

THE COMMUNICATOR

NEBRASKA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Deaf & Hard of Hearing Night at Lincoln Saltdogs: Wednesday, July 31



Wednesday, July 31 | 7:05pm

SIoux CITY EXPLORERS vs. LINCOLN SALTDogs

\$11.00/Ticket

A portion of the proceeds will go to the hearing aid banks

saltdogs.com/hearu



Legislative Updates - NCDHH Priority Bills

John Wyvill, Executive Director



LB15: Children of Nebraska Hearing Aid Act

A top priority for the Commission Full Board, LB15 would require hearing aid insurance coverage for Nebraska children up to 18 years of age. Introduced by Senator Carol Blood, this bill has strong legislative support and several groups and individuals have worked very hard collaboratively to get this bill where its at. Currently, we are waiting for final round approval on this bill on the Legislature floor. You can find more information

about LB15 at: https://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=36850

LB248: Change Terminology Relating to Hearing-Impaired Persons

LB248 was filed under Senator Sara Howard, an act to change terminology 'hearing-impaired' persons to 'deaf and hard of hearing' in Revised Statutes of Nebraska. This piece of legislation has been lead by the Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NeAD) and supported by NCDHH Full Board. This bill was initiated by the National Association of the Deaf and followed by other states, maintaining that the term "hearing-impaired" has a negative connotation that focuses on what people can't do. You can find more information on this bill at: https://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=36991

NCDHH
Nebraska Commission
for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Communication - Advocacy - Equal Access

Celebrating
40
YEARS

**OPEN HOUSE CELEBRATING THE
40TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR
AGENCY!**

WED. JUNE 26 | **NCDHH LINCOLN 4600**
3-5 O'CLOCK PM | **VALLEY RD. ROOM 4A**
| **LINCOLN, NE 68510**

Come out and celebrate 40 years of advocacy in
Nebraska with sweets and refreshments!

Panhandle Happenings

Brittney Isom, Advocacy Specialist

Spring 2019 will be one that we will remember for quite some time. Between the blizzards in the west and the historic flooding in the east, we have shown how resilient Nebraskans are. Despite all of that, life in the panhandle has been a busy one. I have been able to attend a few health fairs and give presentations in the area, like at the Spring Wellness Festival on April 12th. This event was hosted by the Aging Office of Western Nebraska. I had around 10-15 people in attendance for my session. We went over the services that NCDHH provides, along with different assistive technology that is available.



Billy Estes, Executive Director for the Midwest Theater in Scottsbluff, and I are in the beginning stages of doing an "Open Captioning Movie Event" at the theater this summer. This will bring more accessibility into the panhandle with a goal of doing an Open Captioned movie every week. I am very excited to have the opportunity to work with Billy and the Midwest Theater crew!

Last, but certainly not least, we are planning another Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Day at the Riverside Discovery Center in Scottsbluff. Last year was the first year we had the event and it was a success with over 60 people in attendance! Even though spring started off rough for the Panhandle, things are definitely looking up as the grass greens and the trees and flowers bloom. Plus, we have events to look forward to in the months to come.



SAVE THE DATE

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Awareness Day

Saturday, September 7
1:00pm-4:00pm
Riverside Discovery Center
1600 S. Bellline Hwy W, Scottsbluff, NE 69361



**Come out to enjoy a day at the zoo with
crafts, Sensory Sefaris, fun, and more!**



Contact:
Brittney Isom: 308-633-3751 brittney.isom@nebraska.gov
Sara Peterson: 308-641-1402 speterson@esu13.org

Power, Privilege, and Oppression (PPO) CEUs for Interpreters

Sharon Sinkler, Interpreter Program Coordinator



Since 2014, RID has been recovering from organizational crisis and seeking the most effective solutions in defining the organization's future. One of the primary concerns is membership engagement and the need for deliberate inclusion of members who identify with cultural groups that are divergent from the general RID demographic. The RID leadership recognized the need to explore how individual and organizational responsibility play a role in achieving informed

and sustained engagement. The Board sought insight from the membership as to what authentic engagement means at the local, state, and national levels. The response from the membership challenged RID to renew their commitment to membership engagement and deliberate inclusion. Written by Lisa Weems, CI and CT, NIC and originally published in Fall VIEWS November, 2018.

