

The Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing hereinafter referred to as **“The Council”**, was initially mandated by F.S. Statute 413.271 in 2004 to serve as an advisory and coordinating body which recommends policies that address the needs of Florida’s community who are deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, or Deaf-Blind (hereinafter referred to as “hearing loss”) and continues to do so today. The Council is a resource for persons with hearing loss who need assistance with everyday needs including education, employment, healthcare, legal, public safety and emergencies, communication technology and services, and other areas via communication access and accommodations.



2017 FCCDHH Biennial Report *to Governor Rick Scott, the Florida Legislature & the Supreme Court*



The Council needs significant and consistent funding, staffed positions, and state laws, regulations and rules to effectively follow best practices and provide appropriate representation. We have listed our accomplishments in previous reports so the following is an update of what we have done since the last report:

A Public Service Announcement (PSA) advising Floridians to see a licensed hearing healthcare professional is finally coming to fruition.

We have continued engagement with other government departments and agencies, such as Emergency Management, to be responsible for communication access in all aspects of state and county activities, particularly in broadcasting and following up with community assistance after Hurricanes Hermine and Matthew.

“Hearing loss is the third most common chronic health condition in the U.S.”¹

The Council is composed of 17 members appointed by the Governor. Appointments of members representing organizations is made by the Governor in consultation with the organizations.

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1. Masterson EA, Bushnell PT, Themann CL, Morata TC. (2016). Hearing Impairment Among Noise-Exposed Workers — United States, 2003–2012. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6515a2.htm>

“The National Center for Health Statistics reports that approximately 20 percent (48 million) of American adults report some degree of hearing loss.”²

2. Pick, Lawrence. (2013). Health care disparities in the deaf community. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pi/disability/resources/publications/newsletter/2013/11/deaf-community.aspx>

Ineffective communication, when accessing public safety and emergency services, can have outcomes ranging from confusion to loss of life.

EDUCATION

Inconsistent access to support personnel and technology that reduces barriers to education and increases opportunities for equal communication and success for students needs to be addressed. Failure to provide such accommodations can limit educational success, and affect vocational goals and future job options. Due to a lack of awareness, funding, and professional training these students often don't get the opportunity for appropriate education needed or deserved.

"In school year 2015-16, the Florida Department of Education reported serving 4,332 students who are either deaf or hard of hearing and 82 students who are Deaf-Blind"³

3. Florida Department of Education. (2015). Exceptional Student Data by Exceptionality, School Year 2015-16 Report. Retrieved from <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7584/urlt/MembershipProgramsExceptionalStudents.xls>

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, hearing loss is one of the most frequently occurring birth defects; approximately 3 infants per 1,000 are born with moderate, profound or severe hearing loss. Hearing loss is even more common in infants admitted to intensive care units at birth.



Boortz, Christi. (2015). 3D Printer Brings The Future To Campus.

Retrieved from <http://www.fldb.k12.fl.us/index.php/news/3d-printer-brings-the-future-to-campus/>

Some problems faced by this population include:

1. Shortage of qualified teachers, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), interpreters, and other support personnel.
2. Nonfunctional hearing aids or FM/infrared systems for classrooms impede student educational success.
3. A lack of educational facilitators, including those trained in American Sign Language (ASL), tactile sign, and Listening and Spoken language, thus leading to poor educational and vocational outcomes.

Some possible solutions include:

1. Strengthen early childhood education for children with hearing loss and train their parents.
2. "Best practices" established for teachers, CART, interpreters and other support personnel.
3. Provide and train for FM/infrared systems to attain effective classroom communication for all.
4. Establish funded positions for trained support personnel to improve educational achievement.

Inadequate access to technology increases barriers for persons with hearing loss and reduces opportunities for equal, effective communication in daily living.

