

FLORIDA COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR DEAF ANFD HARD OF HEARING
Quarterly Meeting
St. Augustine, FL
Thursday November 4, 2021
9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Members Present: Glenna Ashton, Debbe Hagnar , Chris Littlewood, , Sean Isaac, Gina Halliburton, John Jackson, Mary Hodges, Karen Goldberg

Service providers: LaShay Lewis (AV), Brandi Kent (CART), Chris Costa, George Costa, Donna Flanders, Carrie Moore (ASL interpreters)

Minutes from August 12, 2021 corrected and accepted. Today's agenda approved.

Recognition of Debbe Hagnar for receiving awards from ALDA (Association of Late-Deafened Adults) and Hear Strong both for her advocacy work.

Sean Isaac: 2021 biennial report has been posted on the web site and sent to all legislators. Additional copies were distributed to the Council members. Additional copies can be sent to county ADA coordinators, Surgeon General and the Governor. Time to start thinking about the 2023 report so share ideas for it. The vacant position which is called DOH-FCCDHH Liaison, was advertised and a few candidates were selected for interviews however the process has stalled. The Chair or Vice-Chair may participate in the interviews and the position may be advertised again. A person was finally hired to process appointments in the Office of Legislative Planning. All Council appointments must be re-submitted, there is a questionnaire to do in the packet or online. Other Councils and Board had similar problems with filling seats. Glenna noted that online committee meetings can now be done with both CART and interpreters up to twelve times.

Tour of Florida School for the Deaf and Blind at 207 San Marco Avenue was conducted from 10:00 to 11:30 then break for lunch. A discussion of the tour will be done on Friday for the record.

Presenter: Jenny Locy will discuss CERT – Community Emergency Response Team training program. It is open to anyone anywhere to learn how to assist in times of disaster. Local Emergency Operations centers offer this free training program which is 21 hours of eight units of intense study information and materials. It is usually done in about 8 hours over three days to become CERT-certified. There is a need for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities to become certified since communication access is an issue. AQI – Absolute Quality Assurance Interpreting agency is very supportive of this effort and co-owner David Scott is also CERT-certified. They can work as a team with professionals from EOC, Fire department, hospital, etc. The history of how AQI got involved and CERT itself was provided. Teamwork is involved with one person/leader as a point of contact (POC) and volunteers assigned just one specific task. Teamwork also involved knowing yourself in how you can function well in stressful situations.

Information is given on how to pack emergency supplies for home, trips, etc., and use certain apps for planning such as available gas. Basic first aid efforts to do until a professional arrives is covered. Training manuals, resources, kits, online links, special clothing accessories are included as part of training. Council members can go to their county to request the training program and encourage Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to sign up. Jenny can help to get it started.

Web site Committee: Debbe Hagnar reported that there are 899 people that liked our Facebook group page with 967 people following it. There should be more postings on it including advertising the vacant positions and allowing local organization announcements.

Education, Medical, Outreach, and Technology (EMOT) Committee: Gina Halliburton reported no new updates due to no meetings future dates will be set up. Karen Goldberg brought up an issue in that those medical providers that prescribe medicine must also be a Medicaid provider to do so for certain patients which means they would have to go to someone else possibly without communication access.

Legislative Committee: Glenna Ashton reported that there are a few bills of interest going through the committees. HB 79/SB 498 – Insurance Coverage for Hearing Aids for Children – it's the second or third time this is proposed. HB 55/SB 418 – Assistive Technology Advisory Council includes revisions on appointments and duties so perhaps we can do that too. HB 2109 again provides funding for Auditory Oral Intervention for Children with Hearing Loss which seems to be the same amount as last year. SB 292 – Newborn Screenings will attempt to add another screening for a genetic condition. There is one there already in addition to hearing. This law was focused on hearing, yet others are being added which may dilute the importance of hearing screenings. HB 221/SB 388 – Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – the question is whether that means including people with disabilities plus the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The other activity is the writing of letters on specific issues in cooperation with the EMOT committee. It was hoped that each Council member would write one on their pet issue using the template letter. The template letter would be three paragraphs – first is introduction of the Council, second is the specific issue, and third is suggestions for resolving it. This letter would go to various organizations that should address the issue with their members such as hospitals and television stations. A list of specific issues was shared which Sean will send out again. Gina Halliburton will do interactions with police officers and Deaf prisoners communication. John Jackson will do interpreters in government and agency settings. Debbe Hagnar will do loop systems and text-to-911 systems.

