

**FLORIDA COORDINATING COUNCIL  
FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
August 4, 2005 Meeting  
Holiday Inn Select, Fort Myers, Florida**

**COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND PUBLIC HEARING**

**FCCDHH Members Attending:** Chris Wagner, Julie Church, Evy Friend, Eloise Williams, Carolyn Franklin, Sarah Harris, Randy Ellsworth, Rick Kottler, Stan Gustetic, Tanya Ward English, Joan Haber, Joe Naulty, Evan Goldman, and John Jackson. Karen Anderson and Mary Grace Tavel, staff, were also present.

**FCCDHH Members Absent:** Carol Christopherson, Laurie Gaylord, Lisa Schaefermeyer,

Call to Order 1:06 PM

Welcome by Chris Wagner, Chair. FCCDHH members introduced themselves. Interpreters Angela Roth, Marvin Mollinedo, Tony Bray and Sharon King, sound technician Alex Cora from CODASound, and CART provider Deanna Boenau of Americaption, Inc., were introduced. Members of the public attending the meeting also introduced themselves.

Chris announced that Laurie Gaylord, Lisa Schaefermeyer and Carol Christopherson were absent and excused.

The Legislative Committee and the Information and Referral Committee met.

Public Hearing convened at 3:30

Members of the public were instructed to complete public comment cards if they wanted to present before the council. All FCCDHH members introduced themselves and accessibility services providers were introduced.

The purpose of the Public Hearing was presented by Chris Wagner, Chair of FCCDHH. Comments were provided by 16 members of the public.

Chris Wagner presented Deanna and Jack Boenau with the FAD Accessibility Award for their work and support of Deaf accessibility issues.

Chris Wagner reported that he has been contacted to discuss emergency preparedness for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind individuals and participate on a work group. There will be a small conference on August 18<sup>th</sup> to support this work. One of the issues is how to best locate this population during emergencies.

Chris emphasized to the public that each comment is listened to and acted upon by the FCCDHH.

The FCCDHH is one of the sponsors of the ADA Conference with the goal of making the Council and issues related to deafness visible at this meeting. The Council members were publicly thanked for all of their work in such a short time.

Chris Wagner thanked all public attendees for their comments and described the next actions of the FCCDHH in response to the comments.

Recess until Friday, August 5, 2005 at 8:00 am  
Meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

**FLORIDA COORDINATING COUNCIL  
FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
August 5th, 2005 Meeting  
Holiday Inn Select, Ft Myers, Florida**

**Summary of approvals/action items:**

**General:**

- Minutes were approved unanimously.
- Stan will develop a letter that Joan will share with the Florida Academy of Audiology regarding the need for communication repair counseling by audiologists.
- Carolyn offered to contact Jeanne Clyne to provide ADA training to members of her MQA investigative process.
- Karen will provide the contact information to Laura Ethridge, webmaster for MQA to Dorothy Hesson so that a link between the FCCDHH and MQA website can be explored.
- Evan will explore the possibility of adding a violation for professionals who do not provide interpreters to the state statute
- Chris will write a letter to Henry Adger, the civil rights lawyer for the Dept of Health and Human Services office in Atlanta, in regard to public concerns about DCF services for persons who are Deaf.
- Joan shared sample letters to the Editor that members could use regarding emergency preparation and movie captioning. Joan will share electronic copies of the sample letters to the Editor with Karen for distribution to council members.
- Joan has prepared a letter to be signed by Chris that can go to all of the head offices of major theater companies in Florida. She will send the letter to Karen for distribution.
- Chris will write an email encouraging participation in captioned movies that can be sent out widely to a variety of organizations. The email will also go on the FCCDHH website.
- Tanya suggested that Pamela Dorwarth be approached by the legislative committee for her support and guidance on promoting the Interpreter Licensure bill.
- A motion passed to establish a \$15,000 consulting services line item in the budget. This amount would include the \$5000 already specified in the budget.
- Evan suggested that someone speak at the next council meeting about Medicaid reform (Karen Woodall, Tallahassee, and Linda Merrell out of Ormond Beach).
- Chris recommended that the council promote the idea that different agencies pool funds to develop a position for someone who can address the emergency needs of the 2 million people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Florida. Chris volunteered to work to get the different groups together after January 1 and hurricane season is over.

