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DEAF SERVICES COMMISSION OF IOWA

Commission Meeting
Friday, May 8, 2009
Mental Health Institute
Independence, IA
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

The DSCI Commission Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Theresa Legg at 10:39 a.m., Friday, May 8, 2009, Mental Health Institute, Independence, IA

Members present: Theresa Legg, Dr. James Grover, Dr. Muhammad Chowdhry, Gus Cordero, Jan Fletcher, Tammy Westhoff Gentry

Members absent: Preston Daniels

Staff members present: Kathryn Baumann-Reese, Barbara Jones, Stephanie Lyons, Suzy Mannella, and Linda Scott

Interpreters: Laura Lord, Renee Partlow and Joe Trelstad. Intern to Joe Trelstad: Debbie Johnson

Commissioners, staff and interpreters were introduced, visitor recognized and ground rules for the meeting presented.

Approval of Minutes from the November 8, 2008 Meeting

Motion #09-10: There being no changes to the minutes, moved minutes stand approved as presented. **Legg/Cordero**

Approved: 6

Disapproved: 0

Abstained: 0

Motion passed.

Commissioner/Committee Reports:

Legg:

- working hard on an upcoming audit.
- some positive things are going on at CSD.

Fletcher:

- missed the last Advisory Board meeting of Scott Community College, but will share the minutes with everyone as soon as received.
- assisted three (3) people and referred them to DSCI.

Cordero:

- referred a few people to DSCI for services.
- concerned about interpreters providing services without a license.

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Westhoff-Gentry:

- has been helping a deaf client work her way through the legal process. Would like to talk with the Commission to see what could be done to help the deaf community better access legal services.

Chowdhry: No report.

Grover:

- has been forwarding anything he receives from DSCI on to the Sioux City Deaf Club. Club seems to be getting stronger and becoming more active. Members are beginning to see that DSCI is here to help them and has information to their benefit.
- talked of his disappointment at a recent Social Security Benefits Planning Workshop. Interpreter was not present, as publicized and announced, when a need for one had been expressed.
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All Commissioners discussed the possible reorganization of DHR.

Staff Reports:

Baumann-Reese:

- will be testifying before the Legislative Administrative Rules Committee on June 12, 2009, regarding upcoming expiration of temporary interpreter licenses. About one-third of the interpreters in the state will lose their licenses this year and will not be able to renew because they've failed to pass the test for permanent licensure.

In January, Baumann-Reese met with the Department of Education (DOE), Area Education Associations (AEAs), the local schools and Iowa State Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (ISRID) to discuss this issue. DOE asked if we should recommend to the Board that they extend the temporary license. We recommended that they not grant any further extensions. There are two (2) parents who have come forward to talk with legislators to see what can be done to keep the school interpreters in place. Thus the hearing with the Rules Committee.

- DSCI staff received new video phones and are still working out the bugs. Until they're working properly, please call the main number through VRS and staff will call back through their direct VP lines.

Scott updated the Commission on contractual interpreting funds through the end of FY09.

Mannella:

- 22 campers are signed up for JCP Camp at Dolliver State Park, Lehigh, IA. Interpreters have been arranged, counselors have been secured.

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- Commission meeting will be held Friday afternoon, June 19th from 3:00-4:30. Asked Commissioners to place the meeting on their calendars and let her know if they will be attending. Junior Commissioners will make their recommendations to the Commission for FY10 at that time.
- has been attending monthly meetings on the 2010 Census and shared information she's received from these meetings. Will be placing this information on DSCI's website.
- DSCI will have a new website fall/winter 2009. Working with an agency called Iowa Interactive and the goal is to have some ASL signing on the site.

Lyons:

- discussed the hotel/motel survey and thanked the Commission for their help. Received 43 surveys and distributed the summary to the Commission today. A more formal document to be sent to the Lodging Assn.
- Lyons and Jones attended an ADA Strategies Workshop and both feel more confident and better prepared to assist the deaf community.
- working on JCP donation letters and menus for Camp. Have received a few donations for Camp; however, not as many as last year and it may be due to the economy.

Cordero asked that the donor companies be listed on the DSCI website to recognize their contribution and possibly display more pictures from Camp. Lyons said that pictures of campers and a thank you card go out to each donor, as well as thank you notes and pictures of the winners of donated products.

Cordero asked about newspaper coverage. Baumann-Reese added that every year the Fort Dodge Messenger comes in and does a photo shoot and interview with the campers and staff. Cordero thought that the Des Moines Register or local television stations should also be contacted for some publicity.

