

KANSAS COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
QUARTERLY MEETING  
7-25-08

1

**Attendance**

Present: Lori Michel, Gregory Heller, Teresa Sturgeon, Candace Cobb, Melanie McKay-Cody, Kim Weidler, Mary Hughes, Suzanne Dennis, Kim Aeillo

KCDHH Staff: Rebecca Rosenthal, Audrey Walters

Interpreters: Gerry Richardson, Vicki Scales, Debie Seiler, Dawn Misemer

Guests/Public: Joyce Hightower and Tim Anderson (Kansas Telecommunications Access Program), Bill and Dorothy Fansler, Lloyd Hull (SRS Legal Representative)

Real Timer: Jane Piles

**Call to order:** 10:05

**Approval of Minutes**

Page 5, Bob Maile's announcement should read "The William J. Marra Museum...", not Merrill. Greg moved to approve the minutes as corrected, Mary seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**Program:** Telecommunications Access Program (TAP)

Speakers: Joyce Hightower and Tim Anderson. Packets of information about TAP were distributed to Commission members. Ms. Hightower is the director of the Kansas Relay Service Inc. (KRSI) and TAP. Mr. Anderson is the coordinator for TAP. TAP provides telecommunications equipment for people who have one or more of a variety of disabilities (for example: hard of hearing, deafness, or mobility, cognitive or vision disabilities). Two recent equipment additions to the program are the CapTel (Captioned Telephone) and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs). These were the items that consumers requested be added to the program. The focus for the year is to continue to work on the deaf-blind category. There is not a wide range of equipment available for this category at this time. TAP is a voucher program and it uses several vendors that provide the equipment. Its first voucher was issued in 1997. TAP pays for the equipment but the equipment is the property of the consumer. A consumer may apply to receive equipment from the program once every four years.

## **Committee/Advisory Reports**

### Executive Director (Rebecca)

1. **Bill of Rights:** The final document of the ad hoc committee's Children's Bill of Rights has been completed. The Department of Education's Deaf Education Guidelines are still being developed and have not been posted for public comment yet. The committee has decided that if the Department of Education prints its guidelines, the Bill of Rights document would be available on the KCDHH and KAD websites as a source of information for parents. If the Department of Education does not print its document, then Kansas Association of the Deaf would likely take the Bill of Rights to the legislature.
2. **KQAS Update** (with Lloyd Hull, SRS Legal Representative)
  - a. Members of the Interpreter Advisory Council want to know if the Commission has the authority to regulate interpreters. SRS Legal states that we do have the authority with the understanding that it is a certification process. The Council also wants to know if KCDHH can mandate that all interpreters to register with KCDHH regardless of credentials. After much discussion, no final answer was provided regarding whether a registry can be mandated. KCDHH is allowed to create a registry that lists all KQAS certified interpreters. The registry may also have a link to the RID website that lists all nationally certified interpreters. The issues of mandating a registry and whether licensure should be required in Kansas will continue to be addressed in future meetings.
  - b. The Fair Hearing process is being developed. All KQAS certified interpreters will be on the same CEU cycle by 2011. In August, Rebecca will send the interpreters reminder letters about the CEU cycle deadline. A set of standards will also be posted that explains the certification levels.
3. **Director's Goals:** Rebecca has five goals for Fiscal Year 2009. A list of the goals was distributed to Commission members. At the October meeting, Rebecca will provide a list of workshop collaborations to date.
4. **Update on April's action items:** At the April meeting there was public concern that there were no RID testing centers nearby for paper and pencil written test (as opposed to the computer-based test). Recently, Sign Language Specialists in the Kansas City area became a test site. After December, RID is will discontinue offering the paper and pencil version of the written test.
5. **Georgia Contract:** The last group of Georgia interpreter candidates is being evaluated and they should be finished by the end of August. A new Deaf evaluator for the KQAS has been trained. Next week, two new Message Equivalency evaluators will be trained.

Interpreter's Report (Kim Weidler)

1. The Interpreter Education Task Force has divided into groups to address continuing education, the B.A. program and public awareness. Establishing a B.A. program will be several years in the future.
2. The Interpreter Advisory Council update was covered in Rebecca's Executive Director's Report.
3. RID had its conference in Houston in June. There were about 10 or 12 people from Kansas in attendance. The next conference will be in Philadelphia. There were three tracks in the conference: legal, medical and CDI (Certified Deaf Interpreter).

Hearing Aid Ad Hoc Committee (Rebecca for Bob Weatherly)

On the national level, there is a proposed national tax credit for the purchase of hearing aids. The legislature is proposing a tax credit of \$1000 for two hearing aids or \$500 for one. Rebecca will provide Commissioners with the information she obtained from a newsletter.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Day at the Capitol (Rebecca for Gina)

A committee for 2009 is being formed and more community-based organizations will be involved in the planning. The Kansas Association of the Deaf will probably be included. Kim Aeillo suggests inviting the Kansas Speech, Language and Hearing Association (KSHA) to be involved.

