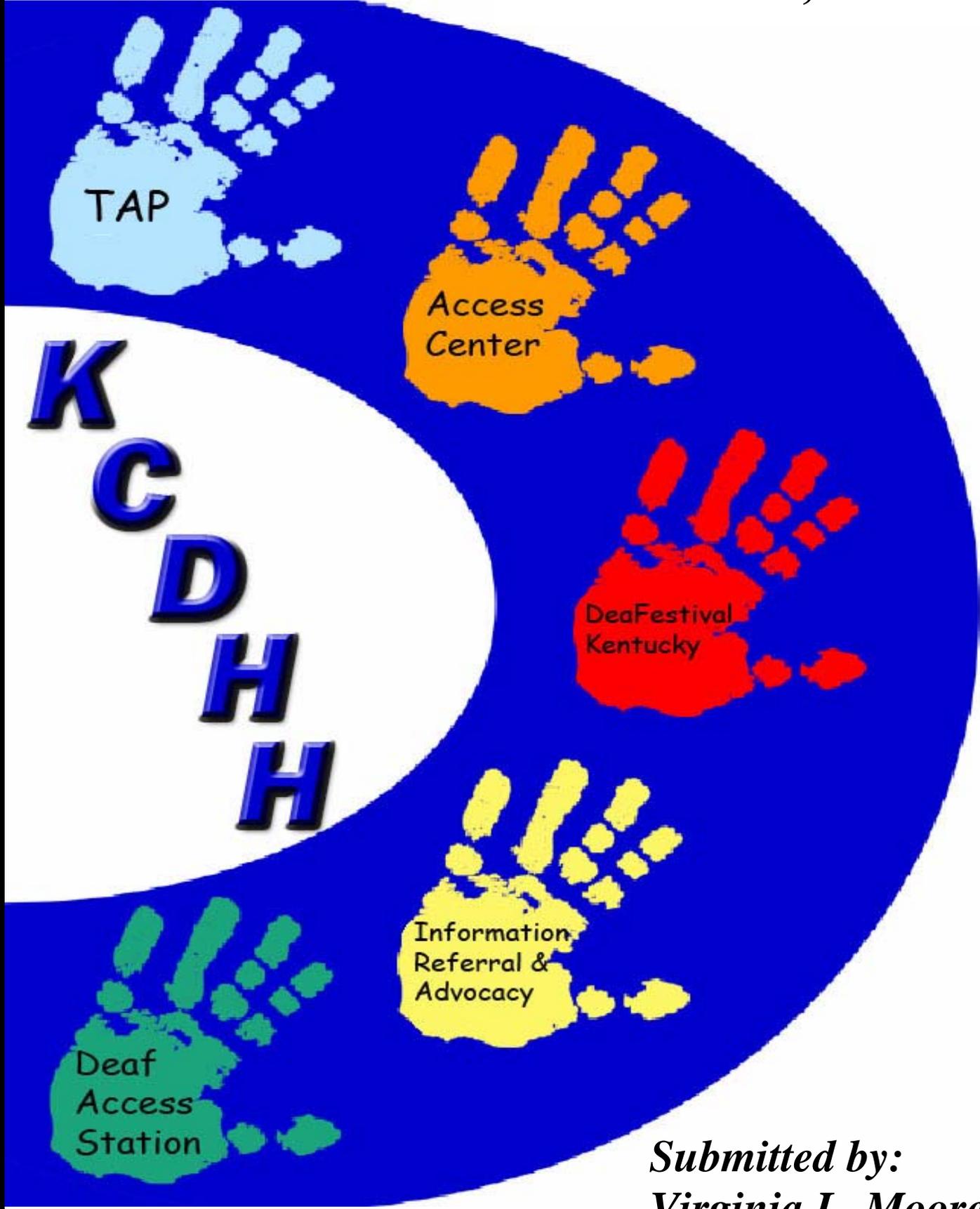


# Agency Report

April 1<sup>st</sup> through  
June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021



*Submitted by:  
Virginia L. Moore*



## KENTUCKY COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

### QUARTERLY ACTIVITIES

April 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021

#### GOVERNING MANDATES

##### **KRS 163.510**

- 1) The commission shall advise the Governor and the General Assembly concerning policy and programs to enhance the quality and coordination of services for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- 2) The commission shall cooperate with and assist local, state and federal governments and public and private agencies in the development of programs for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- 3) The commission shall review legislative programs relating to services to deaf and hard of hearing persons and shall conduct studies of conditions affecting the health and welfare of the deaf and hard of hearing.
- 4) The commission shall oversee the provision of interpreter services to the deaf and hard of hearing and may provide services if necessary.

##### **KRS 163.525 (5)**

- 5) The Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing shall establish procedures for application and distribution of specialized telecommunications equipment by the promulgation of administrative regulations in accordance with provisions of KRS Chapter 13A.

#### 2020-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

- Goal 1:** Develop, propose and lobby for legislation to improve services for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- Goal 2:** Work with government, public, and private agencies to develop programs and provide services for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- Goal 3(a):** Review statewide programs, established through legislation, which relate to services for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- Goal 3(b):** Research conditions affecting the quality of life of the deaf and hard of hearing.
- Goal 4:** Oversee the provision of qualified interpreters and captioning services.
- Goal 5:** Provide information and referrals to consumers regarding equipment provided by other entities.

# ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

## **Legislation**



Although SB 91 (“Bella’s Bill”) did not make it out of committee during the 2021 legislative session, Hands & Voices has continued to work toward educating providers, legislators, parents and those who wish to become parents about congenital cytomegalovirus (CMV). The Executive Staff Advisor participated in a CMV Awareness Webinar, presented by Bella's Bill 4 CMV (KY) and Kentucky Hands & Voices on June 4th. The first half of the webinar included panelists from the medical community, providing background information about the disease itself, as well as how it impacts each of their specialties. The second half was facilitated by staff of the national CMV Foundation and included four parents sharing how CMV has impacted their child and family.

In addition, Ms. Streeval, Bella’s mother, and the Executive Director of the Kentucky Chapter of Hands & Voices presented testimony on June 16 at the first meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Health, Welfare and Family Services, emphasizing the importance of moving forward with this bill. The KCDHH Executive Director, Executive Staff Advisor and Interpreter I were in attendance to provide support. The Deputy Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Public Health has indicated their Kentucky Partnership for Quality Care (PQC) webinar on July 23 will also include a segment on CMV in pregnant women.

*(1.2 Lobby for and support legislation developed by other entities that directly impacts the lives of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

*(3.1(a) Monitor and support legislation promoting equal access to appropriate education for deaf and hard of hearing students, from birth to post-secondary education.)*

*(3.2(a) Advise state agencies and private committees, boards and taskforces in matters related to deaf and hard of hearing issues.)*

*(3.3(a) Monitor legislative issues that affect deaf and hard of hearing Kentuckians.)*

## **Budget**

The legislature has approved the budget for fiscal year 2021-22 with an appropriation increase in restricted funds. Barring unforeseen circumstances, the regular two-year budget cycle will begin again with the 2022 legislative session in January.

## **Personnel**

The Administrative Specialist II and Executive Administrative Secretary positions remain vacant; however, the interview panel selected a candidate for Administrative Specialist II and submitted the selection packet to Human Resources (HR). Pending final approval from Personnel and acceptance by the selected candidate, the new Administrative Specialist II has a tentative start date of July 16. The search for a new Executive Administrative Secretary continues, and the Board will be kept abreast of any progress made toward finding a replacement.

## **Communication Access during COVID-19**

On May 17, the Governor and Kentucky's COVID-19 vaccine decision makers, including Secretary Friedlander of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), joined KCDHH for a virtual community forum to share information with the deaf and hard of hearing community regarding distribution of the vaccine to residents of the Commonwealth. Those in attendance had the opportunity to hear directly from the Governor and Secretary Friedlander and ask questions about COVID-19 and the vaccine during a Question and Answer (Q&A) session following the initial presentation. Secretary Friedlander expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to have an open dialogue with the deaf and hard of hearing community and extended the time allotted for the Q&A to ensure everyone had an opportunity to ask questions.

This quarter, KCDHH has continued to provide communication access for Governor Andy



Beshear's regular COVID-19 press briefings. On Friday, June 11, the Executive Director (ED) interpreted for Governor Beshear as he marked his final regularly scheduled COVID-19 briefing by signing an Executive Order (EO) rescinding the Healthy at Work requirements and associated website as well as all the COVID-19-related EOs except 2020-215, the original EO declaring a state of

emergency. Leaving that EO in place will ensure Kentucky remains eligible for various federal funding opportunities requiring a state of emergency declaration. The Governor also lifted the statewide mask mandate for most settings, with the exception of medical settings and airports,



and ended capacity limits for restaurants, bars, and other public venues, thanking Kentuckians for their hard work and sacrifices that saved countless lives in the Commonwealth. The Governor also thanked close partners in the state's fight against COVID-19 over the past 15 months, including KCDHH's ED. Although this was the

final regularly scheduled COVID-19 press briefing, the Governor will continue to update the Commonwealth through periodic "Team Kentucky Updates."

On June 16, the ED, Executive Staff Interpreter, Interpreter Referral Specialist, and a volunteer Deaf Interpreter were in attendance as the Governor signed a proclamation declaring June 16 "Interpreter Appreciation Day." The Governor stated that when KCDHH opened the door to language access for the deaf and hard of hearing in Kentucky, he opened the door to access in all languages. According to the director of the Office for Globalization, Kentucky has diverse communities that represent over 100 countries and speak more than 120 languages. The proclamation stated:



- There are nearly 700,000 deaf and hard of hearing Kentuckians who benefit from the work of KCDHH; and

- Team Kentucky interpreters donated hundreds of hours to protect their neighbors from COVID-19; and
- Interpreters made sure every person in our commonwealth knew they were part of Team Kentucky and that we would get through this together; and
- Interpreters across Kentucky are preparing our people to reach across borders – and cultural barriers in their own communities – to solve big problems; and
- Many Team Kentucky interpreters have been recognized as Kentucky Colonels due to their extraordinary service to the commonwealth; and
- All Team Kentucky Interpreters won the Kentucky World Languages Association’s Amici Linguarium (Friend of Languages) Award for their dedicated leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic.



On Thursday, June 24, the Governor, ED, Dr. Stack, and Team Kentucky posed for a photo in the Governor’s office, as they were honored by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Bluegrass Chapter with the 2021 Communicator of the Year award. This



is the second year KCDHH’s ED has won the award. The Bluegrass Chapter serves communications professionals in Louisville, Kentucky and the surrounding areas, including Southern Indiana.