Fletcher had two (2) questions. One for Lyons; one for Mannella. Asked Lyons for an update on the plans for a retirement community I Council Bluffs. Lyons has followed up with Cardinal Capital Management, and they've looked into grants, talked with HUD and the Iowa Finance Authority about financing of the facility. Right now there is no money available. Baumann-Reese said that the Governor has announced his support for three (3) new facilities to be built with Iowa tax credits and Cardinal Capital is waiting to hear if they could be one of those facilities. Administrator has talked with Syeta Glanton, in the Governor's office, about the announcement and the intent of Cardinal Capital to build a retirement facility in Council Bluffs. Glanton will look into the announcement and get back with Baumann-Reese.

Fletcher was also curious about deaf camp in July to be held at the Y Camp near Boone.

Mannella advised that because of the economy, the Camp has been postponed. Right now the Committee is working on ideas to get funding. They're looking at an

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endowment. Donations would be invested in companies and then they could begin working on the Y Social Camp for the deaf.

Fletcher asked if it might be possible to hold the Camp next year? Mannella thought that might be possible.

Public Comment:

Legg introduced Bob Vizzini, an instructor of ASL with Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids. He is interested in the work of DSCI, especially deaf children in the school system. He wants to pass on our concerns to his students, because they're the future interpreters in the state.

Old Business:

Certified Deaf Interpreters:

Commission discussed the Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) Program and the possibility of setting up training on CDIs in Iowa. ISRID and the Iowa Association for the Deaf (IAD) may become involved with the project.

Baumann-Reese feels that we must first develop resources for deaf people interested in becoming a CDI and wants to offer a free, introductory class that will explain what a CDI is, the process of becoming a CDI and what it entails. Others would be asked to share their experiences in the training. If volunteers could be found and would be willing to share their expertise they would then offer three (3) workshops, free of charge. From there, we would find and work with either a community college or university willing to offer classes on the linguistics of ASL. Other CDIs, from other states, would be brought in to hold the workshops. A registration fee would have to be charged for these workshops.

As a Commission, we want to offer some free workshops to get it started, to see who might be interested, who really wants to invest their time before we get to the stage of using national presenters.

Baumann-Reese asked for Commission's approval before proceeding forward.

MOTION #09-11: Propose that DSCI approve the Plan for Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDIs). **Fletcher/Cordero**

Discussion:

Discussion took place on whether there was enough demand or interest for CDIs in the state of Iowa. There might not be a lot of demand right now, but once the project begins we would have to take on more responsibility to promote and educate people on the importance of using CDIs. Larger cities like Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Chicago, etc. with larger deaf communities have found support for CDIs; Iowa is just starting to get requests.

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Grover added that VR might be able to help with financing for some training. If a deaf person wants to increase their capacity to earn money, a counselor may be able to justify training costs if it's going to result in increased employment, increased benefit money. The key element for VR will be if it will result in employment.

Approved: 6
Disapproved: 0
Abstained: 0
Motion passed.

Approval of Annual Report FY07-08:

Baumann-Reese: The law requires that DSCI issue a report every two years. Since no February meeting was held, the report has actually been filed without the Commission's approval. Administrator would like the formal approval of the Commission. If there are any changes, the report can be amended. Once approved, the report will be placed on DSCI's website.

MOTION #09-12: Move that the Annual Report for FY07-08 be approved as presented.

Cordero/Fletcher

Approved: 6
Disapproved: 0
Abstained: 0
Motion passed.

Performance Planning FY10 & FY11:

Baumann-Reese: Discussed this fiscal year's planning as well as FY10 & FY11. With the Commission's approval, staff took part in the discussion.

- ✓ took a look at the budget for FY09 and talked about budget cuts and how they have affected DSCI and their programs. Also discussed funding for the next couple of years, possible cuts, programs and staffing issues.
- ✓ JCP Camp could continue if DSCI could raise money. Right now, attendees are not charged for Camp; however, DSCI spends about \$20,000 to hold Camp each year. That includes park rental – grounds/cabins; interpreters, nursing services; food, etc.
- ✓ recommended that we keep the 4.5 FTEs, no Camp, no room rentals/equipment, equipment purchases. Warned that things will not improve until after FY12.

Commissioners talked about ways for the Commission and DSCI to earn additional money or raise funds so that we would not be as dependent on state government.

- ✓ discussed the possible restructuring of DHR and the bill introduced in the Legislature FY09. Recommended that DSCI hold forums with the deaf and hard of hearing community and ask that they prioritize their needs and our services. Administrator also asked the Commission for ideas on departmental

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structure, functionality, etc. before she and other DHR Administrators discuss the study and how to make any necessary changes.

- ✓ looked at the Performance Plan and changes that need to be made. A couple of things need to be changed on the Plan because of funding cuts. One would be the elimination of the JCP Program, which could be placed under “Other” – “if funding becomes available”; the other would be percentage changes for two of the measures – “percentage of primary customers who report being prepared to self-advocate” and “independent living skills”. Wording would stay the same; percentages would change. Legislators/Governor’s Office may think that cuts won’t make a big impact, but we need to show them how it impacts us.