**Budget Issues:**

- A contract with Ecisive will be entered into for website growth and management for a maximum of \$5,000.
- A \$15,000 category for consultant services and \$2,000 category for supplies (\$5,000 of the \$15,000 is specified for website consulting) was developed.
- A contracted amount up to \$5,000 was identified for website consulting services by Dorothy Hesson.
- It was approved that a consultant be retained to review and provide feedback on the 2006 legislation drafted by the interpreter's licensure task force, not to exceed \$2,500.
- It was decided that 25 beta tapes in addition to the 750 DVDs of the council PSAs be purchased not to exceed \$1,500 to be deducted from the printing budget line item.
- A line item called Public Relations was established in the budget and \$10,000 was put into this category.
- Unanimously in favor to support \$5,000 to support the Medical Accessibility Task Force meeting in Orlando. Chris will explore the possibility of free space for the meeting with the Florida Hospital Association office in Orlando.
- Rick also reported an issue with DCF where good policies are in place but there continues to be issues in the field. He requested 15-20 minutes to address this issue at the next meeting
- Rick made a motion that a DVD be made of the PSA and welcome message by Chris. The intent is that this information can then be shared with TV stations to air during Deaf Awareness Week and also to have DVDs available to provide to Legislators and others as appropriate. Rick made a new motion that 750 DVDs be made at \$1.25 apiece.
- The budget was approved by council members.

**Next Meeting's Agenda to Include:**

- VR and DBR presentations.
- Rick Kottler to address DCF issues between policies and field practices.

**February , 2006 Meeting to Include:**

- Chris and Joan to attend Audient Program presentation in January and report on the Audient Program.

**FLORIDA COORDINATING COUNCIL  
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August 5, 2005 Meeting**

**Holiday Inn Select, Fort Myers, Florida**

**FCCDHH Members Attending:** Chris Wagner, Julie Church, Evy Friend, Eloise Williams, Carolyn Franklin, Lisa Schaefermeyer, Sarah Harris, Randy Ellsworth, Rick Kottler, Stan Gustetic, Tanya Ward English, Joan Haber, Joe Naulty, Evan Goldman, and John Jackson. Karen Anderson and Mary Grace Tavel, staff, were also present.

**FCCDHH Members Absent:** Carol Christopherson, Laurie Gaylord

I. Call to Order at 8:05 a.m.

a) Chris Wagner welcomed everyone and all members introduced themselves and Chris introduced all of the accessibility accommodation service professionals.

b) May 12-13, 2005 minutes were reviewed with no suggestions for revisions.

Evy motioned to approve, Julie seconded, all voted in favor of approving minutes.

c) Financial Report/Status was presented by Stan. The budget for the council has encumbered funds that were projected from last year's expenses. Line items will assist in identifying the spending habits of the Council and how much money is available when the need for special projects arises. Members discussed different line items and their justification. Members discussed the need for funding for the 2006-2007 fiscal year. Different ideas for funding were discussed. Joan made a motion for a line item for TV and radio media coverage in the amount of \$50,000. Stan recommended that the line item be renamed for public relations. Voting was tabled until further budget items were discussed throughout the day.

II. Public comment discussion

- a) Stan will develop a letter that Joan will share with FLAA regarding communication repair counseling by audiologists
- b) Tanya reminded the counsel of the concerns by the public for more up-to-date TVs at the hurricane shelters and for TV stations to have a visual cue, such as a red screen, to signify an alert is imminent.
- c) Evy reported that she has explored VR and deaf-blind issues and a representative has been identified at VR (Cecil Bradley) and DBS (Wayne Jennings).
- d) Evan said that he contacted people within Medicaid about the need for FCCDHH to commit to supporting efforts to resume Medicaid benefits for hearing aids for adults
- e) Chris reminded council members that personal frustrations should not be shared during public comment periods
- f) One written comment that was submitted after public comment period was read regarding use of ASL in the school setting rather than Signed Exact English. Evy commented that the school district is not required to support the specific communication modality of a child but they are required to provide an appropriate

communication modality. Julie, Sarah, Chris and Stan provided further comments about the use of different communication modalities in the educational setting.

