

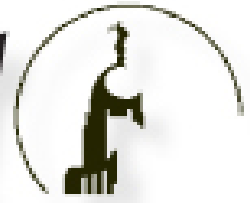
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John C. Wyvill
Executive Director

The Communicator

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



Winter 2015

A newsletter surveying health, government and issues affecting Nebraskans.

“If not us, Who? If not now, When?”



This was President John F. Kennedy’s message to our country over 50 years ago. I cannot think of a more fitting quote to highlight our sense of urgency and purpose here at NCDHH. The year 2015 is already off to a fast start. We are advocating for higher sign language interpreter standards in our Nebraska classrooms and licensed qualified interpreters in the community setting.

We are seeking additional funds from the Nebraska Legislature so we can properly serve Western Nebraska with a full time NCDHH team member with an office in Scottsbluff. Currently, our field representatives in Omaha and Lincoln rotate making the long trek west to provide coverage once a month, weather permitting, for Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing in our 11 western counties. Even with limited resources and staffing our team is working extremely hard on a daily basis in making a difference in the lives of the people we serve.

On the next page you will see some of the highlights of the terrific year 2014 was for NCDHH, with our mission of advocating for Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing.

Every Day, Every Person.

I am truly blessed to work with an outstanding group of dedicated professionals.

Your Executive Director,
John C. Wyvill

A Look Back at 2014

Below is a list of some of the highlights that made 2014 a great year at NCDHH. The successful work the NCDHH team does is not limited to the highlights below, as each and every day someone is making a difference in the life of a Nebraskan who is Deaf, Deaf-Blind or Hard of Hearing.

LR 517: In the spring of 2014, NCDHH began working with stakeholders and those within the community on Legislative Resolution 517. The goal of this is to improve the quality, availability, and proficiency of Sign Language Interpreters in Nebraska. What started as an interim study has now become a legislative bill within the legislature. Through meetings and research with workgroups such as Education, Interpreter, Community/Medical, and Licensure, a compiled list of recommendations was sent to the NCDHH Full Board of Commissioners. Approved by the Full Board, these recommendations were then submitted to the legislature by Sen. Ken Haar and a bill was filed.

Full Board Appointment of Dr. Frank Turk: In June of 2014, NCDHH welcomed Dr. Frank Turk onto the Full Board of Commissioners. Dr. Turk has long been an influential figure in the Deaf community; founding two successful camps: Youth Leadership Camp (YLC) and the National Leadership and Literacy Camp (NLLC).

LR 574: Sen. Colby Coash introduced Legislative Resolution 574 as an interim study to examine the needs of Nebraskans who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in residential facilities, such as nursing homes, assisted living, or a developmentally disabled home.

Nebraska Medicine: NCDHH met with Flower Nunez of Nebraska Medicine and other Nebraska Medicine representatives to discuss ways to improve communication access for Nebraskans who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in the medical setting.

Saltdogs Game: NCDHH worked with Lincoln Saltdogs President Charlie Meyer to create a Deaf & Hard of Hearing Awareness night at a home game in July of 2014. To raise awareness, there was a "Silent Inning" in which an inning of the game was played with no music, commentary, or announcements from the press box. Board Chairman Michael Brummer threw out the game's first pitch, and there was an informational booth highlighting NCDHH's services. Gary Theiler signed "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" during the 7th Inning Stretch. A great time was had by all, and it is our hope at NCDHH to continue this as a tradition each year!

Facebook: Social media is a crucial part of agency awareness and promotion with the community. The NCDHH Facebook page is constantly being updated with the latest news relating to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Whether it be a new "Boss of the Month," a video in American Sign Language, or an interesting article in the paper, it is our duty as a state agency to keep the general public informed. Our Facebook page is constantly growing with more individuals and agencies tuning in to the latest news from our corner!

Stress Management

by: Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist



Interpreting is a stressful and demanding occupation. Your ability to recognize and cope with work related stress is essential to your ongoing resiliency as well as your personal and professional well-being.

On May 16, Dr. Ron Lybarger will present "Help Yourself: Stress Management, Self-Care and Resiliency Strategies workshop for Interpreters" in Nebraska. The workshop will be held in Omaha at the CHI Health Immanuel Medical Center Conference Center.

There is no cost to attend the workshop and CEUs will be provided.