At the next Commission meeting, Baumann-Reese will show the Commission how the Plan has changed and will ask for Commission approval.

- ✓ asked for Commission’s recommendations on reorganization.
- ✓ discussed the Issues Paper and the seven (7) critical issues presented last year. Since we did not get funding for this project, she would like the Commission to take another look at the Issues Paper and set up a Task Force asking Commissioners to chair committees to look at those issues.

Grover asked if we were required to reorganize? Baumann-Reese said, no, we’re required to do a study and make recommendations to the Legislature on reorganization. So the department is going to do a study and provide the report to the Legislature.

Grover: Would this input come by way of a survey or questionnaire?

Baumann-Reese didn’t feel that a survey or questionnaire would be a way to get this information, but rather proposes three (3) special forums around the state – East, Central, West, where people could come and provide input. By meeting them face-to-face, it allows the community to share their views in their language.

Cordero thought it might be a good idea to get the community’s input at an IAD event. Legg felt it could be presented at the IAD Convention this summer. Baumann-Reese said that it might be good to present our recommendation to the IAD President and encourage them to place this on their Convention agenda for discussion, emphasizing that we’re not asking them to lobby, because they can’t, but we’re asking for opinions from members – what they want and need from state government in the way of services. Legg suggested that some of the Commissioners go to the Marshalltown IAD Board meeting in June and ask about it at that time.

Jones felt that we may not get everyone by holding the three (3) meetings around the state, especially those living in the northern and southern parts of the state because of gas prices and lack of extra funds may hinder them from traveling. She, again, approached the idea of a simple questionnaire – three (3) or four (4) questions and have the community meet and actually take a count – number of yes votes; number of no votes to each question presented.

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Lyons suggested that each Commissioner begin talking and networking with the deaf in their community and local areas. That they contact the deaf, on their own time, and do some research to get feedback.

First of all, Baumann-Reese thinks we need to make a decision on what the questions are going to be. We need to agree on what we are going to be asking to make sure that all the questions are going to be standard and everyone is asking the same thing. It might be possible that there would be a group of volunteers that would write questions and make a plan on how to work with the community. The information would have to get back to the Administrator by September or October, 2009. We need to ask the community “what do you want to see happen the most?”

Legg, Fletcher and Jones volunteer to decide on how to get information from the community.

Commission discussed the seven (7) Critical Issues. Baumann-Reese proposed that one Commissioner act as Chair of each Committee or Task Force and work with staff and experts in the community who have interest in the different issues and that they discuss the issues and make recommendations to the Commission as to what should be done. Committee can be comprised of no more than three (3) Commissioners, plus staff and would want recommendations made to the full Commission on what can be done to make things happen.

Committees:

Culturally Affirmative Mental Health Services/Substance Abuse Education and Aftercare Services: Dr. Muhammad Chowdhry

Accessible Legal Representation: Tammy Westhoff-Gentry

Access to Information and Services Through the Use of Technology: DSCI staff

Licensed Sign Language Interpreters Meeting Competency Standards:

Jan Fletcher and Theresa Legg

Opportunities for Youth to Prepare for Employment and Adult Life: Gus Cordero

Services that Specifically Address Issues for Those Who Lose Their Hearing Later in Life: Dr. Jim Grover

Baumann-Reese said that we’ve been told by hard of hearing people that they would like a place to go to test pieces of equipment before they buy it, so would like to see that be made part of the Services that Address Those with Hearing Loss under Dr. Grover.

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Motion #09-13: Motion that we accept the seven (7) Critical Issues and the chairmanships of each Committee. **Fletcher/Westhoff-Gentry**

Approved: 6

Disapproved: 0

Abstained: 0

Motion passed.

Baumann-Reese will advise each Chair the names of the staff member(s) who will be working with them on their Committee.

Announcements:

Baumann-Reese: Because we did not have a meeting in February, and she tried to set up another before today, the law requires that we have one more meeting before June 30. She would encourage any Commissioner who could attend the JCP Camp Commission meeting on the 19th of June to be there in the afternoon to satisfy this requirement. Mannella will send out a tentative agenda.

Baumann-Reese announced that DSCI is trying to make videos for distribution. Not studio quality but home-like quality on different subjects. For example, “Understanding 911”; the “2010 Census”; “Interpreting Services”. She thought that a Commissioner might volunteer to do the narrative in ASL. Cordero and Legg would like to take part in the videos.

There being no further business, Commission meeting adjourned at 3:03 p.m.

Theresa Legg, Chair

Linda A. Scott, Secretary