### III. Presentation by the Manager of the Investigative Services Office of Medical Quality Assurance for the Ft Myers area: Jeanne Clyne

- a) MQA has a website that is very user friendly and assists the public and professionals in finding information.
- b) MQA does licensure and enforcement for 28 boards and 49 professions.
- c) MQA has offices in Tallahassee but they cannot provide actual interpretations of the law.
- d) The other arm is enforcement. Tallahassee accepts written and signed complaints and determines if there is sufficient information to support that a violation to the practice act has occurred. If there is legal sufficiency the complaint goes out to one of the 11 MQA enforcement offices for investigations.
- e) MQA has subpoena power and can compel witnesses as needed. There is a prosecution services unit in Tallahassee that reviews complaints and determines whether to bring the complaint to the licensure board. Boards are the only entities that can discipline licensees.
- f) Complaint forms can be printed from the website. 888-419-3456 is the complaint line for MQA licensees and facilities regulated under AHCA and complaints under Medicaid.
- g) Regarding physicians who do not provide services to persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, Florida Statute does not make it a violation if the physician does not provide an interpreter. So for MQA complaint to be filed there would first need to be a judgment from ADA against the professional.
- h) The Council could approach the legislature about changing the statute so that not providing an interpreter would be a violation.
- i) The Dept. of Justice does ADA violation complaints in response to written complaints. The ADA website has a great deal of information that could be useful to Council members.

Chris thanked Ms. Clyne for her presentation. He asked if there is anywhere in the application or licensee renewal process that states that licensees must comply with all federal regulations and Ms. Clyne was not aware of this as she works in enforcement. The practice act enforces state statute violations, not federal. Rick commented that complaints through the Department of Justice can take many months or years to address. She recommended that problems with hospitals not providing interpreters be reported through the 1-888 number or approach the hospital division of AHCA. Lisa discussed the pending bill on licensure regulation. Randy discussed the development of the FCCDHH website and the desire to have a list accessible of hearing-related service professionals and inquired if it would be possible to provide a link to the MQA website. Ms. Clyne said that Laura Ethridge is the webmaster for MQA and is the contact person to establish this link between MQA and FCCDHH.

### IV. Rick reported on the Task Force for Medical Accessibility.

Rick provided names and affiliations of all members of the new task force. They met on July 7<sup>th</sup> with the Florida Hospital Association and the person in charge of Government Affairs for the Florida Chapter of the American Medical Association. Rick described the outcomes of these discussions. Rick made a motion to the council to support a 1 day meeting of the task force in the Orlando area, including paying the way of a DOH attorney who is deaf. The ultimate goal is for consistency of practices in medical offices.

Rick expects no more than 2 meetings for this Task Force. Rick made motion for \$10,000 to support the meeting and Lisa seconded the motion. Rick amended the dollar amount to \$5,000. Unanimously in favor of spending \$5,000 to support the Medical Accessibility Task Force meeting in Orlando. Rick also reported an issue with DCF where good policies are in place but there continue to be issues in the field. He requested 15-20 minutes to address this issue at the next meeting. Henry Adger is the civil rights lawyer for the Dept. of Health and Human Services office in Atlanta and Rick has had discussions with him. He suggested that Chris direct a letter to Mr. Adger regarding public comments and DCF services.