KCDHH and the ED have continued to receive a high level of recognition as a result of the agency’s response to communication access needs during COVID-19. Though it is hard to find silver linings during the worst pandemic in a hundred years, one of those has been the spotlight shined on the need for communication for the nearly 700,000 deaf and hard of hearing individuals in Kentucky. The publicity from the governor’s appearances and press briefings has led to additional media attention, interpreting requests, and appearances for special events, as well as awards for providing specialized communication and bridging the gap for individuals with a hearing loss. KCDHH has also seen a surge in information, referral, and advocacy requests, some of which have come as a result of the media’s need to understand who we are and what we can provide. Our hope is that through this recognition, more and more deaf and hard of hearing individuals receive the help they need.

- April 29 – WLEX-18, Lexington, interviewed the ED in a “Meet the Governor’s ASL Interpreter” report.
- June 9 – WDRB-41, Louisville, interviewed the ED, Executive Staff Interpreter, and Interpreter Referral Specialist on their journey as the Governor’s silent partners preparing to exit the spotlight as regular coronavirus briefings end.
- June 10 – WEKU-88.9, Richmond, the Eastern Standard, interviewed the ED on the demand for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and career opportunities in the field.
- June 11 – the Ohio Valley Resource Website, Louisville Courier-Journal, Title Press, WOWK-13 in Huntington, WV, WATE-6 in Knoxville, TN, Appalachian News-Express in

Pikeville, and the Trimble Banner in Bedford all reported on the Governor's last Coronavirus briefing where he thanked the ED for her commitment in the state's fight against COVID-19 over the last 15 months and signed the Executive Order ending COVID-19 restrictions.

- June 23 – Louisville Courier-Journal interviewed the ED for a profile piece about the work of the Commission, which will be published in July.

*(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

*(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

# TEAM KENTUCKY

## **KCDHH Recognized for Hospital Kit Collaboration**



On May 13, the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Kentuckiana Chapter recognized KCDHH's ED, Information Office Supervisor, and Network Analyst II for their efforts in completing the 2021 Hospital Kit.

The kit contains a sample letter to medical professionals advocating for effective communication, "Know Your Rights" brochure, "Tips for Communicating" card, labels for paper medical charts detailing an individual's communication needs, stickers with the icon for hearing loss for use on medical records, a plastic bag to store a hearing aid or cochlear implant, a "Face Me" hearing loss button, and info on HLAA resources. The kits are available through KCDHH or HLAA-Kentuckiana Chapter.



*(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

*(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

## **Health and Medical Preparedness Advisory Committee Meeting**



On April 27, the Policy Specialist and Information Office Supervisor attended the quarterly meeting of the Health and Medical Preparedness Advisory Committee (HMPAC) Meeting via Zoom. The Public Health Preparedness Branch Manager announced that HMPAC meetings will continue to be virtual for the remainder of the calendar year and will likely transition to hybrid meetings in 2022. Dr. Stack then provided an update on COVID-19 vaccinations and stated that summer should look a lot more normal.

The Naloxone Distribution / Mobile Harm Reduction Administrator reviewed the Harm Reduction Initiatives from the last quarter, including the "ASL Narcan Training for the Deaf Community" event held on April 8. The free training included the following:

- How to recognize signs and symptoms of an overdose
- How to respond and what to do during an overdose
- Information about recovery community centers across Kentucky
- Information about peer support services, including the Deaf Peer Support Program
- How to use the FindHelpNowKY.org website to find treatment for yourself or a loved one
- How to administer Narcan

Free Narcan kits were also mailed to attendees following the training.

The State Health Operations Center (SHOC) Manager provided an update regarding sustainability plans for vaccine and testing operations in addition to warehouse logistics. Partnering agencies, such as local health departments, the Kentucky Board of Emergency Medical Services (KBEMS), the Kentucky Community Crisis Response Board (KCCRB) and the Kentucky Hospital Association (KHA), also shared updates.

*(3.8(b) Compile information regarding programs, services and barriers that impact the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

### **Early Intervention Meeting**

On June 9, the Executive Director, Executive Staff Advisor, Early Childhood Language Access and Acquisition Study Group Chair, and the Kentucky Hands & Voices Director and Assistant Director met with Chief of Staff of CHFS and several staff members from First Steps to follow up on the March 12 presentation. First Steps staff informed us that they have met on several occasions with others at the Department for Public Health and have taken all of our concerns into consideration. They agree with our concerns and will begin to make changes to improve their services for deaf and hard of hearing children and their families. This will be an ongoing collaborative effort involving many agencies and individuals.

*(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

*(3.2(a) Advise state agencies and private committees, boards and taskforces in matters related to deaf and hard of hearing issues.)*

*(3.4(a) Partner with and advise local, state and national organizations to improve early identification of hearing loss.)*

### **Mental Health Advisory Committee Meeting**

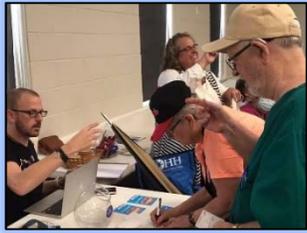
On May 19, the Information Coordinator attended a virtual Mental Health Advisory Committee meeting as a proxy for the Executive Director. The first portion of the meeting was a training with stakeholders from the Aetna SKY (Supporting Kentucky Youth) Program, Department for Community Based Services (DCBS), and KCDHH. Improving services for deaf and hard of hearing children in the foster care system was also discussed. The Committee then viewed an ASL video for deaf and hard of hearing Kentuckians who are searching for a treatment facility for substance abuse. The captioned video focused on how to utilize the website <https://findhelpnowky.org/ky> to find a treatment facility and pointed out that there is an “interpreter-friendly” icon next to the treatment facilities that already provide accommodations for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. The Committee spent the remainder of the time discussing the format of the 2021 Biennial Report in an effort to determine the best way to report both the details of successes and the data regarding services used by deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the most succinct manner possible. The Deaf Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) training indicated there are now more deaf and hard of hearing peer support specialists

for those who are recovering from addiction and substance abuse. Last, elections were held and a new Chair and Vice Chair were selected.