From the RID.org website: At the 2015 RID National Conference in New Orleans, a member motion was made that each cycle, 1.0 of the required 6.0 Professional Studies (PS) CEUs be related to topics of Power, Privilege, and Oppression (PPO). The motion was passed with the support of 64% of the membership. Immediately following the 2015 conference, a workgroup was formed to define the new continuing education requirement as well as develop criteria for meeting the new standards. The workgroup was specifically tasked to identify language that accurately defines power, privilege, and oppression.

After a period of research and development, the committee developed a category definition to reflect the educational goals established by the motion. This description refers to the phenomena by which members of a society are unfairly advantaged and fail to recognize that advantage. The result of this is bias at the systemic, societal, and individual level which contributes to micro aggressions that perpetuate social and systemic oppression.

Consistent with the RID Code of Professional Conduct, interpreters are required to develop the sensitivity needed to identify such phenomena, and build competence and knowledge in the following areas with a goal of promoting and practicing social justice and dismantling oppressive systems. Education in this sector should include, but not be limited to:

- Challenging injustice
- Respecting and valuing diversity
- Respecting and valuing humanity
- Protection of equal access
- Identifying and embracing individual "filters"
- Identifying and acknowledging individual perceptions of privilege
- Changing the narratives of compassion and respect
- Promoting inclusion, freedom and equality
- Challenging the status quo
- Engaging in conversations about "-isms"
- Removal of barriers
- Social Justice/Liberation studies
- Cultural competence
- Identity
- Intersectionality
- Invitational communication/interaction
- Accountability
- Trauma-informed approaches to interpreting
- Challenging injustice
- Respecting and valuing diversity
- Protection of equal access
- Social Justice/Liberation studies
- Cultural competence, and Identity

This list provides a guideline for activities which can be classified under the Power, Privilege, and Oppression Educational/Professional Development category. A full description of the standards as well as the list of guidelines can be viewed at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yHsOLO1gTKlmc7wCQqBx-OoxMPPtRp9Ob/view>

The Content Areas in which interpreters/ transliterators can receive Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are divided into two categories: Professional Studies (linguistic and cultural studies; theoretical and experiential studies; specialization studies) and General Studies (human service and leadership; general knowledge studies). In determining the Content Areas, the RID Professional Development Committee (PDC) considered the recommended standards in the curriculum section of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers' (CIT) Educational Standards Package.

Implementation of the PPO CEU Requirement

The PPO CEU requirement will apply when a new certification cycle begins. If a member has not begun their new certification cycle, no CEUs with the PPO designation will be listed on their transcript. For any members who become certified on or after 1/1/2019, the PPO CEU requirement will be in effect for them beginning with their first certification cycle.

- The PPO CEU requirement will go into effect on 1/1/2019 for Certified members whose certification cycle ended on 12/31/2018.
- The PPO CEU requirement will go into effect on 1/1/2020 for Certified members whose certification cycle ends on 12/31/2019.
- The PPO CEU requirement will go into effect on 1/1/2021 for Certified members whose certification cycle ends on 12/31/2020.
- The PPO CEU requirement will go into effect on 1/1/2022 for Certified members whose certification cycle ends on 12/31/2021.

(You may find more information in the VIEWS article from the November 2018 publication)

Whether you are an RID certified interpreter or not, we can all benefit from Power, Privilege and Oppression training. RID and the PDC are there to support and answer any questions that you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact the Professional Development Department at cmp@rid.org. If you wish to contact me, please email me at sharon.sinkler@nebraska.gov or call (402) 471-3065.