V. Joan shared sample letters to the Editor that members could use regarding emergency preparation and movie captioning. Joan will share electronic copies of the sample letters to the Editor with Karen for distribution to council members. She also shared a list of known theaters that have captioned movies. She will also be speaking to theaters that are putting in rear window captioning. There was a press release last week by the Digital Cinema Initiative Group stating that all of the major movie studio companies have come together to decide upon a single way in which digital films can be made. Digital films can be released with subtitled tracks in place automatically. This will make it easier for theaters to get realistically priced equipment to show captioned films. Joan has prepared a letter to be signed by Chris that can go to all of the head offices of major theater companies in Florida. She will send the letter to Karen for distribution. It is important for council members and all of the deaf and hard of hearing communities to attend captioned movies and to contact the theater managers with appreciation for attending captioned movies. Chris will write an email encouraging participation in captioned movies that can be sent out widely to a variety of organizations and will also go on the FCCDHH website. Joan also shared a 3 page letter from Carol Williams, the court reporter instructor to support a 1 million dollar grant to develop professionals who are able to train broadcast reporters and captioners. The dollars would go to training institutes across the state. Joan shared a contact person for Katherine Harris, Laura Griffin, to gain support for this issue. Joan also shared information with the council about the Audient program that assists individuals in getting digital hearing aids. Chris and Joan will listen to someone presenting from Audient and will bring information back to the council as appropriate. Joan also shared the dates of the National SHHH meeting that will be in Orlando on June 29-July 2<sup>nd</sup> and encouraged council members to save the date and attend. The national SHHH office has established the American Academy of Hearing Loss Support Specialists that provides training for persons who work with persons who have hearing loss. Joan will share more information about the course content for Hearing Loss Support Specialist training --impact of HL on communication, why people don't wear HA, many faces of HL, demographics of HL, laws that support inclusion and prevent discrimination, low social stereotypes, self-perception, etc., impact individual response to HL, etc. Joan will share information with the council at the next meeting.

VI. Chris provided an update on the upcoming ADA Convention. The council is providing \$5,000 support to the convention and there are 4 registrations included in this support and Julie, Evan, Joe, and Mary Grace will attend. Additionally, Chris, Sarah, and Carol Christopherson will be attending the meeting. An exhibit for FCCDHH will be developed by Ecisive. Mary Grace will attend the exhibit but council members are invited to also be at the booth to allow her to attend sessions. All of the promotional items will be in by the convention and Julie will work with Ecisive to be sure that the brochures will be available as well.

VII: Tanya presented on the website and promotional materials  
Cell phone holders, pens, magnets, and clips have been ordered as promotional items with the FCCDHH website. Many magnets and pens were ordered compared to the other types of promotional materials. Ecisive has also been working on an exhibit backdrop for the ADA Convention. The TV spots are currently running in the Tampa Bay and Jacksonville area. The committee discussed the radio spots. Tanya so moved that the \$15,000 for radio spots be used during Deaf Awareness week in September. Julie seconded the motion. Unanimously passed. The website is still being worked on so that it is easier to navigate. Content is still being put on the website and needs to be distributed in logical areas throughout the site. Dorothy Hesson, the council's website consultant is meeting with Ecisive today, Friday Aug 5<sup>th</sup>. Members need to submit articles that are still outstanding. Rick made a motion that a DVD be made of the PSA and welcome message by Chris. Evan seconded. The intent is that this information can then be shared with TV stations to air during Deaf Awareness Week and also to have DVDs available to provide to Legislators and others as appropriate. Rick made a new motion that 750 DVDs be made at \$1.25 apiece. Stan seconded the motion. Unanimously passed.

VIII: Lisa Schaefermeyer presented on the Interpreter Licensure Task Force.  
Evy reported that licensure for interpreters had been tried before and was defeated in the past and there is a need to be strategic in the support of the bill. It is important that the school district interpreters be in support. Tanya suggested that Pamela Dorwarth be approached for her support and guidance on promoting this bill.

Stan made a motion to establish a consulting services line item in the budget. Passed unanimously. Stan proposed that this line item be \$15,000. Tanya seconded. This amount would include the \$5,000 already specified in the budget. Unanimously passed.

The Licensure Task Force (interpreter group) met in the months of June and July for two day meetings. These monthly meetings are crucial in order to meet the deadlines. Binders with collected research from other states have been developed in hard copy and electronically. Some of the information may be helpful to the CART group since they are not at the point of proposing licensure. They are working on recognition or registration of credentials. There are 23 states with no kind of licensure, 9/10 states working on licensure, 10 states with licensure and 8/9 states that have alternatives to licensure, such as registration of credentials. Therefore 27 states (over 50%) have some standard and 23 states have no sign language interpreter standard. The Licensure Task Force started on a draft bill that they expect to be completed by the next council meeting. The next Task Force meeting is planned for August 22nd in Orlando for both groups, CART and Interpreters. The interpreter group is going to take advantage of the date to meet the day before. During our combined meeting they are planning to have demonstrations of CART, C-Print and Voice writing. They also have Sorensen VRS sponsoring lunch for both days. Everyone is working hard to meet the deadline of submitting draft language for consultants to review by the end of September.