*(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

*(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

### **Deaf Vaccine Day**



The Executive Director and Information Coordinator attended Deaf Vaccine Day on June 19 at Louisville Summer Picnic in Fern Creek Community Center. KCDHH and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities partnered with the Louisville Association of the Deaf (LAD), Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and

Wellness, and the Fern Creek Community Center to host Deaf Vaccine Day. Over 100 individuals participated in the LAD picnic and several received their COVID-19 vaccine. Interpreters were provided for those who were interested in receiving their vaccines. Most of the 100 attendees had already received their vaccinations, but eight more deaf individuals were vaccinated that day.

*(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

*(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

### **Deaf-Blind Accessibility**



The Kentucky Deaf-Blind Community study group subcommittee met on May 18 and the full study group met on June 8. Discussion during the meeting focused on options for Communication Cards and providing information and feedback to continue the development of the questionnaire that will be sent out to the community to help identify gaps in access to services. The Chair also updated the group on the progress of Deaf-Blind Community landing page as well as website accessibility and announced that the Deaf-Blind Resource Guide has been completed. It will be posted

on the landing page when it has been appropriately formatted for screen readers. The study group has requested a 6-month extension to complete the remaining projects, including a series of informational vlogs, which will also be posted on the Deaf-Blind landing page on the KCDHH website. In addition, the group will work on developing another fact sheet focusing on Deaf-Blind youth. Assuming the extension is granted at the July Commission meeting, the study group will meet again on September 7.

*(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

*(3.7(b) Research and expand opportunities to address information deprivation and isolation among deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

*(3.8(b) Compile information regarding programs, services and barriers that impact the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

## **NASADHH Meetings**



On April 14, May 10, and June 14, the Executive Director attended the National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NASADHH) virtual meetings.

In addition to electing new officers, key topics of interest included the following:

- Continuing with the virtual format for the upcoming TDI Conference as well as the NASADHH Conference; and
- Issues regarding the interpreting profession's response to the increased demand for interpreting in virtual settings and the ways in which that has impacted billing.

*(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

*(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*





## ACCESS CENTER ACTIVITIES

### ***Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Meeting***

The Interpreter I attended the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Board meeting on April 21, via Zoom. During the meeting, Board minutes were approved, plans for the upcoming 2021 National Conference “Re-Orienting” were discussed, and updates were received from CASLI regarding testing for deaf and hearing interpreters.

*(4.3 Educate interpreters and promote current interpreting standards.)*

### ***DCBS Collaboration Group Meeting***



The Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) Collaboration Group consists of members from DCBS, Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (KDBHDID) and KCDHH. This quarter, a new collaboration with Aetna SKY (Supporting Kentucky Youth) program was formed through the hard work and tenacity of the Program Administrator of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS).

Because of her efforts, there is now an opportunity to begin addressing gaps in services for Aetna members who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind.

On April 21 the DCBS Collaboration Group met with Aetna SKY point staff along with a representative from Seven Counties to learn about Aetna’s proposed plan regarding the Value-Added Benefit program for deaf and hard of hearing members. The proposed benefits would allow Aetna to (a) identify members with hearing loss and potential language deprivation, (b) better assess and communicate to providers the accommodations needed for them to fully benefit from covered services, (c) provide language mentors for children in the SKY program as an early intervention approach to prevent deprivation, and (d) develop a more coordinated approach to care (system of care). The Aetna SKY team collaboration will also help improve data gathering for deaf and hard of hearing children that move through the child welfare system under DCBS as well as addressing gaps and sharing resources to improve services. The DCBS Diligent Recruitment Specialist reported that information about deaf and hard of hearing services was included in the April Foster KY Newsletter and a survey was sent out to deaf and hard of hearing member families that are involved with DCBS to see how services can be improved.

On May 19, the Program Administrator of DHHS invited members of the DCBS Collaboration Group and Aetna SKY program to provide a brief report to the Mental Health Advisory Committee regarding the work that has been done.

On June 2, the group met to discuss the outline of the proposed budget for the Value-Added Benefit program that Aetna hopes to implement in 2022. The DCBS Diligent Recruitment Specialist reported that there were no responses to the survey that was sent out to deaf and

hard of hearing member families in regard to services. The DCBS liaison provided the current data for deaf or deaf-blind membered families as reported in “The Worker Information SysTEM” (TWIST). When that data is compared with Aetna’s data, differences in those numbers can be detected and reported to help identify gaps.

*(3.2(a) Advise state agencies and private committees, boards and taskforces in matters related to deaf and hard of hearing issues.)*

*(4.1 Use a comprehensive approach to coordinate communication access services.)*

*(4.4 Partner with public, private and state entities to improve policies regarding communication access.)*

## **KYRID Meetings**



The Interpreter I attended the Kentucky Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (KYRID) business meeting via Zoom on April 24. The purpose of the meeting was to update members on KYRID’s fall conference plans, vote for new officers, vote on revised bylaws, gather feedback regarding a new logo, and inform members of the formation of the new Credential Maintenance Program (CMP) Committee. As there was not a quorum, no voting could take place. One member did nominate individuals for officer positions; however, individuals must accept the nomination before moving forward. The President determined the best approach is to email all members about positions, position descriptions, and bylaws, then schedule another meeting to discuss and vote on these topics.