In this interactive workshop, Dr. Lybarger will provide participants with stress management training based on scientifically proven strategies including breathing techniques, biofeedback, emotional self-regulation, cognitive behavioral strategies for more rational thinking, meditation, and yoga. The best way for interpreters to manage stress effectively is to ensure they are getting their needs met and that their internal resources are adequate. Interpreters will learn a range of stress management strategies that they can employ immediately to manage stress more effectively.

Fliers will be mailed to interpreters in April at which time you can register for the workshop. If you have any questions about the workshop please contact Peggy Williams at 402-471-3593.

2015 NET Production

by: Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Board has approved funding to produce a program through the Nebraska Educational Network (NET) on the Nebraska history of the Deaf, culture, language and audism. Filming for this program will begin in February or early March.

A committee has been set up to assist in developing this program. A special thanks to Dr. Peter Seiler, Jerry Siders, Linsay Darnall Jr. and Jerry Siders for taking time out of their busy schedule to make recommendations and provide input on the development of this program. The debut of this program will be aired at the June 2015 Nebraska Association of the Deaf convention and aired on NET following the debut.

We Are Professionals

by: Crystal Pierce, Interpreter Program Assistant



If I had a dollar for every time I felt that people do not understand what I do as an interpreter, I would be rich. Those times when a young mother comes up and says, "Oh! My three-year-old does what you do! She can sign milk, more, and please." Other times when I have just finished interpreting for an hour long church service, then a little old lady comes up and says, "You did such a nice job. It was beautiful. Even though I have no idea what you said." Finally, the one that hurts the most is when you are working in a professional setting such as in the medical field and the nurse pops in and says, "Can you just explain that she is having _____ procedure done today. You are her daughter, right?" Now I know that during these types of situations none of the people are trying to make me feel as if I am just a "signer", but it can get frustrating that I am not always seen of as a professional Sign Language Interpreter. Some of this I believe stems from the simple fact they do not know. I can't blame that little old lady for enjoying watching me interpret and thinking it is simply beautiful. What really bothers me is when I work with many professionals that consider me simply a "signer".

With that in mind, I started to ponder the reason behind this label of "signer" that I have been given. I have always strived my best to behave and present myself as a highly qualified interpreter and as their equal. Not that I don't respect every one of them for their expertise in their field. Believe me, I would never be able to become a doctor, nurse, or computer programmer, but that also can be applied to them. They may never have pictured themselves being able to become an interpreter. We all have our own field or study of expertise. Through much thought and consideration I have now determined that their views of me as an interpreter are not only influenced from what they see me do, but also what they see my fellow Sign Language Interpreters do.

As I thought about it, I considered this is sort of funny. Imagine if you were unhappy with a particular family physician, it is probable you would switch to another doctor. Most likely, you wouldn't say you don't like all family physicians, but it was just that particular one. This can be applied to Sign Language Interpreters. Due to the fact that our Sign Language Interpreter community is so small we can become stereotyped from behavior the public sees from one interpreter. Now that is a scary thought. Throughout years of interpreting, I have seen some Sign Language Interpreters do something that was questionable, or they are acting in a way that is against our Code of Professional Conduct. That being said, I don't want to be judged for another's unethical decision.

We Are Professionals (continued)

by: Crystal Pierce, Interpreter Program Assistant

As we are coming into the new Legislative session, the Commission has filed the Interpreter Licensure Bill, LB 287. LB 287 was created after many meetings, committees, and discussion from various workgroups throughout the community. They have made recommendations, which include expanding the interpreter licensure requirements. This expansion would include all community interpreters that accept compensation, with the exclusion of K-12 Educational Interpreters and Religious Interpreters at this time. It would also include a requirement for all Video Relay Interpreting providers to hold a business license. For many years, many interpreters have not gotten licensed, due to the fact that they do not work for state agencies, which is currently the one environment that requires the use of licensed interpreters. If LB 287 passes, then it would encompass all other environments other than the two stated above.

This is a dawning of a new era for us as professional Sign Language Interpreters. This is a wonderful step toward having a regulation for standard of practice and the ethical behavior of interpreters. This benefits everyone in Nebraska. We can proudly state we ARE professional Sign Language Interpreters. We can be confident that those who are not upholding ethical behavior in the Code of Professional Conduct can be held accountable. We are raising the standard and expectation for ourselves and in turn, society can recognize that proper level of skill, quality of interpreting and high moral standards mold this profession.