IX. Evan reported on discussions of the Legislative Committee  
Evan provided "tips" sheets on communicating with elected officials. It is important to make sure that legislators in the local communities know about the council before they are approached to support any FCCDHH legislative initiatives. Evan urged that all council members meet with their local legislators. There are opportunities to speak to

legislative delegations during the legislative session that council members should plan to attend once the dates have been released.

- a) A primary concern for the legislative season is to increase the funding for the council.
- b) A second concern is legislation that results from the 2006 FCCDHH report.
- c) Another issue is emergency preparedness.
- d) Restoring hearing aid coverage in Medicaid is a concern in this time of Medicaid reform. Evan suggested that someone speak at the next council meeting about Medicaid reform (Karen Woodall, Tallahassee, and Linda Merrell out of Ormond Beach).
- e) The service animal issue is another one that needs to be addressed.

#### X. Chris presented on emergency preparedness

Chris suggested that the FCCDHH develop a best practices guide for emergency preparedness. The council should develop an official report that can be shared with the legislature. We need to look at developing an effective system for emergency alerting that doesn't rely on the ability to hear. There are national deafness organizations that are meeting at the federal level. Chris would like to develop a knowledge bank of individuals and organizations that can provide technical assistance for developing a model program and services to address the specific needs and services. Chris would like to have 1 full day of representation from different organizations: DOH, Elderly Affairs, ADAWG, FAD, DSCA, FDBA, FTRI, FCCDHH, SHHH, Office of Emergency Preparedness, Florida Broadcasting Association, etc., to identify the resources and funding. The Council could perhaps apply for some state emergency preparedness grant funds to assist with the meeting and other activities. Chris recommended that the council push the idea that each of these different agencies pool funds to develop a position for someone who can address the emergency needs of the 2 million people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Florida. Chris volunteered to work to get the different groups together after January 1 and hurricane season is over.

#### XI. New Business

Stan led discussions to finalize the budget [CHECK FOR SECONDS ON CART]

- a) Julie made a motion to enter into a contract with Ecsive for website growth and management for a maximum of \$5,000. Randy seconded. Unanimous approval.
- b) Stan made a motion to define a \$15,000 category for consultant services and \$2,000 for supplies (\$5,000 of the \$15,000 is specified for website consulting). Sarah seconded. Unanimously passed.
- c) Tanya motioned that a contracted amount up to \$5,000 for Dorothy Hesson. Randy seconded. Unanimously passed.
- d) Lisa moved that a consultant to review the 2006 report be hired not to exceed \$2,500. Tanya seconded. Unanimously approved.
- e) Rick made a motion that 25 beta tapes on top of the 750 DVDs be purchased not to exceed \$1,500 to be deducted from the printing budget line item. Julie seconded. Unanimously passed. (Tanya will donate 12 beta tapes)
- f) Joan moved that a line item called Public Relations be added to the budget. Julie seconded. Passed unanimously.
- g) Stan recommended that the budget for \$220,602 for encumbered funds and \$29,398 unencumbered funds be approved. Sarah seconded. Unanimously approved. \$10,000 was included for Public Relations.

Chris described his vision of an FCCDHH budget for \$400,000. Additional staff need to be hired to focus on outreach and advocacy efforts.

Tanya made the motion to approve a budget of up to \$400,000 for a Legislative Budget Request and the legislative committee would work out the details and follow through with the LBR. Evy seconded. Unanimously passed.

Evan reported on the disability diversity initiative of the Florida Bar Association. Evan asked for council help in identifying the most compelling issues which prospective law students and attorneys with disabilities face in attending law school and employment and practices in community and courthouse activities and in participation in Bar Association activities.

Chris asked Mary Grace to make up flyers regarding the dates, times and locations of upcoming FCCDHH meetings.