On May 18, the Interpreter Referral Specialist attended the KYRID Board meeting, at which members discussed items that were brought up during the KYRID business meeting on April 24. Board members identified potential candidates who may be interested in filling the vacant positions on the Board, and the KYRID President will reach out to those individuals to see if they are willing to serve. Board members also discussed the upcoming conference, which will be held in August at the Galt House in Louisville. The Board will soon begin revising the bylaws, as they need to be updated.

*(4.3 Educate interpreters and promote current interpreting standards.)*

## **KYRID CMP Committee**

On April 25, interested members of KYRID met with the CEU Coordinator to learn about the recently formed CMP Committee. Committee members will assist, market, and educate the organization’s members on procedures for acquiring continued educational units (CEUs) and update its members on any changes to the CMP developed by RID. A chairperson may be elected to serve as the sponsoring authority for CEUs as defined by RID. The Interpreter I attended this meeting for information gathering purposes. The group plans to meet again on July 1.

*(4.3 Educate interpreters and promote current interpreting standards.)*

## **CASLI Testing Site**



On May 6, KCDHH reopened its doors to eligible candidates for the National Interpreter Certification Exams. the Interpreter I notified the Center for the Assessment of Sign Language Interpretation (CASLI), so they could update their website, and contacted candidates on the waiting list to begin

scheduling exams. Currently testing is limited to Fridays only to ensure the site is thoroughly cleaned following the exams. This quarter, only one exam was scheduled; however, there are several more scheduled for next quarter.

*(4.2 Partner with national, state and local organizations to provide national certification opportunities.)*

### ***Kentucky Board of Interpreters Meeting***

On June 3, the Interpreter I attended the virtual Kentucky Board of Interpreters (KBI) meeting via Zoom. Previous meeting minutes and finances were approved, and the Board had an extensive debate regarding licensure limits for those who hold temporary status. They also engaged in an ongoing discussion about a question on the interpreter application regarding criminal background information. In addition, they are working toward having a more accessible website. The regulations are still under review, and the Board is appointing specific members to create a task force to determine the best solution.

*(4.3 Educate interpreters and promote current interpreting standards.)*





## TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

### ***TAP Advisory Board Meeting***

On April 22, the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) Advisory Board met via Zoom. KCDHH loaned iPads and mobile hot spots to those members without internet access, and the Program Coordinator assisted with training and equipment set-up to ensure that members were able to join the meeting. As a result, there was a quorum present, and the Advisory Board was able to conduct business. The Program Coordinator provided a statistical report of the TAP activities since its last meeting in October 2020 and informed the Board that there was an increase in the number of iPhones and iPads requested due to COVID-19 safety guidelines that included social distancing and wearing face masks. People needed FaceTime more than ever to help communicate with their families. The Executive Director stated that during the normal contract renewal period, finance efforts and government funding were focused on COVID-19 concerns. As a result, she had to file for emergency contract extensions.

TAP staff is also working on implementing new procedures for the database. In-person phone installations and troubleshooting were not permitted during the pandemic, so the Program Coordinator has been providing equipment training by phone. The Program Coordinator has determined that for all in-person equipment installations, in order to ensure the safety of all involved, the consumer and the interpreter must be willing to wear masks. She has conducted two in-person phone installations this quarter: installing a signaler system for a 75-year-old constituent in need of assistance, and assisting with an iPhone activation for another consumer, whose provider was only offering curbside service. She also showed the iPhone user how to include captions on phone conversations. Three Board members' terms expired June 30, and members were asked to recommend potential candidates to fill those upcoming vacancies. The Program Coordinator recorded a vlog announcing Board vacancies and explaining the application process. The next meeting will be held on October 21, 2021.

*(5.2 Maintain Partnerships with national organizations and the current Telecommunications Relay Provider to supply the most current and technologically advanced equipment and apps.)*

### ***KATS Network Advisory Council Meeting***



The Program Coordinator attended the Kentucky Assistive Technology Services (KATS) Network Advisory Council meeting on June 11 via Zoom. Updates included KATS Coordinating Center Updates, committee Assistive Technology (AT) Center and Statewide Hearing Aid Assistance and Reuse Program (SHARP) activities as well as Coordinating Center activities and the Coordinating and Assisting the Reuse of Assistive Technology (CARAT) project. Currently the SHARP program is only accepting donations and assisting with repairs when funding permits. The primary topics of interest were

the partnership with Kentucky School for the Blind Charitable Foundation for AT Equipment Demos and Loans and updates on the Learning Management System (LMS) used to manage training offerings for KATS and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). The OVR Accessibility Workgroup is working on updating the accessibility of government emails and internet, and they announced there will be two positions available: Accessibility Coordinator for OVR and Accessible Developer for the EWDC. The spotlight video was focused on Carl D. Perkins Center in Paintsville, KY. The next meeting will be held in September.

*(5.2 Maintain Partnerships with national organizations and the current Telecommunications Relay Provider to supply the most current and technologically advanced equipment and apps.)*





## INFORMATION, REFERRAL & ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

### ***CSEPP Meeting***

The Executive Director and Information Coordinators met with the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP) Access and Functional Needs Coordinator on April 1 via zoom. They reviewed their website and flyer targeting the deaf and hard of hearing community to make sure it is accessible. The Executive Director and Information Coordinators reviewed their website, advised them to make sure their website's videos are captioned, and encouraged them to record some American Sign Language (ASL) videos since the CSEPP's counties have a relatively large deaf and hard of hearing population.

