

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Committee on Deaf-Blind Issues
Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2017

Members Present

Ed Gervasoni, Chair
Chris Desborough
Cindi Robinson
Carmen Green
Diane McElmury
Mary Hartle

Members Absent

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers, Admin. Assist
*Teleconferenced

Guests Present

Sheri Collins, ACDHH

Call to Order and Introductions

Ed Gervasoni, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:20 am in the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) Conference Room, 100 N. 15th Avenue, Suite 104, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made and a quorum was present.

Approval of the December 7, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Cindi Robinson moved to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2016 Committee on Deaf-Blind Issues meeting. Diane McElmury seconded the motion. Mary Hartle requested that the minutes reflect Diane McElmury's attendance at the meeting. The amended minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP) Update

Ed Gervasoni stated he forwarded a list of questions to Ann Levy, James Rice, and Susanne Hogan regarding the NDBEDP program. Ed Gervasoni stated he sent the following questions:

1. How many people have been served in AZ since the start of the program?

2. How many served so far this year?
3. What are the demographics by age and geographic location?
4. What are the averages of people choosing portable equipment over non-portable? (for example desk top computers over laptops)
5. What is the average training time?
6. How quickly does the equipment become old? Is there loaner equipment available when one is waiting for repairs or replacements?
7. What are the criteria for determining success?
8. Has satisfaction surveys been developed and distributed? If so what are the results showing?

Ed Gervasoni stated two individuals James Rice served individuals in Phoenix and northern Arizona, and Susanne Hogan served individuals in southern Arizona. Ed Gervasoni stated that committee members were welcome to send additional questions to Lindsey Powers, who would distribute to the committee.

SSP Services in Arizona Follow-Up

Ed Gervasoni stated he forwarded questions to Julie Stylinski, Ann Levy, Carolyn J., Cindy Walsh, and Brittney regarding the SSP Services in Arizona. Mr. Gervasoni stated he received a response from Julie Stylinski, which were distributed to the committee. Carmen Green stated Julie Stylinski's statistics were consistent with the statistics the Arizona Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) received and noted the Community Outreach Program for the Deaf (COPD) numbers were similar. Ed Gervasoni inquired whether the committee would be interested in receiving additional information. Cindi Robinson stated she was surprised that clients did not report using Support Service Providers (SSP) to assist in paying their bills. Ed Gervasoni noted many individuals did not require assistance paying bills due to technology and online payment methods. He noted individuals did need assistance when going to the gym, for example, because they needed assistance using the gym equipment. Cindi Robinson inquired whether Carmen Green was familiar with the number of clients served in Tucson. Carmen Green stated she did not remember the actual numbers, although the statistics were included in ACDHH's budget proposal. Mary Hartle suggested Ed Gervasoni send a letter to Ann Levy requesting the information regarding the SSP program. Ed Gervasoni stated he forwarded the questions to Ann Levy previously, and Ms. Levy indicated that she would provide the information. Carmen Green stated in an email from July 2016, Ann Levy indicated that 35 individuals had been served, and 17 individuals were currently being served and had requested 10 hours of service a week.

SSP Training Curriculum Update

Carmen Green stated she included the SSP Training Curriculum on flash drives, which she would distribute to the SSP Statewide Services Task Force members. Ms. Green noted HKNC agreed to provide feedback on the curriculum as a more neutral organization. She stated HKNC might potentially provide the first SSP training on July 20-22 or July 27-29, 2017. Carmen Green stated current SSPs would be encouraged to attend the training and receive the certification. She stated the training would provide certification to SSP's and would support salaries commensurate with their skills. Carmen Green stated if an individual receiving community based training, a SSP could provide that service. She stated the ACDHH would work with AHCCCS to determine the agency that should be responsible for funding those services. Cindi Robinson inquired whether the \$192,000 in additional funds came out of the telephone tax. Carmen Green stated the \$192,000 came from the telephone land line tax, and noted the ACDHH was completely funded from that tax. Ms. Green noted those funds were part of the commission's appropriated funds. Cindi Robinson inquired whether those funds could be swept. Carmen Green stated those funds had been swept in the past, although the funds had not been swept in several years. Ed Gervasoni stated the funds were released several years prior to develop a SSP program training. Mr. Gervasoni stated the ACDHH partnered with Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in order to pull down federal funding. He noted the Attorney General later indicated that RSA offered short term services and SSP service were long time services, so the two agencies could not partner. Ed Gervasoni noted that ACDHH received their funds, but did not use the funds, and the funds were swept.