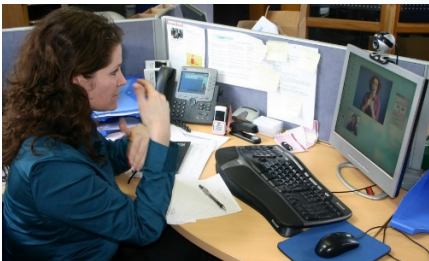
EMPLOYMENT

Inadequate accommodations via access and technology thus reducing barriers to equal opportunities in employment for which they are qualified can be improved. Failure to provide such accommodations can result in poor employment opportunities, affecting one's ability to be a contributing citizen in Florida. Appropriate accommodations for employment in which they were qualified would allow this population to achieve to their fullest potential in a vocation/profession and become a contributing member to society.

In 2014, the percentage of adults 18-64 with a hearing disability that were employed was only 47.2%.⁴

In 2014, only 34.5% of adults with a hearing disability were employed full-time.⁴

According to disabilitystatistics.org, the prevalence of Florida adults with a hearing disability is 3.8%. Among these adults, the amount who receive SSI is 13.3%.



Courtesy: SignificantSignVideo Services.

Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deaf_or_HoH_person_at_her_workplace_using_a_Video_Relay_Service_to_communicate_with_a_hearing_person_via_a_video_interpreter_and_sign_language_IMG_2954.jpg

Some problems faced by this population include:

1. Lack of accommodation policy with employers & employment agencies for those with hearing loss.
2. Lack of vocational, technical, and post-secondary training personnel for career opportunities for individuals with hearing loss.
3. Lack of a source of assistance/resources needed for people who are deaf & hard of hearing who have personal assistive devices.
4. Lack of compliance by businesses/employers/agencies that often don't comply with ADA requirements.

Some possible solutions include:

1. Provide training to employers & employment agencies on reasonable accommodations to implement in the workplace.
2. Train vocational, technical, and post-secondary programs on reasonable accommodations and resources.
3. Encourage Vocational Rehabilitation to expand programs for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, and Deaf-Blind including interpreting staff.

⁴ Erickson, W., Lee, C., von Schrader, S. (2016). Disability Statistics from the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Yang Tan Institute (YTI). Retrieved from <http://www.disabilitystatistics.org>

“In school year 2015-16, the Florida Department of Education reported serving 4,332 students who are either deaf or hard of hearing and 82 students who are Deaf-Blind”

HEALTHCARE

Inadequate training of medical/healthcare professionals often leads to ineffective healthcare treatments and services for persons with hearing loss from birth throughout the lifespan. Ineffective communication, when accessing medical services, can lead to incorrect diagnoses by the physician, can cause delayed or improper medical treatment, and can create poor patient understanding of physician instructions. This can result in potentially fatal outcomes as well as decreased business and litigation expenses for the medical provider. This includes doctors' offices, pharmacies, laboratories, urgent care centers, emergency rooms, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and other medical settings.

Despite the size of this population, there is limited information regarding the health services utilization of its constituents. Understanding the health care needs of people with hearing loss has gained legal implications since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please follow this link for more information. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1430352/>



Rochester Institute of Technology. (2017).
Non-Credit Certificate in Healthcare Interpreting.
Retrieved from <https://www.ntid.rit.edu/aslie/certificate-healthcare-interpreting>

Some problems faced by this population include:

1. Poor communication in medical settings leading to poor understanding of instructions and other potential life threatening medical errors by individuals with hearing loss.
2. Lack of/poor access to mental health programs and professionals able to address issues unique to people and families impacted by hearing loss.

Some possible solutions include:

1. Ensure all medical settings have access to communication training and policies with resources for communication access for patients & caregivers.
2. Have educational institutions provide training programs to mental health professionals so services may be provided in the preferred mode of communication of individual with hearing loss.

There is a lack of educational facilitators, including those trained in American Sign Language (ASL), tactile sign, and Listening and Spoken language, thus leading to poor educational and vocational outcomes.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES

Ineffective communication, when accessing public safety and emergency services, can have outcomes ranging from confusion to loss of life. Emergency management should be trained in effective communication for people with hearing loss for safety in general population shelters. Other emergency situations would include law enforcement, 911 calls, and hotlines.

Only 6 out of 67 Florida counties have text-to-911 capabilities. Please follow the link below to learn more.
<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/what-you-need-know-about-text-911>



Associated Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (2015).
Emergency & Crisis Communication.