*(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

### ***Governor's Office of Early Childhood Executive Director Meeting***



On April 28, the Executive Staff Advisor participated in the Governor's Office of Early Childhood (GOEC) Advisory Board meeting. Once again, the meeting was focused on the partnership between the GOEC and the Community Early Childhood Councils (CECC). The GOEC is often asked about the connection between the two, and GOEC staff explained that the CECC are the boots-on-the-ground leaders that are working in their respective communities daily to make changes in Kentucky's Kindergarten Readiness rates. One of the main priorities of the GOEC is to increase the kindergarten readiness rate in every county across the Commonwealth, and these 34 CECCs across the state collaborate with the GOEC to help achieve this. Each year when the councils complete a grant application and receive funding, they are able to look at the needs in their community and create strategies that helps improve kindergarten readiness there. Several CECC staff from around the state attended the meeting to give examples of what they will be doing this year in order to give Advisory Board members a better understanding of the process.

*(2.6 Advocate for equal access to education for deaf and hard of hearing individuals, cradle to grave.)*

*(3.2(a) Advise state agencies and private committees, boards and taskforces in matters related to deaf and hard of hearing issues.)*

*(3.8(b) Compile information regarding programs, services and barriers that impact the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

### ***Governor's Office of Early Childhood Shared Accountability Committee Meeting***

On June 10, the Executive Staff Advisor met with the Executive Director of the GOEC. The GOEC Executive Director requested the Executive Staff Advisor become a member of a committee created by the GOEC called the Shared Accountability Committee, and this meeting was called to explain why the committee was formed and what the vision was. Kentucky has a means to measure whether or not children are kindergarten ready but this only comes into play when they reach kindergarten age. GOEC hopes that this committee can collaborate to create ways to monitor and measure children from birth to kindergarten in order to improve Kentucky's Kindergarten Readiness numbers which are consistently at 50 percent.

The Executive Staff Advisor attended the first Shared Accountability Committee meeting on June 11. The focus of the meeting was to introduce the various members and their positions in the early childhood arena that make them a good fit for this committee. There was also discussion on the goal of improving Kentucky's Kindergarten Readiness numbers as well as the vision for how these committee meetings will continue.

*(2.6 Advocate for equal access to education for deaf and hard of hearing individuals, cradle to grave.)*

*(3.2(a) Advise state agencies and private committees, boards and taskforces in matters related to deaf and hard of hearing issues.)*

## **211 Presentation**



On April 28, the Information Coordinators for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing attended a Zoom presentation by Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD) focused on a service called Direct Connect ASL Now. Several Executive Directors from other state agencies also attended the meeting in addition to various organizations and 211 centers. Direct Connect ASL Now is a service provided by CSD for organizations, agencies, or businesses to partner together through contract agreements to better serve the deaf community by facilitating direct ASL communication rather than using VRS services. CSD will hire and train deaf individuals in those states with whom they have a contract, and those individuals will then be employed by the 211 centers. CSD will be responsible for training, quality assurance, monitoring calls, and providing statistical reports for 211 centers. 211 is a three digit phone number that individuals can call to be connected with programs and services that provide resources such as clothing, food, financial assistance, and other needs. Kentucky's 211 service is provided through United Way.

*(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

*(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

## **Hands & Voices Leader Facilitated Discussion**



On April 29, the Executive Staff Advisor participated in a facilitated discussion with Hands & Voices leaders entitled, "Supporting Families without Bias II – Organizational Considerations," which was facilitated by two Hands & Voices Headquarters staff members. The discussion focused on what it means to be unbiased at an organizational level and how to take the principles used in our individual bias/personal belief system and apply them in order to uphold Hands & Voices unbiased philosophy organizationally.

*(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

## **KAGC Lunch and Learn Meeting**



The Information Office Supervisor attended the Kentucky Association of Government Communicator's (KAGC) monthly Lunch & Learn Zoom meeting on May 5. A University of Kentucky Public Relations and Marketing veteran, who was also a television reporter, discussed what he had learned through the years and all the avenues of communication that can be used to promote your agency.

*(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

## **Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Conference**



The Executive Staff Advisor has been asked to be a part of the national 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDl) Conference planning committee for the second year. The first meeting of this committee took place on May 10, and the focus was the introduction of the committee members and the expectations of the committee as a whole. The conference will take place in Cincinnati March 13-15, 2022.

*(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

*(3.4(a) Partner with and advise local, state and national organizations to improve early identification of hearing loss.)*

## **EHDl Advisory Board Meeting**

On June 14, the Executive Staff Advisor attended EHDl Advisory Board meeting. Updates regarding new staff at the Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs (OCSHCN) were shared with the Board. One of the two Family 2 Family (F2F) positions has been left vacant; however, two new EHDl positions will be created and covered by the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) grant. The plan is for these two new positions to be held by parents or people connected to the deaf community working from home 20 hours a week, ideally covering eastern and western portions of the state. The listing is not yet available, but will be shared as soon as possible.

