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**Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services
Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
Advisory Committee
on the Need for Services for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

The Advisory Committee on the Need for Services for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, commonly referred to as the Advisory Committee, met at the Franklin County Extension Office in Frankfort, Kentucky on Wednesday, May 15, 2024.

Michelle Niehaus, Program Administrator, and Jeannie Taylor, Chair, welcomed members to the meeting and confirmed that everyone had communication accessibility either via captions or signed language. Anthony Adkins, Program Coordinator reviewed the 'Communication Agreements for In-Person Meetings'. As a means for calling roll, Mr. Adkins asked individuals to answer an 'ice-breaker' question. Quorum was established. Dr. Kendall Ramsey, Vice-Chair, introduced three individuals serving as proxies: Kristen Beach, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR); Amber Collins, Department of Aging and Independent Living, (DAIL); and Emily Kimbell, Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, (KCDHH). One visitor was introduced, Ms. Helga Gilbert, (OVR).

Following roll call, the February minutes were approved along with the minutes from both subcommittees. The initial meeting agenda included new member orientation; however, due to attendance and the resignation of two committee members, Ms. Niehaus led a discussion on partnerships and opportunities between OVR and DBHDID. Ms. Collins (DAIL) was asked to inform members about the Mental Health and Aging Coalition conference to be held in September. According to Ms. Collins, there will be a workshop during that conference on the connection between dementia and hearing loss.

Members met in their subcommittees for one hour. Below are highlights from those meetings:

Resources & Supports for Providers Subcommittee Highlights (Jeannie Taylor, Facilitator)

After briefly reviewing the subcommittee's goals, the group turned its focus to determining what information providers need to know when serving individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Members reviewed existing information sheets from KCDHH and an infographic created by Zac Childers and Anthony Adkins. Mr. Childers led the conversation regarding the infographic and collected feedback for revisions. Members were given two new tip sheets and asked to review the documents while considering questions such as: Could this be used "as is"? If not, what should be changed? Who is the best audience for this information? During the August meeting, subcommittee members will continue to focus on what providers need to know. Eventually it is their goal to create a grid that lists tip sheets, infographics, and guides that can give providers quick access to the resources they need.

Awareness & Education to Hard of Hearing and Deaf Communities Subcommittee Highlights (Dr. Kendall Ramsey, facilitator)

The subcommittee will select an event to hand out educational material about mental health or substance abuse treatments potentially at Walk4Hearing on September 21st, or at Hands and Voices May 5K Run and Zoo Day. The subcommittee plans to review a commercial about Peer Support Specialists and give constructive feedback to the Public Relations teams. Members hope to identify and collect contact information for faith groups that are "recovery ready" or support substance use treatments/mental health treatments.

During New Business, Ms. Taylor announced that Mr. Tom Coughlin and Mr. Jessie Coon resigned due to other commitments. In addition, because Mr. Bobby Moore has failed to attend Advisory Committee meetings, as well as, failed to respond to contacts made by email, text, and video phone during the past year, members agreed to remove him from the committee in order to give someone else an opportunity to actively participate on the Advisory Committee. A motion was made to remove Mr. Moore and passed unanimously.

Ms. Niehaus indicated there are presently four open or expiring terms: Member-at-Large (2 openings); Family Member; and Kentucky School for the Deaf Alumni Association. Currently HLAA is waiting for their nominee to be reappointed.

Ms. Niehaus reported department updates. Prior to adjourning the meeting, Advisory Committee members were given the opportunity to share updates. The next meeting will be held August 21, 2024 in person (location to be determined). The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Jeannie Taylor

HLAA-Kentucky Representative