Retrieved from <http://aideaf.com/our-services/emergency-crisis-communication/>

Some problems faced by this population include:

1. Shortage of qualified interpreters, captioners, and Support Service Providers (SSPs) on emergency management teams/situations.
2. State and local emergency management agencies, emergency shelters, and local TV often do not provide effective communication to disseminate emergency information in an accessible manner.
3. Public safety personnel are often unaware of the communication needs of persons with hearing loss.
4. Lack of/limited direct access to 911 services in emergency situations via texting

Some possible solutions include:

1. Train groups of interpreters, captioners, and SSPs for emergency management teams.
2. Train state and local emergency management agencies, emergency shelters, and local TV regarding effective methods to disseminate emergency information in an accessible manner.
3. Mandate training of public safety personnel on range of persons with communication needs and ways and means to provide access.
4. Expand “Texting to 911” service to all counties in Florida, currently only available in 6 out of 67 counties.

TECHNOLOGY

Inadequate access to technology increases barriers for persons with hearing loss and reduces opportunities for equal, effective communication in daily living. A person with hearing loss often goes through a day without available technology that can make a difference in, vocational/professional advancement, the ability to join friends and family in social situations, and awareness of potential threats in the environment such as a fire alarm.

Jan. 24, 2017 The Florida Senate celebrated the opening in November of the newly renovated Senate chamber. Along with the new desks, carpet, paint and stained glass, a hearing loop system was installed. Other upgrades include a portable wheelchair lift to the president’s rostrum. The rostrum also was widened to allow space for a

wheelchair. Please follow the link below for more information. <http://www.ncsl.org/blog/2017/01/24/keeping-legislators-and-citizens-with-disabilities-in-the-loop.aspx>

“Among adults aged 70 and older with hearing loss who could benefit from hearing aids, fewer than one in three (30 percent) has ever used them. Even fewer adults aged 20 to 69 (approximately 16 percent) who could benefit from wearing hearing aids have ever used them. Based on calculations by NIDCD Epidemiology and Statistics Program staff using data collected by :

- (1) the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) annually for number of persons who have ever used a hearing aid [numerator], and
- (2) periodic NHANES hearing exams for representative samples of the U.S. adult and older adult population [denominator]; these statistics are also used for tracking Healthy People 2010 and 2020 objectives”⁵



Troth, Jeff, L. (2016). Implant turns on the world to Evans patients. Retrieved from https://www.army.mil/article/175251/implant_turns_on_the_world_to_evans_patients

Some problems faced by this population include:

1. Personal technology is not affordable (Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs), cell phones, hearing aids).
2. A need for captioning for local broadcasts, in public venues, and utilizing technology to provide sign language interpreters properly through video remote interpreting as appropriate.
3. Need for public transportation systems to provide visual access for immediate information or emergency safety.

Some possible solutions include:

1. Financial assistance for hearing aids and ALDs.
2. FTRI to provide digital phones pending recommended review of the Telecommunications Access Systems Act (TASA) (F.S. 427.701) .
3. Visual fire/smoke alarms for all as well as enough updated safety kits in public accommodations.
4. More programs training qualified captioners in order to increase their availability.

Florida Coordinating Council for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Members

Florida Association of the Deaf

Glenna R. Ashton, Chair;
Donna Drake

Hearing Loss Association of America - Florida

Debbe Hagner, Vice-Chair;
Karen Goldberg, MD

Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA)

Chris Littlewood

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) Providers

Vacant

Hearing Aid Specialist

Vacant

Persons who are Deaf-Blind

Darlene Laibl-Crowe

Deaf Service Center Association

Julie Church

Alexander Graham Bell Association

Debra Knox

Audiologist

Cindy Simon

Parent of a Child who is Deaf

Roseanne Finigan

Florida Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (FRID)

Eugenia Halliburton

Florida Department of Children and Families

John M. Jackson

Florida Department of Education

Cecil F. Bradley

Florida Department of Elder Affairs

Mary Hodges

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5. National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders (NIDCD). (2016). Quick Statistics About Hearing. Retrieved from <https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/statistics/quick-statistics-hearing>