Reading Resources

Jessica Larrison, Education Advocate



I have included a link for the blog, “Itsy Bitsy Titans” with a list of books that are for Deaf and Hard of hearing children ranging from newborn to 18 years old. These books can help your child feel comfortable in their own skin, promote self-advocacy, and help other children understand hearing loss a little better. There is also a tab for parents which will show a variety of books for your journey ahead to understand hearing loss and what it means for your child and to how to start the school process. This is a long

journey, and many deaf children are born into a hearing family. This can make it challenging for the family to understand what the child is going through. These books help give some insight and helpful guides on how to approach some difficulties time you may face along this journey. If you are interested in more information or have any questions or concerns about your child’s hearing loss or education, please do not hesitate to contact me at Jessica.larrison@nebraska.gov or 402-471-3593.

<https://blog.itsybitsytitans.com/hc/en-us/articles/360021357592-Kid-s-Books-for-Deaf-and-Hard-of-Hearin>

What is Anxiety?

Teresa Hevner, Lead Advocacy Specialist



Anxiety... A word that may not be the topic of most of our dinner conversations. However, it affects many individuals and is one of the most common mental illnesses diagnosed. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, Anxiety disorders affect 40 million adults in the U.S. every year. Many of us can relate to feeling anxious at one point or another. Interviewing for a job, preparing for a test or even financial issues can cause us to feel stressed or anxious. When the feeling of anxiety is

persistent, it may interfere with an individual’s life. Some studies also show it may start to hinder the physical health of an individual.

Anxiety is defined as “a feeling of worry, nervousness or unease. Typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.” It is a normal and often healthy response our bodies have to certain situations. The fight or flight response is known to trigger anxious feelings to help redirect us to a safer environment. In time, for some this feeling passes once the event or outcome is finished. For many other people, anxiety may be a daily occurrence that does not have a particular reason for showing up. This can be caused by a generalized anxiety disorder or social anxiety disorder. Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) is described as chronic anxiety, exaggerated worry, and tension with nothing present to provoke the symptoms. Approximately 6.8 million adults in the U.S. have some form of GAD. Women are two times more likely to be affected by this. Another common type of anxiety may be a social anxiety disorder or social phobia. This can cause feelings of extreme self-consciousness or anxiety in everyday social interactions. Typically, this is related to a specific task or event. Public speaking may cause social anxiety for some. In very severe cases, social anxiety can be triggered any time an individual is around others. Treatment options for both of these are similar. If you think you may be affected by either of these anxiety disorders, you should consult with your health care provider or a mental health provider. NCDHH has a list of mental health providers you may contact on our website.

Places that May Provide Trained Hearing Service Dogs

Kim Davis, Advocacy Specialist

Below may be some organizations that train dogs to become Hearing Service Dogs. All organizations have different qualification criteria. If interested in learning more, it is encouraged that you contact the organization directly. These service animals are trained to perform specific tasks, and are recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). There are also Emotional Support animals, those that are not trained to perform specific tasks but rather provide emotional or companion support. Animals that provide emotional or companion support are not recognized under the ADA, but rather under the Fair Housing Act (FHA). Be sure to be familiar with relevant federal and state civil rights statutes and regulations, and any possible local ordinances. Empowering yourself with self-awareness is highly encouraged as it will be helpful to prepare yourself for any obligations necessary with owning or preparing to own a service or emotional support animal, type of animals that may be recognized under the particular role it serves, and for self-advocacy purposes within places of public accommodation and rental residential places involving proprietors. Feel free to contact one of us at NCDHH to provide these additional resources.



