

WISCONSIN COUNCIL FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday September 30, 2009
Madison, Wisconsin

Present: Mary Jane Griffin, Daniel Houlihan, Billy Mauldin, (Chairperson), Tom Meitner, Stefanie Saltern, and Eloise Schwarz.

ODHH Staff: Linda Huffer

Excused: Alice Sykora, Jennifer Evans, Terri Matenaer, and Alex Slappey

Interpreters: Amber K Mullett, Nicole A Mueller

Captioner: Rose Coulthart

Guests: Mike Bachhuber, Executive Director – Independent Living Council
Sara Strell, MPH – Public Health Preparedness Local Liaison, Regional Coordinator, WI
Division of Public Health; and Evelyn Cruz

Proceedings:

- *Meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chair, Billy Mauldin*

Business Meeting

March 12, 2009 Minutes:

- Meeting Minutes were electronically sent to all Council members and approved online.

Council Updates:

Council 2009-2010 Schedule

- Council Meeting Dates have been finalized for the year starting this meeting date of the new fiscal year. The dates are: December 10, 2009 in Room B139; March 11, 2010 in Room 751 and May 13, 2010 in Room 751. Captioning and interpreting services are available for all Council meetings.
- All Council members should make every attempt to attend the scheduled meetings to assure a quorum is met.

Nomination for Council

- Notifications from the Governor's office for reappointment to the Council were discussed and noted that only three members had received a call regarding the member's decision to stay on. Official office documents had not been received by those whose terms had expired in July 2009.
- One Council member will no longer be serving on the board. [Evans, J]
- There has been one open position on the Council since 2007-08, as noted by Huffer.
- In further discussions, it was noted that terms for the current members were not in accordance with the Bylaws of the Council, which states four (4) year terms.
<http://www.dhhcouncil.state.wi.us/council/ByLaws2008.pdf>
- Current membership also does not reflect the required appointees as noted in the Bylaws which include: 3 deaf, 3 hard of hearing, 1 deaf-blind, and 2 members-at-large.

- Current Council is comprised of 4 deaf, 2 hard of hearing, and 1 deaf-blind. An appeal for possible names was made in filling the remaining open positions. Previously submitted names to the Governor have not been appointed.
- Any suggestions of possible candidates should be sent to the ODHH / Liaison Office as soon as possible.
- Further investigation with the Governor's Office regarding appointments to the Council and Bylaw compliancy will be followed through by Huffer and Sykora.
- Since this meeting is the first of the new term, Nominations for the Executive Board Positions were presented, voted, and approved unanimously as: Chairman: Mauldin; Vice Chair: Houlihan, and Secretary: Schwarz. Sykora will continue to provide assistance to the Council from the ODHH department.

Council Initiatives – 2009-2010

- Council needs to establish new Goals for the Year 09-2010, as noted by Mauldin.
- Possible goals prompted discussions regarding specific communication needs including: accessing telecommunication i.e. high speed internet access, video phones, web cams and broadband services for work environments and barriers: safety mechanisms (firewalls), Birth-two-Six program, 511 Emergency Traffic Services status and Captioning at the state and local levels.
- Discussion on statements of position / letters that should be sent out or posted on behalf of the Council was requested by Meitner, Saltern and Houlihan including:
 - 1) Employment accessibility for deaf candidates and use of video phones;
 - 2) Recently passed legislation on the *Insurance Coverage of Hearing Aids and Cochlear Implants for persons under 18 years of age* <http://legis.state.wi.us/2009/data/SB-27.pdf> and
 - 3) *The Hearing Aid Assistance Tax Credit Act* <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h111-1646&tab=committees>
- Resources for further discussion will be requested from Council members for the December meeting in order to narrow the goals and initiative activities for the next term year. Mauldin and Schwarz will provide materials from the TCI Seminar; Mauldin, Meitner and Houlihan will provide resources for the communication services; and Griffin and Schwarz will provide information for the Tax Credit Bill.

Interpreter Licensure Bill

- Electronic mail sent to Council by Sykora prior to meeting outlined current activities related to this draft legislation. The 24 hour emergency Opt-Out requirement continues to be under discussion.
- Mr. Joel Mankowski and Colleen Keating of the Statewide Task Force on Interpreters Licensure group have been collaborating with Senator Kedzie (R-Elkhorn) to move the stalled bill forward. The Council, by name has been included in the request for support of this bill. A letter of support had been sent in the past.
- The current draft bill has not been seen by the Council but is available and includes a revised Opt-Out portion. A request for the bill will be made by Mauldin/Schwarz in order for members to review and offer suggestions before a new letter of support is sent to the Task Force.

Guest Speaker: Mike Bachhuber, Executive Director

Independent Living Council of Wisconsin (Eight ILC in WI)

- Request for Input
- Organization is in the process of developing a new three year plan for ILC of WI for representing the interests of people with disabilities [physical, cognitive, mental health, and sensory] and their ability to live independently.
- Council works jointly with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in promoting people with disabilities to get involved in the communities for 1) long term care reform, 2) transportation options by maximizing

available community resources, 3) housing, 4) disaster preparedness (assistive technology), and 5) financial education and resources.