Social Media and Technology



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www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov

Hellen Keller Story Comes to Kearney area



In November of 2014, NCDHH Field Representative April Guthrie coordinated with theaters in the Kearney area to raise awareness for Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing through several performances about the life of Helen Keller. In preparation for the events, April did a segment on NTV's "Good Morning Nebraska" to discuss NCDHH services and the upcoming performances.

On Nov. 13, the Merryman Theater in Kearney hosted an event called "Connections". This performance was a story ballet about the life of Helen Keller and was focused on elementary students. Incorporated into the performance were sensory exercises to teach the children in the audience about the experience of being blind and deaf. The performance was well attended, with 600 children from the Kearney area in the 2nd and 6th grades. Prior to the performance, April addressed the children to promote awareness of hearing loss issues as well as NCDHH services. Each child received a bag of NCDHH materials to take home to his/her family. Lesson plans were also sent out to the teachers of each class prior to the performance to prepare the children for what they would learn during "Connections".

A similar performance, titled, "A Light in the Dark" was hosted by The Tassel theater in Holdrege. This performance was for an adult audience and also featured story ballet scenes about the life of Helen Keller. April set up a booth at the Holdrege event to promote awareness and to hand out informational material to attendees.

MP3s and Hearing Loss

Studies have found that people using personal music devices, such as MP3 players, at high-volume settings, for at least one hour a day risk permanent hearing loss after five years. To reduce the risk, use earphones that go over the ears rather than those that go in the ears, and only listen to music at lower than 50 percent of the maximum output level. If you are concerned about a possible hearing loss, talk to your doctor about having your hearing tested.

Source: American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Troubleshooting Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) Service Issues

by: Kim Davis, Field Representative



As we know it, Video Remote Interpreting services have been on the rise. Many Deaf individuals who use sign language for communication have expressed frustration with the use of Video Remote Interpreting Services (VRI). This article concentrates on a very high number of issues occurring in hospitals, doctors' offices and emergency room departments. Some of the common complaints expressed are similar to these:

"The interpreter in the video screen and I have to sign very slowly to understand what is being asked or said by me and the doctor or nurse. We can't sign fast because our signs become blurry. We even have to repeat our signed messages."

"The interpreter looks so divided and chopped up on the screen. I can't understand what is being said or asked."

"The screen kept going black and we lost the interpreter. And we have to call again, and then it happens again."

"I have never used this interpreter inside the screen. Why did she get mad at me because she couldn't see my signs?"

"I was in so much pain and had limited physical movement to be able to face the screen to sign or even see the interpreter sign."

"I feel violated when I'm naked for a medical test I had to do. How do I know if the VRI interpreter on the screen is in her room or cubicle space alone?"

"I don't want to use VRI. I want an interpreter physically in the room. I was told they only use VRI but I could bring my own interpreter and pay myself as long as it is not a family member."

"I can't see the interpreter on the video screen clearly due to my poor eye sight."

"The VRI didn't work, and the hospital said they can't call an interpreter to come in person because of their hospital rules or policies. So we had to communicate in writing. I have no idea what was causing my pains and what some of the medicines they gave me were and its purpose."

Troubleshooting Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) Service Issues (continued)

by: Kim Davis, Field Representative

The U.S. Department of Justice recently released a publication entitled "ADA Requirements: Effective Communication". This particular publication provides a summary of the Americans with Disabilities Act that details the available types of auxiliary aids and services; how effective communication can be determined and processed; and, most of all, answers on many of the above concerns and complaints regarding the use of the Video Remote Interpreting services and the service provider's obligations with the VRI's performance standards. The "ADA Requirement: Effective Communication" publication **can be found at: www.ada.gov/effective-com.htm**

What Can You Do? If you have experienced problems with obtaining effective communication, you have several options.

Ask the nurse or doctor who you can address your concerns or complaints to about the video interpreting service problems in their hospital, doctor's office or emergency department. Most hospitals and their medical centers also have a Patient Advocate office.

Contact us at NCDHH for advocacy assistance, guidance or resources. We can also assist you with addressing your concerns or complaints and educating the hospitals, doctors' offices and emergency room departments. Feel free to contact me by email at Kim.Davis@nebraska.gov or by telephone (402) 261-2657 (VP/VRS) or (800)545-6244 (V/TTY).