OCSHCN reported that hospitals are now required to enter follow up appointments in the KY Child database for babies that refer on Newborn Hearing Screening. Users and centers reporting data will be able to enter more information about referrals to early intervention programs to try to fill the gaps with data sharing. OCSHCN staff have been meeting and will continue to meet with the Department of Public Health (DPH) and First Steps staff to create more updates to the goals for increasing family involvement by at least 20% in Kentucky Hands & Voices. They are currently waiting for updates from a contact in Frankfort and hope to have that by the next meeting. There was also discussion related to starting to distribute Hands & Voices postcards as well as "Loss & Found" videos to hospitals to encourage follow up screening. This will continue to be considered. One of the current grant goals is to encourage deaf adult support, and Hands & Voices will create and air "Deaf and Hard of Hearing Hero Power Hour" monthly on Tuesday evenings on Facebook. During the power hour, deaf adults of different modalities/communication methods will be available to talk about their journey and answer questions from families and professionals.

The Part C Coordinator explained that telehealth is still being offered for hesitant families. Consideration is being given to continue teleintervention, but it has to be worked out with Medicaid. Discussions going forward include the potential for three modalities for treatment (virtual, in person, combo).

*(3.4(a) Partner with and advise local, state and national organizations to improve early identification of hearing loss.)*

*(3.8(b) Compile information regarding programs, services and barriers that impact the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

## **Video Explains Driver's Licensing Services Transitioning to Regional Offices**



On May 11, the Information Coordinator and the Commissioner of the Department of Vehicle Regulation participated in a video regarding the transitioning of Driver's Licensing Services to regional offices across the state. The deaf and hard of hearing community was informed about where to go to apply for or renew their driver's license. The REAL ID was also discussed in the video, as the new effective date has been pushed to May 3, 2023 at the federal level. The Executive Director of the Office of Public Affairs was on hand during the recording to ensure the information presented was accurate and clearly explained. The Interpreter Referral Specialist and another licensed interpreter provided clear ASL communication throughout the video. The Network Analyst II recorded the presentation on Zoom and added captioning for the community.

*(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

## **Protection & Advocacy meeting**



On May 20, the Executive Staff Advisor met with an advocate from Protection & Advocacy (P&A) to discuss advocacy steps for an educational situation in Northern Kentucky. P&A and KCDHH staff have both worked on the case, and this meeting was an effort to ensure services were not duplicated and to discuss additional resources and actions that might be helpful to those involved.

*(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

*(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

## **Zoom meeting with Aetna**



On May 26, the Information Coordinators and a representative of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Kentucky Chapter met virtually on Zoom with a representative from Aetna and a KCDHH Commissioner to review the content of Aetna's website. Aetna's goal was to ensure that the website was accessible in all formats and included appropriate access to accommodations. The website is for members to review and learn what Aetna offers. Overall, the website looked good, but the group did have a couple key recommendations for improvement. The group urged Aetna to find a different location on the website for deaf and hard of hearing consumers to request accommodations, rather than having that under the "non-discriminatory" disclaimer, and emphasized that it's important to have all videos captioned by professionals, as automated captioning is not always accurate.

*(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

*(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

## **KCDHH Enters KAGC Awards of Excellence**



On June 2, the Information Office Supervisor entered various KCDHH communication pieces in the Kentucky Association of Government Communicators 2021 KAGC Awards of Excellence. KAGC annually recognizes professional excellence in communications, materials, and campaigns by public

agencies. This competition was for work completed between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020. The following is a list of categories and KCDHH entries:

- **Audio: Long Program**  
KSR’s Meet Virginia
- **Video: Short Program**  
Signing Santa Visits Kentucky Kids via Zoom!
- **Video: Long Program**  
COVID-19: Epidemiology Series
- **Working Without a Net/Live Performance**  
Virginia Moore Signs Song during Governor’s Press Briefing
- **Web-Based Media**  
Coronavirus Accessible Communications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- **Social Media**  
Virginia Moore/Reb Kreutzer Governor’s Press Briefing Updates
- **Public Information Campaign**  
Coronavirus Accessible Communications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- **Innovation Award**  
KCDHH Mask Up for Communication

*(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

**KATLC Quarterly Meetings**



The Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation’s (KATLC) quarterly meeting, scheduled for June 10, was cancelled due to a death in the administrator’s family. The Information Coordinator attends these quarterly meetings, but this one has not yet been rescheduled.

*(3.2(a) Advise state agencies and private committees, boards and taskforces in matters related to deaf and hard of hearing issues.)*

**Public Relations Output**

The Office of Information Services focuses on Public Relations (PR) efforts and outreach activities to increase awareness of services offered by KCDHH. This quarter, **504,547** informational and public relations items were distributed.

| PR Dissemination               |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Method of Dissemination</i> | <i>Number Disseminated</i> |
| Hard Copy                      | 550                        |
| Blitz                          | 5,819                      |
| Social Media                   | 498,178                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | <b>504,547</b>             |

*(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)*

*(3.2(a) Advise state agencies and private committees, boards and taskforces in matters related to deaf and hard of hearing issues.)*

**Vlogs**

In the last quarter, KCDHH has released the following informative vlogs in ASL with captioning:

- Laurel and Henderson’s Vaccination Centers

- Shot of Hope
- TAP Advisory Board Vacancies
- Coffee Chat with Dr. Steven Stack
- Deaf Vaccine Day
- Real ID with Commissioner Matthew Cole of the Transportation Cabinet.

*(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

### **Database**

On June 11, several staff members met with the database developers via Zoom to discuss additional problems with the database, which need to be rectified. These issues were identified over time with repeated use of the database. At the conclusion of the meeting, the developers indicated they would evaluate the time needed to resolve these issues and submit a cost estimate to KCDHH's Executive Director.