Carmen Green stated if the commission wanted to use the previously received interpreter funds, the associate would be required to partner with a university or college. She stated the ACDHH had discussed SSP training with Phoenix College, although the commission would be prepared to move forward either way. Cindi Robinson inquired whether Cathy Kirscher would be willing to provide the feedback regarding the SSP training. Ed Gervasoni suggested the commission receive feedback from a deaf-blind individual or someone else in the field. Carmen Green stated Cathy Kirscher was approached to provide feedback, although she turned down the offer. Ms. Green noted HKNC would identify the individual appropriate to provide feedback. Carmen Green stated within the next couple of weeks, she would follow up with HKNC to receive feedback regarding the SSP Training Curriculum. Mary Hartle inquired whether each task force member would receive a copy of the SSP Training Curriculum. Carmen Green stated each task force member would receive a copy of the training and if any member

had difficulty accessing the information, to let her know. Carmen Green stated a DVD was also developed, although she did not have a copy to distribute. Chris Desborough inquired whether the DVDs included audio description. Carmen Green stated she was unsure whether the DVDs included audio description. Carmen Green stated the curriculum allowed the instructor providing the SSP Trainings to add additional information. Ms. Green stated the HNKC would likely provide the first SSP Training, and the ACDHH would then offer trainings once a year potentially. Ed Gervasoni inquired whether HKNC would create an endorsement to endorse the SSP Training program. Carmen Green stated the National Community of Practice had requested the ACDHH participate on their committee, in which one of their goals was to develop a national training effort. Ed Gervasoni stated several agencies such as Perkins School for the Blind and HKNC would partner and develop task forces. Mary Hartle inquired whether there was a subcommittee hearing in the Senate of Health and Welfare of Appropriations. Carmen Green stated Sherri Collins would share any further movement with the committee. Ed Gervasoni stated there was a Deaf and Hard of Hearing online SSP training and curriculum through the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Mr. Gervasoni noted HKNC could glean the best practices from different organizations or state programs.

SSP Professional Development Discussion

Cindi Robinson inquired whether the ACDHH had considered partnering with agencies or organizations in addition to community colleges. Carmen Green stated the funding portion required the ACDHH partner with a college or university, although the ACDHH could consider partnering with agencies at a later date if the funding allowed. Ms. Robinson inquired whether community colleges offered credentialed SSP training, rather than SSP certifications. Carmen Green stated the ACDHH and the community colleges would consider the type of credential or certification offered. Ed Gervasoni stated some organizations, such as the HKNC, might be able to offer endorsements on the SSP training. Mary Hartle thanked Carmen Green and the ACDHH for working towards a SSP training program and noted the committee would be pleased to assist the ACDHH in that goal.

SSP Statewide Services Task Force Update

Chris Desborough stated the SSP Statewide Services Task Force continued to support the ACDHH's budget request efforts and attended the commission's Day at the Capitol. Chris Desborough stated the task force was making efforts to be established as a non-profit group. Mr. Desborough noted the task force had lost some members and would engage in membership recruitment efforts. Mary Hartle stated the National Federation of the Blind

of Arizona (NFBA) supported the ACDHH budget request and noted the organization attended their own NFBA Day at the Capitol as well. Ms. Hartle stated the NFBA distributed a Fact Sheet, which explained what SSPs do, demographics of individuals requiring SSP services. She stated the task force presented to the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging, to explain the need for SSP services and that older individuals are most affected with CVHL.

RSA Deaf-Blind/CVHL Services Update

Diane McElmury, Services for Blind Visually Impaired and Deaf (SBVID) Operations Manager reviewed some Deaf-Blind statistics:

FFY 2016

Total number of individuals in VR program 54

Total number of individuals in OOS 1, in Priority 2

Average number of days from application to eligibility 2

Median number of days from application to eligibility 2

Number of new plans written 4

Eligibility compliance rating 100%

Average number of days from eligibility to IPE 160.8

Median number of days from eligibility to IPE 164

IPE implementation compliance 50%

Number of clients placed 1

Number of clients closed successful 0

Diane McElmury stated RSA continued to send clients to HKNC for center-based training for 6-9 months. Ms. McElmury noted HKNC could subcontract services to individuals locally within the state. Diane McElmury stated she would be hiring two counselors for individuals with CVHL, and had created two positions for counselors to serve the DHOH populations in Maricopa County and in Tucson. Diane McElmury stated Ellen Boyd and PV Jantz were making the eligibility determinations and identify the counselor most appropriate to take the client case. Diane McElmury stated about 3-5 deaf-blind clients attended the Transition Summer Program, and about 1-2 blind clients attended the Transition Workshops. Ed Gervasoni inquired regarding the age range for students eligible for the Summer Transition Program. Diane McElmury stated students could attend at age 14 until high school exit and noted several blind or visually impaired students were able to attend several years. Chris Desborough inquired whether RSA had been able to offer SSP services to clients. Diane McElmury stated RSA discussed offering SSP services to clients, although the agency struggled to find providers able to provide services. Diane McElmury noted that SSP services provided by RSA would be VR related. Ed Gervasoni inquired whether the deaf-blind

individuals received an Orientation geared towards individual with CVHL. Diane McElmury stated deaf clients received an Orientation by VR staff. Ms. McElmury noted clients with CVHL typically received orientations one-on-one by counselors. Diane McElmury stated blind and visually impaired individuals attended an Introduction to Blindness Orientation, which had been discussed at the GCBVI Full Council meeting. Ms. McElmury noted until recently, RSA was not aware of the cost of transportation to send the clients to the different organizations, and RSA identified other ways for the clients to receive that information.

ACDHH Budget Request Update

- SSP Statewide Services
- Additional Funding Request

Sherri Collins, Executive Director ACDHH, stated ACDHH had submitted a budget request of \$192,000 to the Governor in order to provide SSP services. Ms. Collins stated she did not anticipate an opposition to the budget request. Sherri Collins stated the \$192,000 additional funds would not solve the problem, but would temporarily provide SSP services to individuals. Sherri Collins stated the ACDHH had requested an additional \$300,000 separate from the \$192,000 funds in order to provide community based services. She stated when individuals submitted a request for Arizona Long Term Care Services (ALTCS); those individuals were required to undergo assessments. She noted that the majority of deaf-blind individuals did not qualify for ALTCS services based on those assessments, thereby increasing the gap in services for deaf-blind individuals. Sherri Collins stated she took the opportunity to review current ALTCS bills under the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) in order to find a way to include SSP services. Sherri Collins stated she developed Fact Sheet to be submitted to the Legislature, which referred to the additional \$300,000 funding for community based services. She stated the ACDHH intended to outsource the community based services that would cover three-five years. Ed Gervasoni inquired whether AHCCCS would modify their laws or policies in order to provide services to deaf-blind individuals. Sherri Collins stated her understanding that AHCCCS would change internal policies rather than legislation. Carmen Green stated the majority of deaf-blind individuals were not eligible for services according to the functional and medical needs assessment. Ms. Green noted that ALTCS services were geared towards services in the home, and the majority of deaf-blind individuals needed support outside of the home. Chris Desborough stated his understanding that ALTCS would be required to negotiate the waiver with the federal government. Sherri Collins agreed and noted that AHCCCS policies were complex.

Mary Hartle inquired whether the \$300,000 in additional funds would be requested each year, or whether the funds would cover three-five years. Sherri Collins stated ACDHH was requesting \$300,000 per year because she did not have a baseline of community based services costs. Ms. Collins noted the services would come from a portion of the telephone land line tax, which funded the ACDHH. Chris Desborough inquired whether the outsourced services would serve deaf, blind, or individuals with combined vision and hearing loss (CVHL). Carmen Green stated the ACDHH would rely on existing programs serving the deaf-blind population, such as the COPD, Valley Center for the Deaf (VCD), and Catholic Community Services. Ms. Green noted when ACDHH solicited for those services, any other agencies providing services to deaf-blind individuals could bid for a contract. Ed Gervasoni stated the University of Arizona could potentially collaborate with the ACDHH to provide services to deaf-blind individuals. He noted that clients would need to receive services from providers in their community as they would need assistance navigating their community. Ed Gervasoni stated some individuals that received services from Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) did not obtain the necessary skills to navigate their home environment. Carmen Green stated when the ACDHH solicited the bid for services, the agency might learn of other organizations that provided services for deaf-blind individuals. Ed Gervasoni requested that ACDHH consult with the deaf-blind population when developing the Request for Proposal (RFP) and obtain feedback from the community. Chris Desborough agreed that the deaf-blind population could offer knowledge and noted that Arizona could set the standard for SSP service provision.