XIV. Meeting adjournment at 4:00

### Public Comments August 4, 2005

- Joan Andrews: She was one of the individuals who was initially involved in setting up a body to provide leadership for Deaf and hard of hearing issues. Ms. Andrews commented on her inability to have access to emergency information during hurricane Charlie in 2004. She surveyed about 20 members of her local (Punta Gorda) SHHH club for their reactions: no captions, didn't know about any shelters, emergency evacuation routes or even if she should evacuate, shelters didn't have TVs with captioning, only deaf person in the shelter, (*"In an emergency, old TVs without captioning should be banned"*). Ms. Andrews stressed that all citizens need to become educated on what to do in an emergency; information and special needs people need to be in touch with their emergency preparedness managers. Evan Goldman recommended that she write up the comments from her survey and share them with her local legislators.
- George Armitage: Have a deaf son who had a good job in Western New York. The Vocational Education personnel located jobs for persons with disabilities and they made periodic visits to make sure there were no problems. His family moved to FL because they had heard that Fort Myers had a large Deaf community. Their contacts with VR resulted in claims that they did not have time to go out into the community to find jobs for people. He commented about the lack of Deaf clubs, lack of a directory of contact information, social activities for persons who are Deaf. This is a concern, and if this exists, where is it? Evy Friend asked Mr. Armitage what his son's last name is. Sarah Harris asked where he lived. Tanya English described the upcoming FCCDHH website.
- Kathy Borzell: She is a member of SHHH (national and FL chapter) and a community education specialist with the deaf and hearing connection for Tampa Bay. Thanked the Council for their accomplishments to date. She made the case for the need to have communication repair training available for persons who are losing their hearing. People do not come away with the coping skills they need beyond obtaining amplification. Hard of hearing people need to learn to advocate for their needs. Communication strategies: What am I (deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened)? What to ask for when communicating with others? What is a communication breakdown? What are communication options? What is speechreading? Benefits and limitations of speechreading? Is sign language an option for me? Can hearing aids, speechreading and sign language work together to help me? TV captioning and CART – how to use and what are they? Telecommunications options? Can a support group help me? Once a person is empowered with this information they become better advocates for themselves and others. Julie Church asked about who would be targeted for communication repair training. She said she was referring specifically to services for senior citizens but could apply to a larger population. Stan commented that audiologists really have neglected doing this with the population and it isn't a requirement that

audiologists learn and not billable so that if they did provide communication repair training. Ms. Borzell did comment that the audiology community is improving in the 'human side' of services but they don't have time. She and Joan Haber will be attending the upcoming Florida Academy of Audiology Convention later this month to try to form a partnership with audiologists. Tanya English requested that she provide information that could go into a 'people in hearing crisis' section of the website and possibly for future trainings through the Deafness Service Centers. Rick Kottler promoted the SHHH program for hearing service specialist. Joan Haber said that the issues addressed in the SHHH program will be kept in mind in the formation of the website. Joe Naulty suggested that she get in contact with the new FDBA president Nellie Pohlmeier. Chris Wagner suggested that perhaps the Council can work with the state Audiology Board about increasing requirements in communication repair.

- Mark Mettler: reinforced comments made by his father, George Armitage.
- Sandy Burt and Donald Severino. Moved from Columbus Ohio that had a large Deaf community. She has found that there is little that this area has to offer to individuals who are deaf. Concern areas were employment, education, guide dogs. She has tried unsuccessfully to get things going in Ft. Myers to draw interest in activities for the Deaf. Only drew in 8-10 members. She needs support to develop services in the local area – a lot more services and supports are needed. Evy Friend asked about VR. He was told when he went to VR 9 years ago that VR cannot go out and look for jobs for people. Julie Church commented that the states that some public members have moved from have states that allocate dollars to support deaf services whereas FL has allocated no funding for specific Deaf services.
- Velma Wright: She is a retired person who is Deaf who teaches beginning, intermediate, and advanced sign language. She directs her students to go out to the Deaf community and interact. They have to travel great distances to connect with Deaf individuals. Many people who learn sign language will label themselves as an interpreter and have insufficient skills. She also has concerns about the screening process for interpreters for the schools. She has heard from many deaf people about their experiences with interpreters. School boards have hired them or deaf educators with appropriate skills or education. She also has concerns about the education of children who are deaf and how behind they are compared to their hearing peers. Also refusal of hospitals to provide interpreters to individuals who are deaf. Chris Wagner commented that the FCCDHH has recently set up a Medical Accessibility Task Force to address the hospital interpreter issue. Sarah Harris commented that she is on the interpreter licensure task force of FCCDHH that will require licensure in the future. Sarah said that the parents of these children need to complain to the school districts. Evy Friend shared her concern about interpreters and children who are Deaf learning to read. Dollars have been