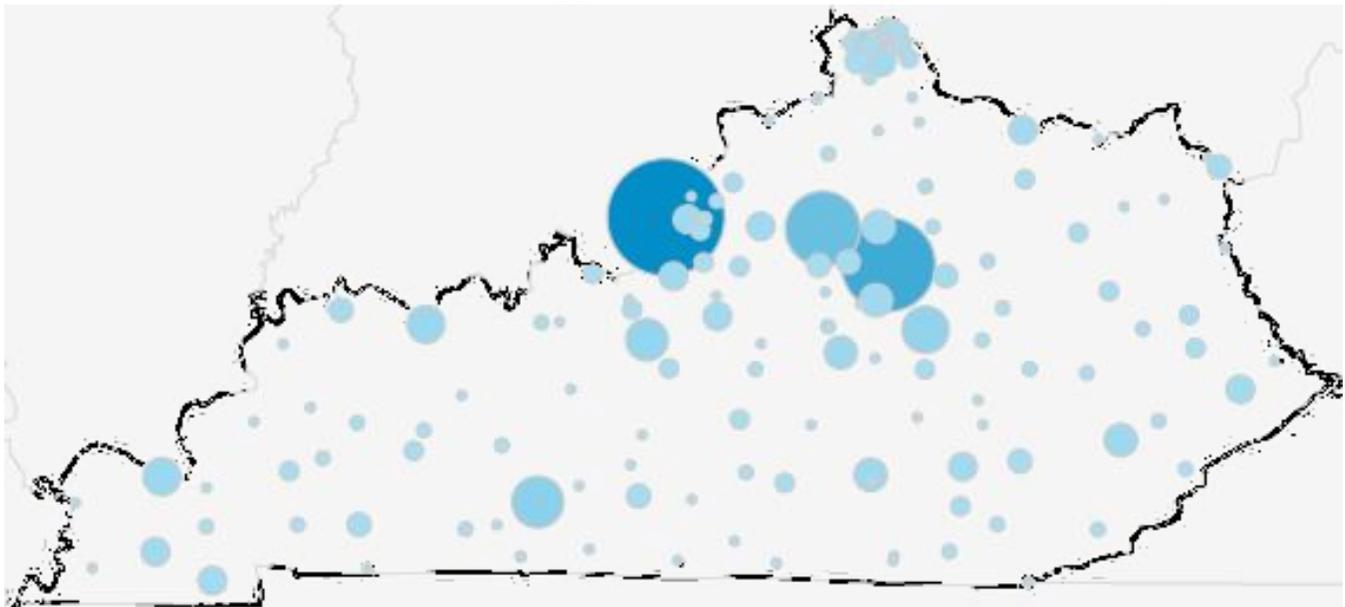
*(3.6(b) Foster partnerships to obtain and maintain valid deaf and hard of hearing demographic information for the state of Kentucky.)*

*(3.8(b) Compile information regarding programs, services and barriers that impact the deaf and hard of hearing community.)*

*(4.1) Use a comprehensive approach to coordinate communication access services.)*

### **KCDHH Web Counter Hits: April 1 – June 30, 2021**

The following image depicts the various cities and towns throughout Kentucky from which consumers visited our Web site. The bigger the circle, the more visits that circle represents.



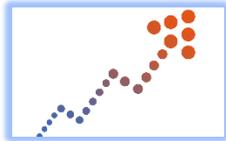
We have had 3,044 visitors from Kentucky this quarter, which represents a 44% decrease in visitors over the previous quarter (5,495). This significant drop is largely due to the fact that there were no new coronavirus vlogs published this quarter. Interest in the request forms (currently down due to the ongoing transition to the new online request system) as well as the TAP and DeaFestival web pages remains about the same as previous quarters.

## ***Continuing Education and Training***



The Executive Staff Advisor participated in an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) training titled “Higher Education and the ADA” on May 19. This training focused on how the ADA may be relevant in a number of post-secondary education situations, including the admissions process, academic adjustments and accommodations, architectural barriers, and housing. The webinar also reviewed the relevant federal regulations and developing case law in this postsecondary education area.

On June 3, the Executive Staff Advisor participated in an ADA training related to assembly areas. This webinar reviewed the requirements for assembly areas such as movie theaters, lecture halls, grandstands, performing arts centers, stadiums, and arenas under the ADA and Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Accessibility Standards. Presenters discussed provisions for wheelchair spaces, companion seats, accessible routes, designated aisle seats, bleacher seating, assistive listening systems, and press boxes. Frequently asked questions and common sources of confusion were also discussed.



The Interpreter I attended the virtual “2021 Deaf in Healthcare Summit for Interpreters, Connecting Dots to Ascend,” April 16 -18. This conference was held via Zoom. Workshops attended include the following: “How doctors think: Why did they ask those questions,” “Panel: Racial Disparities and Experiences in Healthcare,” “The Science Behind Medical Interpreting,” and “Reframing Systemic Change in Healthcare.” This Summit provided 14 hours of CEUs required by RID for professional development.



Throughout the quarter, the Executive Director has met with staff virtually on a bi-weekly basis (schedule permitting) to check in with staff, ensure communication lines remain open, and maintain accountability, as the majority of the staff has been telecommuting. On June 11, COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, and on June 23, the entire staff met in person for the first time since government offices were closed in March, 2020. While many staff members will continue to telecommute two or more days a week, the Executive Director has indicated she plans to continue to meet with staff in person moving forward. Items on the agenda typically include department updates, progress reports on new or ongoing projects, issues or concerns related to working remotely, and an informal open forum, allowing staff members to share information related to the deaf and hard of hearing community as well as good/bad news of a more personal nature in order to maintain a sense of connection and community.