Presenters on Deaf-owned businesses. Andy Lange is a cruise travel agent. He noted that while cruise lines usually will provide interpreters for Deaf passengers on cruises that leave from U.S. ports, they did not provide captioning or interpreting for him during online training programs. Thus, he had to figure out ways to access the information online. He continues to advocate for access for himself and for the Deaf passengers, but the lines' attitude relates to the fact that the Deaf is a tiny number among the thousands. A M-enabling conference in DC highlights that access is still a continuing problem for all disabilities with business giving it lip service. For

example, they will hire someone to show diversity but not provide accommodations. Also need to educate first time cruisers on what to expect.

Kelly Lange is a real estate agent who used to work many years in relay services thus involved in accessible telecommunications. She had a hearing friend who was a broker that asked her for help when she had Deaf clients. She ended up taking online courses and passing them, then passing the state exam. She is now working with the broker as an agent instead of a helper. The online course videos were not captioned so she relied on doing a lot of reading. She stressed functional equivalent services in which there must be 100 percent clear and quality access to information. For example, not to let someone who knows a bit of sign to do the closing at a title company instead of hiring a qualified interpreter. It is protection for both the professionals and the clients. Again, it means education of everyone involved in the huge investment of buying/selling a home. Deaf clients prefer open space, minimal walls, plenty of electrical outlets, visual alarms, etc. - part of the concept of Deaf space. Universal codes provides for buildings to be accessible – need to follow up on it.

Council decided to try to develop a directory and video library of successful Deaf business owners in Florida, starting with the Langes. Videos can go on Facebook with permission.

Examples of communication cards were passed out to use with EMS, fire dept. ambulances, and emergency rooms. HLAA is promoting the use of them with laminated copies. We have permission to make copies and pass them out locally. Thanks to Eloise Powell who sent the copies.

Public Comments:

Donna Drake: A former member of FCCDHH is concerned about Deaf individuals knowing about their rights with the usage of VRIs which have been improving in better service. Examples include requesting a matching gender in interpreter as in female-related health issues, requesting a more appropriate communication access such as a live on-site interpreter, and having control of the communication process.

Trisha Kidd: A longtime resident of St. Augustine, retired FSBF teacher and Flagler College Professor and a world traveler. A situation came up that totally relies on technology without human attendants is the automated parking lots at airports, especially late at night. Sometimes the machines don't work, and it can be scary trying to get out of the parking lot. Technology needs to be inclusive with various accessible ways to contact the company if there's a problem.

Mary Antal: A longtime resident of St. Augustine with Deaf parents that are senior citizens discussed the lack of direct services to Deaf senior citizens such as a social center, assisted-living facility, a nursing home, and other resources that need to be made accessible. Mary Hodges provided information to contact the Area Agency on Aging of Northeast Florida. This is something to be followed up on in all areas of Florida. Other Deaf organizations have made efforts in this area such as FAD and DSA. Individual contacts for local services sometimes don't follow up which may be due to communication access and/or waiting lists since Florida has a

very large number of senior citizens everywhere. Certain more urban areas of the state have sizable Deaf communities such as St. Augustine, South Florida, Tampa Bay area, etc. which could have an average of a 1,000.

Eloise Powell: W.H.O statistics shows that one out of every 10 people with hearing loss is Deaf. Perhaps 3.5 million needs to be revised upwards due to the increased number of Deaf and hard of hearing senior citizens moving here. She will continue to advocate on all related issues via letters and phone calls.

Andy Lange: Senior services accessibility is a top issue locally. Council suggested to start networking and reach out about providing functional equivalent access to the existing senior services.

Eddy Laird: would like to see interpreting agencies represented on the Council. There are concerns about the quality and appropriateness of interpreters being sent out on assignments. There is no feedback/monitoring system in place.

Andy Lange: Explained about the history of the repeated failed legislation to require licensure of interpreters often falling on "deaf ears" through the bill process over a few years in Tallahassee. There was a discussion on the issue of trying to educate the legislators, possible liability, budgeting for accessibility services, and increased advocacy. Eloise mentioned that Wisconsin was successful after fighting for three years full-on.

Glenna and Debbe will man a booth at the Deafnation Expo Saturday November 6th.

There continue to be many vacancies on the Council since we only have 9 out of 17 representatives. Now with a new person in the Governor's Appointments Office, we need to be active in getting applications in from interested people.