- **America's VetDogs – the Veteran's K-9 Corps, Inc.**
(631) 930-9000
info@VetDogs.org
www.VetDogs.org
Located in New York
- **Canine Companion for Independence**
Located in Ohio
(740) 833-3700
info@cci.org
www.cci.org
- **NEADS World Class Service Dogs**
Located in Massachusetts
(978) 422-9064
info@neads.org
www.neads.org
- **Dogs for Better Lives (formerly Dogs for the Deaf)**
Located in Oregon
(541) 826-9220
info@dogsforbetterlives.org
www.dogsforbetterlives.org
- **Duo Dogs, Inc. (formerly Support Dogs, Inc.)**
Located in Missouri
(314) 997-2325
info@supportdogs.org
www.supportdogs.org
- **International Hearing Dog, Inc.**
Located in Colorado
(303) 287-3277
www.hearingdog.org

Organizations for Additional Information & Referrals

- Assistance Dogs International
www.assistedogsinternational.org/members/programs-search
- Assistance Dog United Campaign
<http://www.assistedogunitedcampaign.org/index.html>
- *** Check out their "Voucher Info" and "List of Member Programs"

To Have Your Own Pet Trained

Most service dog trainers or businesses do not provide training to interested potential applicants' personal pets. They provide their own trained animals instead. Some organizations may have a compiled list of potential places.

- Association of Pet Dog Trainers,
<https://apdt.com/>
- International Association of Canine Professionals
<https://www.canineprofessionals.com/service-dog-trainer-certification-program>

To Become a Service Dog Trainer

- One option is to seek on obtaining a Service Dog Coaching Certificate
- Cooperative Paws Service Dog Education
<https://cooperativepaws.com/service-dog/>

Criticism of Netflix film: ‘The Silence’

Cody McEvoy, Advocacy Specialist



Netflix has recently come out with a new horror film called “The Silence” which has many resemblances to the popular film “The Quiet Place” with the only difference being that there was a Deaf actress playing in the movie “The Quiet Place”. The film features a hearing actor playing a Deaf role which received backlash from the Deaf community, including Deaf actress, Marlee Matlin, and Deaf model, Nyle DiMarco, directed toward the film’s Director, John Leonetti, for not considering the views of the Deaf community.

Leonetti cast a hearing actress, Kiernan Shipka, to play a Deaf girl in the film. For the film, she had to learn sign language. Leonetti reported during the production that Kiernan was “flawless with sign language as she had been signing her entire life.” This statement received backlash from the Deaf community. DiMarco fired back “and mastering sign language, which takes years and years of practice does not mean you’re flawlessly Deaf?” There was also criticism for incorrect sign language and Kiernan’s ASL not being grammatically correct.

With more films featuring Deaf characters, it seems there is a spark in Deaf talent in the film industry. Hopefully this criticism of this new film on Netflix allows for more authentic roles including having proper representation of Deaf characters played by Deaf actors and actresses. It is the hope of many for future films, this public criticism will show why it’s important to cast deaf people in Deaf roles.

As of now, director John Leonetti and hearing actress Kiernan Shipka have not responded to the backlash from the Deaf community. This is an important example for you to always advocate for yourself; in ways like Nyle DiMarco and Marlee Matlin have. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me and how I can help!

Please Pass On!

The Nebraska Interpreter Review Board (IRB) has one vacancy in the representative for a deaf individual. Applicants will be subject to an interview in front of the Full Commission board.

The IRB is tasked to develop guidelines and regulations for the licensing of sign language interpreters that work for any state entity which receives appropriations from the Legislature. This includes Legislature, legislative committees, executive agencies, courts, and probation officials. The Board consists of eight individuals: a director of Health and Human Services or his/her designee, a Director of the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) or his/her designee, two Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals, two licensed, qualified interpreters within one year of their appointment, and two individuals representing local government. Members are appointed by the NCDHH Full Board of Commissioners. The IRB meets quarterly, generally with the meeting occurring on a Friday. Normally, meeting times are 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., alternating between Lincoln and Omaha work sites. Members are reimbursed for their travel expenses.

Anyone interested in becoming a member on the Nebraska IRB, please download the application here: https://ncdhh.nebraska.gov/sites/ncdhh.nebraska.gov/files/doc/IRB_application1.14.14.pdf

The Benefits of Audio Training

Aaron Rothenberger, Advocacy Specialist

We can train our bodies in many ways. We can lift weights. We can jog in preparation for 5k races. We can perform stretches to increase flexibility. But did you know that you can train your brain to hear better and clearer? That is where Audio Training comes in.



