

Monthly Communicator

NJ Department of Human Services | Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

December 2015 | www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/home/index.html

Chris Christie, Governor

Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor

Elizabeth Connolly, Acting Commissioner

David Alexander, Director

Director's Corner by David C. Alexander, Ph.D., Director

Director Attends State Association Meetings

A number of associations of the deaf and hard of hearing held their annual conferences during the month of November. These were cosponsored by the DDHH and Director David Alexander made remarks at each.

The first ever joint conference by the NJRID and NJAD was held at the Hilton Hotel, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ. Workshops were conducted for youth, parents, community members and sign language interpreters. There was something for everyone. The HLAA also conducted their annual meeting at the East Brunswick Public Library. Janice Lintz, CEO of Hearing Access and Innovations was the keynote speaker. Her presentation, "How to Get Hearing Access and Services," was well received. Both associations also conducted elections for new boards.

New Jersey is fortunate to have active state associations working to improve advocacy, support and resources to people with hearing loss. DDHH and these agencies have a long history of working together to improve the quality of life of people with hearing loss. DDHH looks forward to continuing this positive collaboration.

I would like to congratulate all of the association members, friends and volunteers who contributed to the success of both of these events.

DDHH Staff Member Catie Purrazzella Given Special Recognition

At the NJAD/NJRID joint conference, staff member Catie Purrazzella was given an award by NJAD in special recognition for her involvement with the Deaf Advocacy Project. The Project is cosponsored by the DDHH and provides treatment and support to victims of domestic violence who are deaf and hard of hearing. The certificate was inscribed with the following:

"With NJAD collaboration on the Deaf Advocacy Project regarding Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Catherine went above and beyond to ensure access for Deaf victims and survivors. The partnership had created a dynamite team of experts in provisions in interpreters, and has helped NJAD, Womanspace, NJCEDV, and NJCASA with input for these meetings and trainings."

On behalf of the DDHH and the deaf and hard of community, I would like to congratulate Catie on this award.

Deaf Consumer is Awarded \$35,000

DDHH staff often advocate for people who are deaf and hard of hearing to receive access to goods and services as stated in several laws that protect consumers from discrimination. The case on the link below describes one of these situations. After attempts were made by DDHH staff Catie Purrazzella to convince a health facility to provide an interpreter, it was referred to the NJ Division on Civil Rights who successfully followed through and secured a settlement which hopefully will prevent a recurrence. Click here for [article](#).

NJ DDHH and NJ Division on Civil Rights to Host Community Forums in 2016

by Jason Weiland, DDHH Field Representative

Since 2003, the NJ Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and NJ Division on Civil Rights (DCR) have collaborated over the years to address issues related to the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing community. As a result of this partnership, the agencies were able to settle with five major movie theatre companies in NJ to boost the number of screens with captioning from three to sixty. With a former Attorney General's support, the partners worked with the New Jersey Hospital Association and more than 90 hospitals to develop the Communication Access Guide for Working with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This has greatly impacted the way access to hospital services and doctor's offices have been provided in the state.

During November, DDHH met with NJ DCR Assistant Director Philip Freeman and Legal Specialist Edward Haas to revisit the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing community. Video Remote Interpreting, Motor Vehicle Commission, and access to other service providers were just a few of the items discussed that day. We decided to host community forums in New Jersey similar to those in the past. Currently, DDHH is looking into possible dates and locations. More information will be provided in upcoming issues of the Monthly Communicator.

Interviews Conducted for Vacancy

DDHH staff conducted interviews for the "*Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist*" civil service positions that are currently vacant. Candidates are being considered for final approval.

Advisory Council Meeting Held

On Friday, October 30 the NJ Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Council held its quarterly meeting at the East Brunswick Public Library. Joey Garth and Kevin Mona presented information about their new online deaf news which can be accessed [HERE](#). They related that anyone can submit information that they wish imparted to people with hearing loss. Joel Strasser of HLAA-NJ also gave information about their online news format which is located [HERE](#).

Advisory Council Chairperson Lauren Lercher and Vice Chair Wayne Roorda were reelected to two year terms.

The Right to Special Education in New Jersey

by Catie Purrazzella, Service Coordinator

Many parents reach out to the Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and request advocacy resources regarding access to an appropriate education for their deaf and hard of hearing children including Individual Education Programs (IEPs). Sometimes parents believe that school districts are not providing appropriate access to their education. They want to know how to advocate on behalf of their children. Below are some important resources for parents.

The Education Law Center in Newark developed a guide on how to advocate for access to an appropriate education for deaf and hard of hearing students. The link can be found [HERE](#).

If you need help in understanding your rights, you may contact the following organizations for further assistance:

- [Statewide Parent Advocacy Network \(SPAN\)](#) at (800) 654-7726
- [Disability Rights New Jersey \(DRNJ\)](#) (800) 922-7233
- [New Jersey Department of Education](#) (for a list of Department of Education offices in each county)
- Also, the New Jersey Department of Education has a handbook that focuses on [Parental Rights in Special Education](#)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friday, January 29, 2016

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

DDHH Advisory Council Meeting
East Brunswick Public Library

 *Happy
Holidays*


DDHH Regular Office Hours: Monday – Friday: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Office Closed: Friday, Dec. 25 - Christmas

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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