Mary Hartle suggested the ACDHH include members from the SSP Statewide Services Task Force when meeting with AHCCCS. Sherri Collins stated she knew the barriers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population from personal and work experience. Ms. Collins stated the deaf-blind population would be included in the RFP for community based services. She noted the ACDHH wanted to be a model for all other states and to provide the best services for deaf-blind individuals. Sherri Collins stated if the agency received the additional funds; the agency would need to begin providing services July 1, 2017, and would develop the Scope of Work (SOW) quickly. Sherri Collins stated she planned to develop two separate RFPs for the separate funding requests. She stated ACDHH could consider partnering with the University of Arizona and AHCCCS in the future. Ed Gervasoni stated the benefit to having an outside organization review the program and offer suggestions and feedback. Cindi Robinson requested examples of community based services. Sherri Collins stated the Fact Sheet she developed listed the types of community based services. Ed Gervasoni stated community based services included Independent Living skills, Self-Advocacy, Orientation and

Mobility, and Assistive Technology. Sherri Collins stated the ACDHH recognized that some SSP's could provide additional services and noted that New Mexico's SSP program differentiated between SSP experience levels. Chris Desborough inquired whether the community based services would teach deaf-blind individuals how to cook or clean. Sherri Collins stated the commission would review the services that ALTCS provided and include services that the deaf-blind population required. Ms. Collins noted the commission would ask the deaf-population regarding the types of services required. Ed Gervasoni stated typically, a deaf-blind individual received one-on-one instructional support due to the difficulty in providing assistance to several individuals. Sherri Collins stated the community based services could be compared to an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), in which the individual would receive individualized service delivery. Mary Hartle inquired whether ACDHH would include a member from the SSP Statewide Services Task Force in the meeting with AHCCCS. Sherri Collins stated in the initial meeting, the ACDHH would meet with AHCCCS to discuss the issues at a policy level. She noted that consumers could be included in the discussion at a later date.

- Day at the Capitol Update

Sheri Collins stated she was impressed with the attendance at the ACDHH Day at the Capitol event. Ms. Collins noted the commission set up a simulation for Legislators or interested individuals to simulate deaf-blindness. Sherri Collins stated she ordered 150-175 lunches, and had about eight meals left over, and surmised that about 150 individuals attended. Mary Hartle stated the music in the tent made hearing difficult and suggested omitting the music in future events. Sherri Collins stated the ACDHH would have a second Day at the Capitol, which would be open to the community at Wet 'n' Wild.

New Member Recruitment Discussion

Ed Gervasoni thanked Diane McElmury for all her hard work and commitment to the deaf-blind population. Mr. Gervasoni inquired whether Ms. McElmury had any recommendations for her replacement. Diane McElmury stated she would discuss potential replacements with the SBVID Program Manager. Ed Gervasoni encouraged committee members to recruit a committee member who represented the deaf community, but had the literacy capability to participate in meetings. He stated the committee would also benefit from having a younger person or a parent of a blind, deaf, or individual with CVHL. Cindi Robinson suggested the committee reach out to Laura Ellington-Pierre and Julie Stylinski for committee member

recommendations. Diane McElmury stated she would inquire whether the counselors could recommend some potential committee members.

Conference Updates

Cindi Robinson stated the Western Regional Early Intervention Conference for Sensory Disabilities would take place in June in Scottsdale. Ms. Robinson stated the conference would focus on service providers for youth from birth through five years old, and on self-advocating.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Deaf/Blind Committee was scheduled for May 4, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) Conference Room, 100 N. 15th Avenue, Suite 104, Phoenix, AZ. Agenda items are as follows:

- National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP) Update
- SSP Services in Arizona Follow-Up
- SSP Training Curriculum Update
- SSP Professional Development Discussion
- SSP Statewide Services Task Force Report
- Conference Updates
- RSA DB-CVHL Services Update
- ACDHH Budget Request
- Intervener Training Update

Announcements

Cindi Robinson stated the Arizona Association for the Deaf-Blind 21st Anniversary fundraiser would be on April 1st. Ed Gervasoni stated the association would hold a BBQ Party/Fundraiser and noted interested individuals could purchase tickets for \$15.00.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment of Meeting

Diane McElmury moved to adjourn the meeting; Mary Hartle seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. The meeting stood adjourned at 1:12 p.m.