Audio training is a technique that can improve the understanding of speech and increase your listening skills. This is done through an activity that is specifically designed to optimize speech perception by training the hearing processes that you use while listening. Your brain is like a muscle. If you don't use it you lose it, or rather, the more you use your brain to listen, the better it gets at hearing sounds and deciphering what those sounds mean.

This concept is referred to as Neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout life. By training your brain, you are creating new connections and pathways that are utilized in everyday processes, including hearing. Scientists are learning that the brain has a lot more neuroplasticity potential than was initially thought. Audio training allows us to take advantage of that potential.

The process of audio training will have you listening and identifying sounds and speech components to better hear and understand those sounds in everyday life. It also allows you the opportunity to practice sounds that you find hard to understand in daily conversation. This can help both hearing aid users and non-users to better perceive speech in noisy situations, like a busy restaurant or dance hall. The more you hear a sound, the faster your brain processes the sound, and the faster you understand what has been said.

Several audio training programs are available on the internet, and most hearing professionals can assist you in finding a program that works for you. The Hearing Loss Association of America, in particular, has a nice list of free and paid audio training programs on their website at <https://www.hearingloss.org/hearing-help/technology/auditory-rehab-programs/>

A lot of the people I work with have told me, "I can hear you, I just cannot understand what you said." By using audio training regularly, you will find your ability to understand will increase. It will improve your understanding of speech and enhance your listening skills. And if you are consistent at it, you might find that an old dog can, in fact, learn new tricks.

Happy Listening!

Don't forget to check out NCDHH on Facebook at:
www.facebook.com/nebraskacommissionforthe deafandhardofhearing/

We're also on Twitter! @NebCDHH

You can also find information on our website at www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov



Falls & Balance Problems Could Result from Hearing Loss

Kathy Scusa, Advocacy Specialist



Did you know that hearing loss and/or ear problems can be a cause of balance problems and falling? Any time you are experiencing an increased number of falls or periods of dizziness or feeling off balance, you should see your physician to determine the cause. There are a huge number of possible causes for increased falls. Here, I am only including some of the possible causes that are also linked to hearing loss or ear problems.

Menier's Disease: affecting roughly 615,000 people in the United States, making it a relatively rare disorder. Each year about 45,500 new cases are diagnosed. This disease is difficult to diagnose, it is a cluster of symptoms for which the underlying cause is unknown and for which there currently is no cure. More than anything else, Meniere's tends to be known for the extreme and unpredictable dizziness that typically comes with it—vertigo, with which the individual is overcome by an overwhelming sensation of spinning. Other common symptoms of Meniere's include tinnitus (commonly called "ringing in the ears"), muffled hearing or the sensation that one's hearing has been blocked, and a feeling of congestion, fullness, or pressure in the affected ear. Acute episodes are dominated by severe vertigo, which tends to come with associated imbalance, nausea, and/or vomiting. Some people also experience blurry vision, trembling, cold sweats, rapid pulse, and/or diarrhea. Most often, Meniere's involves only one ear, but in about 15 percent of people with the disorder, both ears are involved.

Vertigo: is a sensation of feeling off balance, having a dizzy spells, you might feel like you are spinning or that the world around you is spinning. Vertigo is often caused by an inner ear problem. One of the most common causes is: BPPV (Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vvertigo). BPPV occurs when tiny calcium particles (canaliths) clump up in canals of the inner ear. The inner ear sends signals to the brain about head and body movements relative to gravity. It helps you keep your balance. BPPV can occur for no known reason and may be associated with age. Vertigo is associated as a symptom of a great many inner ear disorders and it is often difficult to diagnose an exact cause for it.

