

Attendance

Present: Melanie McKay-Cody, Gina Schonthaler, Lori Michel, Robert Weatherly, Jim Deister, Robert Maile, Gregory Heller, Beth Ward, Mary Hughes, Suzanne Dennis, Kim Weidler, Teri Sturgeon, Eileen Honors, Kim Aeillo

Absent: Mike Donnelly, Kim Symansky, Candace Cobb

Commission Staff: Rebecca Rosenthal, Megan Essary

Minutes: Audrey Walters

Real Time Captioner: Barbara Hoskinson

Interpreters: Vicki Scales, Heidi Benham, Tim Anderson

Guests: Bill Fansler, Dorothy Fansler, Jack Cooper, Ann Cooper, Rocky Nichols

Call to order

10:00 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

The following changes will be made to the minutes of the October, 2007 Commission meeting:

- 1) Each page will have a header with the name of the Commission, date of the meeting and page number. The approved minutes will be disseminated to Commission members.
- 2) Hearing Aid Ad Hoc Committee Report: Add "Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City has already approved hearing aid coverage. It was recommended that the ad hoc committee use Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City as a model to develop policy for hearing aid coverage."
- 3) 25th Anniversary of KCDHH: Change Deaf Day at the Capitol to Deaf *and Hard of Hearing* Day at the Capitol.
- 4) Public Comments: Add "KAD sent a letter of resignation from the ad hoc committee to some of the Commission members. The letter is attached to these minutes."
- 5) New Business: Change "Suzanne nominated herself..." to "Suzanne volunteered to be..."
- 6) Announcements: Add "Community Emergency Response Team" to the acronym CERT.

Kim made a motion to approve the October minutes as corrected. Suzanne seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Program

Rocky Nichols, Executive Director of the Disability Rights Center (DRC) of Kansas gave a short presentation about the DRC and the services it provides. He distributed copies of two pamphlets. The first is a general agency pamphlet that outlines the DRC's services and the second pamphlet describes the Kansas Client Assistance Program.

The Disability Rights Center is a 501c3 non-profit agency that is federally funded. It is a protection and advocacy agency. The DRC provides intake and assessment, legal representation, advocacy representation, self-advocacy and information and referral. Since 2003, the caseload of DRC has increased while the number of referrals it makes to other agencies has declined. The Kansas Client Assistance Program serves any Kansan who receives services funded under the federal Rehabilitation Act. The DRC is investigating the feasibility of using video clips on its website to assist consumers who may have difficulty with text format. The DRC website is www.drckansas.org. The toll-free TDD number is (877) 335-3725.

Committee/Advisory Report

Executive Director's report (Rebecca Rosenthal)

1. The last meeting of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children's Bill of Rights ad hoc committee focused the feedback that was received. The next meeting will be February 8. New Commission member Teri Sturgeon is invited to participate. Once the best effort document is finished, the committee will decide who to give it to so that individual or group can take the Bill of Rights to the legislature. The goal is for the committee to have the document by the April Commission meeting.
2. KCDHH and the Interpreter Advisory Council have decided that the KQAS needs revision. It is not equal to the National Interpreter Certification (NIC) test. The NIC is under the umbrella of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). The NIC is 150 questions and covers a variety of topics such as Deaf culture, history, and linguistics. The KQAS has 50 questions and the questions are generally situational. KCDHH would not administer the test but would give candidates information regarding where they could take the test. The candidates could choose either a pencil and paper version or a computerized version of the test. Rebecca proposes that effective August 2008, interpreter training program graduates should take the NIC written test rather than the KQAS written test. If the Commission members feel the deadline is too soon, students could have the option of the KQAS or NIC test.
3. Commission members received a progress report on the fiscal years 2007 and 2008 initiatives. The format of the progress report has been revised.
4. The KCDHH website continues to be updated. If possible, a Vlog may be added to the site for people who prefer to receive information in sign language.

Interpreter Representative (Kim Weidler)

Kim Weidler attended an Interpreter Education Task Force meeting on November 2. It was determined that the period of time that would be required to set up a Bachelor of Arts degree in interpreting would be longer than previously expected. The meeting focused on alternative ways of increasing the number of interpreters in the state. It was decided that future meetings of the Task Force would be held at different universities and colleges around the state. This will give the Task Force an opportunity to visit potential sites for a future B.A. program. The next meeting will be on January 25 at Cowley Community College.