- They also are responsible for monitoring the review/evaluation implementation of the plan as well as coordinate activities with the other state councils.
- An appeal was made for ideas and suggestions of issues that affect the deaf and hard of hearing communities. Suggestions offered included: strobe fire alarms and bed shakers, ramps, intercoms / cameras at building entrances and updating communications options e.g. internet instead of outdated TTY, & captioning. Representatives of the deaf and hard of hearing sitting on the IL Councils should also be considered since they represent a larger percentage of people with disabilities in WI.
- A survey is available for additional thoughts and can be found at www.ILC.org . All are welcome to access this survey and provide additional input for the state plan.

Lunchtime Presentation: H1N1 Novel Influenza – Communication Strategies

Guest: Sara Strell, MPH – Public Health Preparedness Local Liaison, Regional Coordinator – Special Populations, WI Division of Public Health

- Provided a general overview of current influenza / flu situation including the difference between the H1N1 virus and the seasonal influenza. Transmission, onset, timing of the year, immunity, and demographic groups affected most by this virus, level of severity, and comparison to other pandemics over the last 100 years.
- Recommendations on what to do if one gets sick including the incubation period, notification of doctors, simple steps to take in staying well including: washing hands, using sleeve to cough/sneeze into, use of hand sanitizers and staying home from work/school. If you are sick, call your doctor first, for instructions. Wear a mask if a visit to the office is necessary so that there is no spreading of the virus to other vulnerable people
- No testing is being done since 99% of all cases are the H1N1 virus (swine flu). If testing is done, it is for monitoring purposes only. Deaths are due to person having underlying medical conditions.
- The vaccines are being shipped out to the states for distribution to key county health departments/ providers that are reaching the high risk groups – youth, young adults, pregnant women, and caregivers. <http://www.flu.gov/professional/states/wisconsin.html> The healthy populations will have the opportunity to receive the vaccine after this group. The local media releases will have the information since the state Department of Public Health will not be releasing any Press Release Statements.
- For up-to-date information on general health directions, number of cases and deaths per state, and medications/ vaccine available for prevention, go to www.flu.gov or <http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1FLU/> .

Guest: Evelyn Cruz, Representative of the North Health Program, Preparedness Task Force for Communications to Special Populations

- Inquired of Council if the Public Service Announcements put out in April/May 2009 were seen or heard, and if not, what is needed to make sure those people who are deaf or hard of hearing have the necessary information for future announcements? Most Council members were not aware of the Public Announcements.
- Suggestions from Council included: Listserv websites (ODHH, WAD, HLAA) and other related organizations would be a start. Text/twitter/instant messaging and paging are possible alerting mechanisms, along with captioning, sub-titles and ASL. Making sure everyone is aware is the goal with or without an internet access.
- Radio announcements and 211 are not appropriate for the DHH individuals. The 511 system may be the answer.

ODHH Updates:

- Budgetary concerns continue including the ODHH – cuts made included Service Fund monies, TAP/TEP Program funds and the general GPR budget. There were no layoffs, but there are 8 furloughs per fiscal year as noted by Huffer.
- Current projects will continue as budget allows e.g. Deaf Unity; MIG (employment); HIV-AIDS project; Mentoring program for sign language interpreters (working in tandem with DPI); and a workshop (4), hosted by ODHH throughout the state, for the deaf and hard of hearing communities focusing on “*Work? Yes You Can! – How to Find and Keep a Job!*”
- Jason Altman, a former staff member of the ODHH, has a new job with UW Milwaukee. He will help with the workshops as scheduled. The department now has only three regional coordinators sharing all responsibilities. There is a statewide hiring freeze.
- The Wausau position continues to be frozen but has been relocated to Stevens Point.

New Business

- Hearing Loss Association of America – WI will be hosting a 5K walkathon – Walk 4 Hearing in 2010 – May 16th in Milwaukee – Veterans’ Park on the Lakefront. This will be the first annual walk in Wisconsin. The Milwaukee-Racine HLAA chapter is helping to organize the walk and is working out of the Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing office in West Allis, WI. Appeals have begun for Alliances and sponsors to help support the walk from throughout the state of WI. An invitation to participate was offered. Additional updates will be provided at the December meeting by Schwarz. www.hearingloss.org
- The National Hearing Loss Association of America will be holding their national convention in Milwaukee, WI on June 17-20 at the Hilton Milwaukee City Center and the Midwest Airlines Center downtown. Preparations are being put in place with the opportunity to register for the convention starting towards the end of October. <http://www.hearingloss.org/convention/>

Reminders:

If any Council Member is not able to attend any of the planned Council Meetings, please let Huffer know as soon as possible. Next meeting is December 10th in B139 from 10:00 am to 3 pm.

Meeting Minutes will be sent out via electronic mail. Please read and send comments/corrections to Schwarz. When completed, please provide your voting response via email to Sykora. Thank you.

Public Comments: No visitors or public comments noted.

- Meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m. by Chairman, Mauldin.
- Minutes submitted by Secretary, Schwarz