Communicating your concerns or complaints with the responsible administrator helps them know there are problems that need to be resolved. Ongoing problems that have been addressed and unresolved can also be brought to the attention of the U.S. Department of Justice (under Title II or III of the ADA) and any federal departments that provide federal funds or grants to that particular medical facility (under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act).

Feel free to share this newsletter article and DOJ publication with your doctor or hospital. A copy of our newsletter is also available on our website at www.ncdhh.ne.gov.

Disaster Preparedness

by: Beth Ellsworth, Field Representative



With the unexpectedness of disasters it is so important to prepare so we are not caught off guard. But what is necessary and what is not? For those of us with hearing aids, cochlear implants or assisted listening devices it is crucial that they be stored in a container that will protect them. Getting in the habit of setting them near us so we can grab them is also important. For example, I used to keep my hearing aids in a container in another room at night but now I put them next to my bed in a container so I can get them without delay. The American Red Cross recommends storing an extra hearing aid (if possible) or Cochlear Implant with the emergency supplies.

Here is a list of important emergency supplies to include:

1. Extra batteries for hearing aids, implants, light or loud phone signaler.
 - It is a good idea to have at least one battery operated phone and signaler (light or audible).
2. Keep one battery operated phone and signaler charged.
3. Have pen, pencil and pad of paper stored in a secure place for emergency personnel.
 - NCDHH has a terrific card that identifies emergency contact, communication tips and pictures and phrases.

Other ways to prepare:

- Contact the American Red Cross in your area and talk with them about your needs in the event of an emergency.
- Contact your TV stations and keep on them to broadcast all news and emergency information in open caption format
- Be an advocate and tell hotels and places you stay what you will need. TV with closed captioning, amplified phone, visual and audible alarms

This is just a start to what needs to be done to prepare for an emergency. To learn more contact the American Red Cross at www.Prepare.org If you do not have internet please contact me for a written copy of the American Red Cross guidelines specific for hearing loss. I would be happy to work with you in making a plan!

Social Media and Technology

NCDHH

Nebraska Commission
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Media Center

Interested in learning more about...

American Sign Language

Interpreting

Deaf Culture

Hearing Loss

And more!

Available to Nebraskans, NCDHH has a free media center loan program. Available materials include books, videos, and teaching materials on topics from American Sign Language, deafness, interpreting, hearing loss, and more

Browse and Submit Your Request at:

ne.gov/go/ncdhh-media

or by phone:

(800) 545-6244

ncdhh.nebraska.gov



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Registry of Persons with Hearing Loss

Section 71.4728(5) of the Revised Statutes of Nebraska requires the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) to conduct and maintain a voluntary census of Nebraska citizens who have a hearing loss. **All information provided to the Commission on this form will be held strictly confidential.** Please return this completed form to the address given above. If you have any questions about this form, please contact our office between 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday (*closed on state holidays*).

Please Print Clearly

Name: _____ **Year of Birth:** _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____ **County:** _____

E-Mail: _____ **Home Phone:** (_____) _____

Video Phone: (_____) _____ **Cell Phone:** (_____) _____ **Texting** Y / N

Do you consider yourself?

- Hard of Hearing Late Deafened Deaf Hearing Deaf/Low Vision
 Hard of Hearing / Low Vision Speech Impaired Other (Specify): _____

Yes **No**

Do you have a Cochlear Implant?

Do you use a Hearing Aid?

Would you like to receive the NCDHH newsletter and announcements Yes No

Would you like more information on:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NE Specialized Telephone Equipment Program (NSTEP) | <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment Loan Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sertoma Hearing Aid Bank Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Media Loan Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lions Hearing Aid Bank Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter Referral Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Presentations or Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

How did you hear about our program?

- Friend Health Clinic Internet Referred by another State Agency
 TV/Radio Newspaper Other: _____

Registering with NCDHH helps the Commission make better planning decisions and improve services.

Thank You!

Date: _____

Staff Member: _____



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Submit an Article Idea!

NCDHH welcomes ideas and articles for consideration and insertion into future issues of the newsletter.

Please submit articles to:

NCDHH Newsletter Ideas
4600 Valley Road, Suite 420
Lincoln, NE 68510-4844

or e-mail them to:
ncdhh@nebraska.gov

Articles submitted are not necessarily the views of NCDHH. The NCDHH newsletter is published four times annually.

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