used to provide professional education dollars for interpreters in the schools. Until there is a licensure, school interpreters will not be required. In 2001 standards were shared with school districts for interpreters and some districts changed and some did not. The Dept. of Education has tried to get legislation introduced in the last few years but it hasn't gone anywhere. Professional development activities in the near future will focus on improving literacy of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Dept. of Education is really trying to put initiatives forward to focus on the issues of the Deaf population.

- Carl Eason: President of Lee County SHHH Chapter. He is out to help people with hearing problems. He has approached different organizations to get something going. When hurricane Charlie came through ABC, NBC, CBS came to him to survey the deaf and hard of hearing population on what they could do better. There are still times when they don't provide closed captioning. He is planning on going to speak with people at the TV stations. A suggestion is for the whole screen to turn red when an emergency message is captioned along the bottom as an extra alerting device. Same for Amber Alert when the screen could turn to yellow. He previously worked at Syracuse University in NY with students for speech, lip reading and audiologists. The Chapter is still small, with only about 10 people, but he has gone to the Senior Apartments. They didn't know about using the telephone. Florida Gulf Coast University interviewed him. DVD: "Good Sense on Public Television on Hearing". A lot of people can't afford hearing aids. Veterans can get hearing aids for free from the VA. The new Ft. Myers library opened on June 18<sup>th</sup> and there was no sound system was provided as promised, which was a violation of the ADA. Some people have been attracted by ads in the paper for \$1,000 off the price but that hearing aid did not meet their needs and they had to buy a more expensive one. He tells people of the federally required 30-day trial period. Rick Kottler said that the local Deaf Service Center had done a lot with closed captioning and filing FCC complaints. He suggested that they work together in their advocacy efforts. The VA has cut budgets for hearing aids so it isn't as easy as it was in previous years. Chris Wagner commented that the Council sent out a letter to all of the TV stations reminding them of their responsibility to provide captioning. Stan Gustetic commented that all WWII Veterans receive hearing aid benefits. Other veterans are required to have some note about hearing impairment in their medical file to get a hearing aid. In the 30-day trial period it is spelled out in the contract what is not returned to patients who return hearing aids. Randy Ellsworth commented that the 30-day trial period is a state law and not a federal law. For consumers that feel like something is done improperly the consumer can complain to the MQA department in Tallahassee.
- Dawn Raymond: Concerns about educational services, early intervention and school age, especially unqualified teachers and interpreters. Parents are not as concerned about the students' communication deficits as they are of the teachers' and interpreters' communication deficits. The Deaf