Approved 4-11-08

Hearing Aid Ad Hoc Committee (Eileen Honors, Bob Weatherly)

Eileen, Bob, Rebecca and audiologist Dr. Tim Steele met with Rep Kiegerl this week. He suggested that the Insurance Commission write its own version of the hearing aid bill that it would be willing to support since it did not support the bill as it was proposed. The bill would be written in general terms to suggest that insurance companies offer hearing aid coverage for an additional premium. If the bill passed, a “rules and regulations” phase would then determine the details. If the bill goes to legislation, consumers will need to be found who are willing to testify for the bill. The bill may be presented in this session as an amendment to another bill. Once the bill is developed, it will be sent to the ad hoc committee which will then share it with the other Commissioners.

Twenty-fifth Anniversary of KCDHH and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Day (Gregory Heller)

Celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of KCDHH and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Day at the Capitol will be on March 6. Rebecca has drafted a formal letter to the governor requesting a proclamation announcing the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Commission. Gina would like to give an award to Governor Sebelius in appreciation for letting Deaf and Hard of Hearing Day take place in the capitol annually. This year’s theme for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Day at the Capitol is “See Through the Eyes of a Child”. Gina is trying involved students at the Kansas School for the Deaf by asking them to perform skits and provide their original artwork. It was suggested that children statewide be involved. Melanie will provide a list of state deaf education programs to Gina so that more children can contribute. Gina would like to promote Sound Start and will contact Carol Busch, the chairperson of the Sound Start committee. There are 15-16 booths for exhibitors.

Old Business

- 1) Policy and Procedures Committee Chair: Suzanne volunteered to be chair for the Policy and Procedure committee. The committee now comprises Suzanne, Rebecca, Greg, and Lori. The first task will be to review the by-laws. The committee will be on-going.
- 2) Written test for interpreter certification candidates: Kim made a motion that the KQAS written test be replaced by the National Interpreter Certification test effective August, 2008. Teri seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Response to public comment regarding skill and certification level of Wichita interpreters: A fact sheet describing the functions of the Commission will be shared with agencies such as KAD and KID. The fact sheet states that KCDHH “...cannot be a policing agency...” and that there is a grievance policy in place regarding the code of professional conduct.

2. Fiscal Year 2009 Goals: The commission members were asked to submit suggestions for goals for 2009. Suggestions should be submitted to Rebecca by Monday, March 10. Comments may be regarding existing or new goals. The Executive Committee will review the suggestions and comment at the April Commission meeting.
3. State Fiscal Year 2007 Annual Report: Rebecca will accept comments regarding the draft of the report through Monday, January 14.

Public Comment

Bill Fansler: He is past commission member and has seen many changes over the past five years, particularly regarding new technology such as video phones and video relay. Can the Commission work with Sorenson Communications to distribute more equipment to physicians, hospitals, and agencies in order to increase their accessibility?

Ann Cooper: Shane Dundas was not able to attend the meeting but sent comments via e-mail to Ann so that she could make public comment. He sent a copy of his e-mail to the Commission members. In his e-mail, Mr. Dundas mentioned concerns regarding interpreter regulations, training curriculum for law enforcement (particularly regarding the use of taser guns), the size of the KCDHH staff and the need for more outreach and the KQAS. Ms. Cooper will be attending a KAD board meeting on February 2 and will share information about the Disability Rights Center with the other board members.

Announcements

Melanie: The National Association of State Directors for Special Education will hold training in Overland Park on February 11 and 12. The meeting will be related to meeting the needs of Deaf and hard of hearing students.

Gina: Two styles of shirts are available that can be embroidered with a KCDHH logo so that Commission members may wear them when making appearances at events. She has information regarding colors, styles, sizes and prices. Interested members can contact Gina. Gina remains in remission of her cancer.

Lori: In the future, e-mails to Commission members regarding Commission business should be sent by the Monday preceding the next Commission meeting. This will give members time to review their e-mails before the meeting. If a member wants changes made to the meeting minutes, having a precise wording prepared will expedite the flow of meetings.

Action Items

- Commission members will submit suggestions for Commission goals for fiscal year 2009.
- Commission members will submit comments regarding the draft of the 2007 Fiscal Year Report
- The executive committee will consider public comment to determine if action is necessary.

Motion for adjournment made by Mary. The motion was seconded by Kim. Meeting adjourned.