

The Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing hereinafter referred to as “FCCDHH”, 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 and continues to do so today.

2018 FCCDHH Biennial Report

to Governor Ron DeSantis, the Florida Legislature & the Supreme Court

Photo retrieved from: <http://deafeducation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/SummerSchool2015-95.jpg>

INTRODUCTION

FCCDHH 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. Although this report is mostly highlighting healthcare, public safety, and Deaf-Blind issues there are other important concerns that FCCDHH continues to address. Other important issues include hearing aids, equivalent education for Floridians who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind, legal system issues, access to technology, and access to accommodations such as qualified sign language interpreters and captioning as needed for effective communication in all areas .

FCCDHH benefits from 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 biennial reports and the following is an update of some of the things we have done since the last report:

- FCCDHH continues to meet face-to-face quarterly throughout different areas in Florida to maximize outreach.
- FCCDHH continually invites guests to present on pertinent issues facing Florida’s Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened and Deaf-Blind communities.
- FCCDHH has been a welcomed exhibitor and sponsor of community outreach events such as the 2018 “The 20th Anniversary Family Café” and the 2018 “It’s a Deaf Thing!” Expo.
- FCCDHH continues to be open to the public at all meetings encouraging members of the community to share their thoughts, experiences and concerns.
- FCCDHH continues to provide resources and referrals to the public as well as government agencies to maximize support for Florida’s Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened and Deaf-Blind communities.
- FCCDHH has a full-time program coordinator who serves as liaison between the public and the Council between meetings, answers calls and returns emails, maintains the website and organizes the quarterly meetings.



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

OVERVIEW

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Inadequate communication causes medical errors leading to patient morbidity and mortality as well as an increase in overall healthcare costs

HEALTHCARE



Retrieved from: <https://www.starkey.com/blog/2013/05/10-surprising-facts-about-hearing-loss#>

For the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened, and Deaf-Blind populations within Florida, inadequate communication causes medical errors leading to patient morbidity and mortality as well as an increase in overall healthcare costs. Floridians with hearing loss are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and have the right to full access to communication with their healthcare providers. According to the National Association of the Deaf's (NAD) position statement on health care access for Deaf patients, providers and staff should ensure the right of Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened and Deaf-Blind individuals to determine for themselves the appropriate communication mode in the health care setting. This means that the patient has the right to use of a qualified sign language interpreter (American Sign Language, Signed English), qualified Deaf Interpreter (DI), communication access real time translation (CART) or tactile sign language interpreter for Deaf-Blind.¹ The U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services has developed the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in health and healthcare. The National CLAS standards are intended to advance health equity, improve quality and eliminate health care disparities. CLAS is about respect and responsiveness: Respect the whole individual and Respond to the individual's health needs and preferences.²

Pictured in the graphic above are just some facts that highlight the need for effective communication between those who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened, and Deaf-Blind and their healthcare providers.



Retrieved from: <https://www.ntid.rit.edu/aslie/certificate-healthcare-interpreting>

1. National Association of the Deaf (NAD), Position Statement on Healthcare Access for Deaf Patients. Accessed online from: <https://www.nad.org/about-us/position-statements/position-statement-on-health-care-access-for-deaf-patients/>. Medical Access Subcommittee of the NAD Civil Rights Subcommittee.
2. HHS.gov, National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care. Accessed online from: <https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas>. Think Cultural Health.

Effective communication in public safety and emergency situations is a civil right under the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal laws. FCCDHH is working diligently to provide information about public safety issues impacting Florida's Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened and Deaf-Blind communities.



