

# COMMUNICATOR

KENTUCKY COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
632 Versailles Road \* Frankfort, Kentucky 40601 \* [kcdhh.ky.gov](http://kcdhh.ky.gov) \* 800-372-2907

38th Year  
Spring 2020

## “Sign” of the Times...



*Virginia L. Moore*  
*Executive Director*

I saw this statement the other day, “I am not going to add another year to my birthday because I have not lived it in 2020.” Wow, so true. At first I laughed, and then I sighed because it IS true...yet, NOT true. The world as we knew it is no longer! We are in a new world – one that is sad, destructive, depressing,

oppressive, heavy with the air of death, and yet we have hope! Hope for a better world! We have the opportunity to right so many wrongs and design our world to be hopeful, supportive, encouraging, and alive.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) hit the United States like a freight train. We’d heard about this mysterious virus from other parts of the world and thought we were immune, because after all, this is America, land of opportunity, prosperity and health, right?

Kentucky’s first case was identified in early March, after which Governor Beshear gave his first press conference and declared a state of emergency. KCDHH is mandated to “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,” so we immediately reached out to the Governor’s office to request that an interpreter be provided as the Governor explained COVID-19. This was the first time the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) community truly experienced equal access to the Governor’s office, and we will be forever grateful that the door is now open.

COVID-19 information has been confusing and constantly evolves as testing has become more widespread and new data is received. That confusion is even more prevalent among the DHH community, due to the unique challenges presented by the recommendations published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Citizens are strongly encouraged to practice thorough

handwashing, maintain social distancing (six feet apart), and use face masks to curb the spread of the disease and reduce the death rate; however, two of these requirements have proved to be particularly challenging for DHH. While social distancing makes it harder to hear and read lips, standard face masks make lip-reading impossible. KCDHH is working to address this issue, and while there’s no perfect solution, we have been making progress toward obtaining clear masks. Clear masks can be difficult to clean, tend to fog up and, in some cases, may only be used once before being discarded; however, we are working with local entities that may be able to provide clear, fog-free masks that can be cleaned. One of the challenges with this issue is that it’s not just the DHH users who need these masks, it’s the people with whom they interact, which makes distribution more complicated. World pandemics rarely occur more than once in a lifetime, so we are learning as we go, dealing with each new challenge as it presents itself.

### 2020: the year of “Good Vision”

The vision for 2020 has been scary, confusing, confining, and unpredictable. Can we recover? The struggle to navigate daily life in the shadow of COVID-19 has multiple areas of impact including our schools, places of employment, and our interaction with friends and loved ones. Will our children go back to school or will “school” continue to take place in our homes? It has been a challenge for most if not all parents to educate their children at home through Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI), and that challenge is compounded when there are barriers to communication. Ninety percent of DHH children are born to hearing parents, many of whom are not fluent in American Sign Language (ASL). In addition, some components of NTI are often internet-dependent, and while that may not be an issue for those who live close to urban areas, internet service in rural areas is often unreliable at best or, in some

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# “Sign” of the Times...

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cases, non-existent. At the same time, many business have closed their doors, creating the largest unemployment ratio Kentucky has ever experienced; we were asked to not visit our loved ones who are seniors in nursing homes and long term care facilities, as they are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19; and the wonderful experience of childbirth and the addition of new family members could not be shared with those we love.

**In order to look past our difficulties and have a clearer vision of our present and our future, rose-colored glasses may be our best defense.**

In the midst of all this, families stayed home, together, without the interruptions and distractions of work and other responsibilities. Laptops and iPads were provided for several students to assist with NTI. Teachers pulled together, supporting parents via the internet and banding together to do drive through parades, offering support and encouragements to students. Doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers stayed on the frontlines, leaving their own homes and families to care for ours. Unlikely heroes have worked to keep us all safely quarantined in our homes: grocery stores continued to keep their doors open and shelves stocked, making sure we had enough food; volunteers packed food and delivered meals to children and seniors who would normally eat in schools and seniors centers; businesses and restaurant servers continue to provide curbside services, as we slowly move to reopen and restore our economy.

### Do we have a vision for the future?

We are all looking forward to a time when we can go back to our old normal, but until then, we need to develop a new normal – one that includes COVID-19. Doctors and scientists are working hard to develop a vaccine and treatment, but it may not happen this year. As we move forward into this new normal, we need to cultivate patience and understanding, taking time to communicate with each other, be present with each other, and support each other.

**We are ALL in this TOGETHER!**

## Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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502-573-2604 (V/TTY) \* 800-372-2907 \* 502-416-0607 (VP)

### Staff

Virginia Moore, *Executive Director*

Tashina Crowe, *Interpreter I*

Anita Dowd, *Executive Staff Advisor*

Jessica Endler Smith, *Administrative Specialist II*

Vacant, *Policy Specialist*

Emily Kimbell, *Information Coordinator for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing*

Elise Kitchen, *Executive Secretary II*

Rachel Morgan, *Executive Staff Interpreter*

Blake Noland, *Information Coordinator for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing*

Jayna Oakley, *Information Office Supervisor*

Jim Rivard, *Network Analyst II*

Rachel Rodgers, *Interpreter Referral Specialist*

Toni Jo Stinson, *Document Processing Specialist I*

Vacant, *Program Coordinator*

# Deaf & Hard of Hearing COVID-19 Communication Card

## Symptoms



Fever



Cough



Tired and Weak



Runny Nose



Stuffy Nose



Diarrhea



Body Aches



Sore Throat



Headache

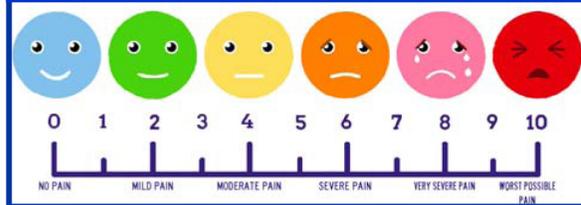


Not Hungry



Hard to Breathe

## How do you feel?



## How long have you had symptoms?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14

Minutes   Hours   Days  
Weeks   Months   Years

## Tips for Health Care Providers

- ➔ Get the persons attention and make eye contact before speaking.
- ➔ Speak normally and at a natural pace, unless you speak very quickly.
- ➔ Remember, if you are wearing a mask it will be impossible to lip read, so...
- ➔ Repeat, rephrase, or write down your request.
- ➔ Know that while hearing aids/cochlear implants may improve hearing, many wearers still may not be able to understand all or parts of what you say.
- ➔ Be patient. :-)

Need more DHH COVID-19 Communication Cards? You can print them here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/y8psy66j>



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[kcdhh@kcdhh.ky.gov](mailto:kcdhh@kcdhh.ky.gov)

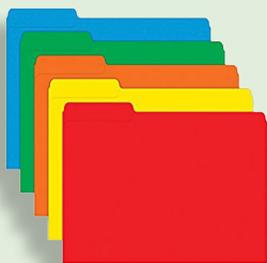
*Due to  
COVID-19,  
this year's  
DeaFestival  
had to be  
cancelled.  
Stay tuned!  
We promise  
an even  
bigger celebration  
in 2022!*



# DEAFESTIVAL KENTUCKY®

KCDHH is an agency of the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

**Want  
to Know  
What We've  
Been Up to?**

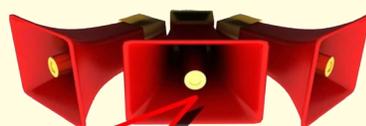


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