- Service Center is trying to change its focus and suggests a serious review of the graduation and regular diploma rate for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Sarah Harris asked if parents addressed the school board. Ms. Raymond said that no complaints were provided to school board yet, only to early intervention. The DSC serves Lee, Hendry, and Collier Counties. Evy Friend said that DOE has looked at scores and that they have improved for students with disabilities because of improvements in reading programs. Way too many students who are deaf or hard of hearing graduate with a special diploma. Students are being retained if they have not learned what they needed to learn in grade 3. Some of this information will be used to support the need for interpreter licensure.
- Pamela Dorwarth: She is on the Federal Access Board as the hard of hearing member. There is another Access Board member who is deaf. She provided updates on what they have been working on. There is a big push to enforce accessibility for the deaf and blind. If there is no captioning on the TV she recommends that individual write their legislators. There were 8 places in FL last year that had no captioning during the hurricanes. Citizens should complain to their local commissioners. Federal grants are available for the TV stations to get captioning. She recommends that the FCCDHH PSA be sent to the President, the legislators, and many others. She brought the lack of captioning issue to the ADA Access Board. The deaf community must make these deficits known. There are 3 bills in the house right now, HB951 on video restoration act of 2005, SB900 for the visually impaired. The way that hearing aid coverage was lost in FL was that at the last minute a legislator from this area put an amendment on to remove all coverage for hearing aids, eye glasses, and false teeth (Senator Peardon). This money was 'needed for transplants'. This last session eye glasses and denture coverage was restored but not hearing aids. ADA is working on making courthouses accessible under federal law (already is in FL), making cruise lines accessible, evacuation plans, some form of captioning for blind in public parks. One shortcoming is under education – we need to have the teachers educated. The US Congress needs to make the staff and congress aware of what they need to do for persons with disabilities during an evacuation. Visible disabilities are not a problem to obtain accessibility accommodations, but hearing impairment is not visible. Joan Haber commented that the SHHH Chapter of Sarasota lodged a complaint with the FCC against the TV station for lack of captioning during the hurricane that was dismissed because the TV had placed a crawl along the bottom of the screen. They need to have a VCR tape that illustrates that the crawl was not equivalent to what was presented verbally. Tanya English asked about the necessity of public meetings needing to be captioned if they are on cable. News is required to be captioned, meetings are not required to be captioned at this time. Rick Kottler said that in Martin and Indian River Counties the meetings are not captioned and this was brought to their attention and they've decided after consulting the law

that they were required to provide captioning for these meetings. Joe Naulty discussed the needs of the deaf-blind for accessibility accommodations federally.

- Vivian Wyre: She is from the Social Security Administration and is the messenger of the Medicare drug prescription plan. She is having a presentation September 7<sup>th</sup> at the Riverside Community Center. The Deaf Service Center is going to provide an interpreter. Medicare is responsible for the program and the Social Security Administration is the messenger.
- John Hoglund: He is a Hearing Instrument Specialist who has been interested in the activities of the FCCDHH and he appreciated the meeting occurring in the Ft. Myers area. If there is anything that he can do to assist in public knowledge of Deaf Awareness Week they would like to assist.
- Parri Tantillo: She lives in Tampa and is a student at USF in mental health and rehab and just completed a practicum with Julie Church at the DSC. She described the situation of her son and the juvenile justice system and her difficulties she has faced with her communicating with him as a late-deafened adult. No accommodations were provided for her to assist her in communicating with her son. She was denied an ASL interpreter to assist her in the hearing for her son. Because her son was 18 she was told that the court did not have to provide her with an interpreter. After pursuing her accessibility rights she was promised an interpreter but not CART. Her county ADA liaison did not know who the appropriate contacts were and was not supportive to her when she did find the right people to contact. The county court system failed to provide her with equal access. Chris emphasized that Ms. Tantillo's situation is not new and is one of the underlying reasons for the purpose of the FCCDHH. There is no consistency among the policies of the counties for how accessibility accommodation situations are handled.
- Ann Whealton: She is planning on moving to the Ft. Myers area because she and her family had been lead to believe that there were good Deaf services here. They tried a variety of different social events involving the deaf, deaf-blind and hearing communities. There are no activities for the deaf, community services, and provision of ASL. Not much has happened as a result of contact with the Ft. Myers DSC.
- Written Comment from Jenny Blocky, who was recently appointed as Miss Deaf Florida. She attends St. Petersburg (Junior) College. She needs to go to West Palm Beach to revisit her case with VR annually. Because she tried to get tutoring for a class that ended up being too hard for her and VR said they couldn't help her. VR just said she needed to retake the class. They also said that she should live in the dorm. She also was frustrated with communication with the VR counselor, who wouldn't respond to her communications. She has been waiting 1 year for authorization for an audiological evaluation and she is still waiting. The VR counselor, in discussion of her academic situation, and counselor was holding up his/her life as being able to hold down 2 jobs and go to school.

- Written comment regarding a young man's incarceration and frustration with lack of communication. Interpreter services will not be provided during court appearances or court ordered counseling sessions. The individual has been incarcerated for a long period of time without services and continues to not receive services.
- Written comment by Angela Davis, mother of a child who is deaf and uses ASL. She has had difficulties in working with the schools in Lee County getting ASL communication rather than Signed Exact English in the public schools.