PUBLIC SAFETY & EMERGENCIES

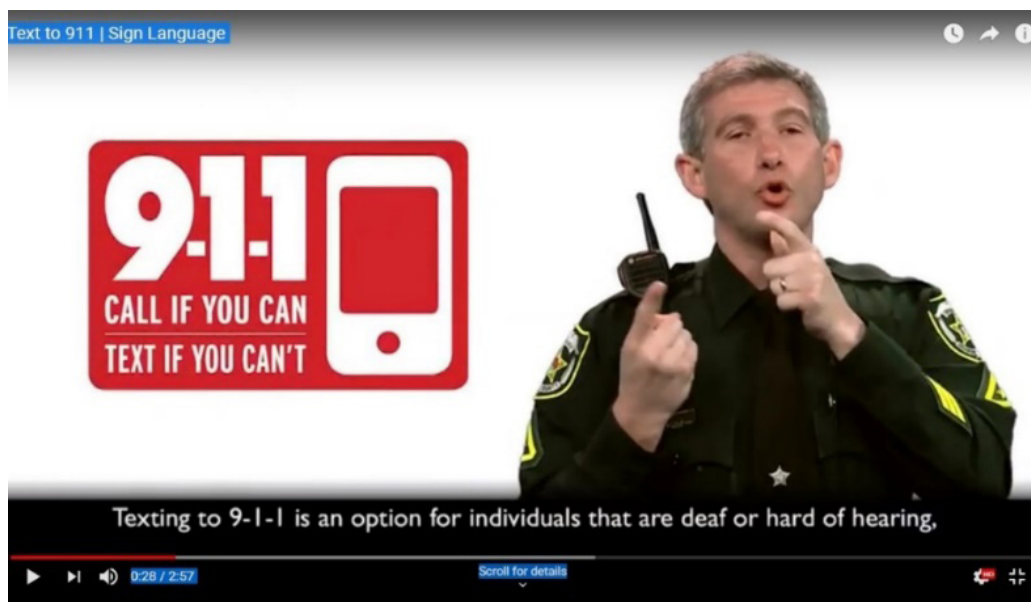
Effective communication in public safety and emergency situations is a civil right under the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal laws. FCCDHH is working diligently to provide information about public safety issues impacting Florida's Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened and Deaf-Blind communities. FCCDHH has provided information about the importance of using qualified interpreters, captioning, and other necessary communication strategies throughout the state, county and local levels during times of emergencies.

In the past several years, Florida has been impacted by major hurricanes, natural disasters and public safety incidents, which have affected the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities as much as it has everyone else in the state. There have been several well publicized communication barriers negatively impacting the safety of Florida's Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens. This includes use of unqualified sign language interpreters, inadequate captioning services, and inability to access law enforcement in times of emergencies.

FCCDHH works with public safety officials through education about the needs of Florida's citizens who are Deaf,

Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened and Deaf-Blind regarding effective communication strategies. FCCDHH supports the implementation of the Communication Video and Accessibility Act of 2010 moving from legacy or E-911 to next generation or NG-911 allows more advanced methods of communication to a public safety access point (PSAP).¹ Although the majority of deaf and hard of hearing citizens have no direct access to 9-1-1 through voice calls, part of the implementation of NG-911 can allow texting to 9-1-1.

Text to 9-1-1 is implemented locally, at the county level in the state of Florida. By the end of 2018, almost 20 of 67 counties in Florida have incorporated text to 9-1-1 in some capacity. There are still many counties in Florida that still have not implemented text to 9-1-1.² While text to 9-1-1 benefits people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, it is also beneficial to ALL Floridians for direct access to emergency services (this is known "Deaf Gain": when a service that benefits the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community also benefits the community as a whole).



Created by Orange County Law Enforcement.

The video may be found by following this link: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=6GbkwStGGXI>

1. Federal Communication Commission (FCC), (2017), 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA). Accessed online from: <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/21st-century-communications-and-video-accessibility-act-cvaa>.
2. Federal Communication Commission (FCC), (2018), Text to 911, What You Need to Know. Accessed online from: <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/what-you-need-know-about-text-911>.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: DEAF-BLIND

It is estimated that nationwide more than 2.5 million (0.70%) Americans have a Dual Sensory loss; i.e., Deaf-Blind. Deaf-Blind is defined as combined hearing and vision loss that may impact communication, mobility, participation and learning. There is a need for better identification and understanding of the impact of dual-sensory loss. There is also a need for trained professionals who are:

- Knowledgeable and skilled in interaction with the complexities of those who are Deaf-Blind
- Informed of quality resources and advocacy skills to those who assist the Deaf-Blind; e.g., parents, caregivers, service providers

The FCCDHH recommends:

- Trained Deaf-Blind Specialists for outreach, training, and consultation statewide
- Communication access—tactile sign language, touch signals, pro-tactile, and voice for those who are Hard of Hearing
- Funding and training for Support Service Providers for Deaf-Blind throughout the state of Florida

Mississippi State University and Rehabilitation Training Research Center (2017) <https://www.blind.msstate.edu/docs/DeafblindDataAnalysis.pdf>.

Gallaudet University (2016) <https://www.gallaudet>

Florida and Virgin Islands Deaf-Blind collaborative (2017) <https://nationaldb.org/members/stateproject/FL>



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