Sound Beginnings/Sound Start (Kim Aeillo)

1. Sound Beginnings received \$170,000 from the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the Kansas Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI). The primary goal is to develop a web-based module to allow the Sound Beginnings system to be integrated with the larger Kansas child health system. The secondary goal is to do exploratory studies regarding follow-up rates.
2. Sound Beginnings also received a \$150,000 grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration. The focus is to reduce loss to follow-up from the newborn hearing screening program by utilizing community audiologists and family consultants.
3. Sound Start continues to have monthly committee meetings which Carol Busch is attending. They are reviewing assessments, curriculum and resources. They are also developing a flow chart for requests for proposals and legislature. They are going to determine if it is appropriate for them to apply for the Early Childhood Block Grant for funding for Sound Start.

4. Carol Busch is on a committee for the State Department of Education and the Deaf Education Guidelines. When the final document is ready, it will be posted on the KSDE website for public comment.

Mental Health/Substance Abuse/Independent Living (Suzanne Dennis)

1. Suzanne attended a conference in Washington D.C. for state mental health coordinators. Kansas was recognized as having one of the best mental health programs in the nation relating to having services for the Deaf and hard of hearing.
2. Suzanne attended another conference for National Counselors for the Deaf Association. She is now president of that organization. The 2010 conference will be at the Kansas State School for the Deaf.
3. The American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association (ADARA) will have its 2009 conference in San Antonio.
4. Suzanne has a new brochure for her program that she developed.
5. Bonnie Goben has resigned from her position with the Resource Center for Independent Living (RCIL).

Rehabilitation Services/Transition (Mary Hughes)

Mary recently attended a national conference in New York for rehabilitation counselors for the Deaf and hard of hearing. The main issue of the conference was the transition program from age 18-21 years. Counselors are focusing on the kids who will go to college and the kids who are not planning on going to college may not get much information. There will be a statewide transition meeting in Kansas City next month and they'll discuss that issue there.

**Old Business**

1. Bylaws: After the last meeting of the policy and procedure committee, Suzanne requested feedback from the Commissioners regarding the latest draft. The committee then sat down with the feedback to finalize the draft. A final draft will be distributed to Commissioners so it can be voted on at the October meeting.
2. Fiscal Year 2009 goals: Suzanne moved to approve the fiscal year 2009 goals as printed, Melanie seconded. Motion passed.

**New Business**

The Kansas Relay Service Incorporated (KRSI) needs to have a representative from the Commission to replace Mary Hughes. KRSI requested that Becky appoint a commissioner to go to the meetings. The representative will need to be savvy about technology. The appointment will be made at the October meeting.

**Public Comment**

Bill Fansler: The Topeka Association of the Deaf will have its annual picnic on Saturday, August 16. The food will be provided by Hy-Vee and the cost is \$10.00 per person. There will be a cash drawing. The picnic will be at the big gates shelter house. Four sponsors will have booths with information. The sponsors are Hamilton Relay, CSD VRS, Hands On VRS, and Sorenson.

**Announcements**

Lori: A copy of a laypersons' guide to Roberts Rules from Bob Maile was distributed to commission members.

Melanie: Melanie will be moving to Missouri to teach ASL at William Woods University. This will also allow her to continue to work on her degree in American Indian Sign Language.

Kim Aeillo: Kim will be moving to Guam. She will do consulting work. Her last day at the Department of Health and Environment is August 22.

Teresa: Her son went to applied for a job at a major company. It has come to her attention that the company does not use certified interpreters and the Deaf people who work there are not aware that they can ask for certified interpreters. The employees who are deaf do not attend weekly meetings either because they do not understand the interpreter or because there is no interpreter available. This may be an example of doing harm. Teresa will be pursuing this issue.

**Adjournment:** 1:00 p.m.

The next Commission meeting will be held on October 10 in Olathe at the Kansas School for the Deaf. Lunch will be provided, followed by an opportunity to visit the William J. Marra Museum.

**Action Items**

1. Rebecca will send a letter to KQAS certified interpreters reviewing the CEU cycle and policy.
2. At the October meeting, Rebecca will provide Commissioners a list of workshops that KCDHH has collaborated on so far this year.
3. Rebecca will provide Commissioners with the information regarding the proposed federal tax credit for the purchase of hearing aids.
4. Rebecca will distribute the final draft of the by-laws to Commissioners before the October meeting.
5. Rebecca will consult with KRSI to determine if appointing Dennis Selznick as a KCDHH representative would be a conflict of interest.
6. At the October meeting, a representative will be appointed to the KRSI board.