Barotrauma: Ear barotrauma is a condition that causes ear discomfort due to pressure changes. In each ear there is a tube that connects the middle of your ear to your throat and nose. It also helps regulate ear pressure. This tube is called the Eustachian tube. When the tube is blocked, you may experience ear barotrauma. Occasional ear barotrauma is common, especially in environments where the altitude changes. While the condition isn't harmful in some people, frequent cases may cause further complications. It's important to understand the differences between acute (occasional) and chronic (recurring) cases so you know when to seek medical treatment. If you have ear barotrauma, you may feel an uncomfortable pressure inside the ear. Common symptoms, which occur earlier or in mild to moderate cases, may include: dizziness, general ear discomfort, slight hearing loss or difficulty hearing, stuffiness or fullness in the ear. If it progresses long enough without treatment or the case is particularly severe, symptoms may intensify. Additional symptoms that may occur in these cases include: ear pain, feeling of pressure in the ears, as if you were underwater, nosebleed, moderate to severe hearing loss, and eardrum injury. Eustachian tube blockage is one of the causes of ear barotrauma. The Eustachian tube helps to restore equilibrium during changes in pressure. For example, yawning normally opens the Eustachian tube. When the tube is blocked, symptoms develop because the pressure in the ear is different than the pressure outside of your eardrum. Altitude changes are the most common cause of this condition. One of the places many people experience ear barotrauma is during an airplane's ascent or descent. The condition is sometimes referred to as airplane ear. Other situations that might cause ear barotrauma include: scuba diving, hiking, and driving through mountains. Diving is a common cause of ear barotrauma. Once treated, almost all symptoms will go away. Hearing loss from ear barotrauma is almost always temporary and reversible. Any issue that may block the Eustachian tube puts you at risk for experiencing barotrauma. People who have allergies, colds, or active infections may be more likely to experience ear barotrauma.

Vestibular Neuritis & Labyrinthitis: This is an inner ear problem usually related to infection (usually viral). The infection causes inflammation in the inner ear around nerves that are important for helping the body sense balance. Vestibular rehabilitation is a type of physical therapy aimed at helping strengthen the vestibular system. The function of the vestibular system is to send signals to the brain about head and body movements relative to gravity.

Autoimmune Inner Ear Disease: AIED, is a rare disease that happens when your body's immune system mistakenly attacks your inner ear. It can cause dizziness, ringing in your ears, and hearing loss. Less than 1% of the 28 million Americans who have hearing loss have it because of AIED. If you have AIED, you'll have hearing loss that starts in one ear and then spreads to the other. This may take weeks, or it could happen over a few months. Other symptoms can include: dizziness or problems with your balance, fullness in your ear, tinnitus (ringing, roaring, or hissing in your ear) and vertigo (a sense that you're spinning). Your immune cells are always on the lookout for germs trying to invade your body. If they mistake cells in your inner ear for a virus or bacteria, they attack them. This is called an autoimmune reaction. Because the symptoms of AIED are so common, it can be hard to diagnose. Many times, it's mistaken for an ear infection until hearing loss has spread to the second ear. To diagnose AIED, your doctor will ask questions about your health and medical history, do a physical exam, and give you a hearing test, and also test your balance, which can show how well your inner ear is "talking" to your brain. There's no test that can tell for sure that you have AIED, but the results may show that you're having an autoimmune reaction. If they do, it's a good idea to see an otolaryngologist (ear doctor) who's also trained in autoimmune disorders.

All of these diseases and disorders can cause hearing loss (permanent or temporary), tinnitus and an increase in dizziness and frequency of falls. If you are experiencing any of the symptoms related to any of the diseases or disorders in this article, I suggest making an appointment with your primary care physician or an ENT (Ear, Nose & Throat) Dr. to determine what is causing your symptoms. You don't have to suffer in silence and live with falling, attributing it to "getting older." Many of these disorders are treatable. If you would like to discuss anything hearing related or NCDHH's programs and services, please contact me at my North Platte office phone number (308) 535-6600 or you can email me at kathy.scusa@nebraska.gov. I look forward to serving you.

Article Sources: <https://www.american-hearing.org/disease/menieres-disease/>
<https://www.webmd.com/brain/vertigo-symptoms-causes-treatment#1>,
<https://www.healthline.com/health/ear-barotrauma>

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