

## Highlights

The 172nd Quarterly Meeting of the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) was held on Friday, January 21, 2022, from 1:00 to 4:00. Due to Governor Beshear's response to Covid-19, the 172nd Quarterly Meeting was held via Zoom video conference. Hearing accessibility was provided during the meeting by CART and ASL interpreters.

Mrs. Amy Hatzel, Executive Board Chair, presided over the meeting and welcomed commissioners to the meeting. After roll call, Ms. Hatzel requested that commissioners review the minutes of the last Quarterly Meeting held via Zoom on October 29, 2021. Following the acceptance of those minutes, the minutes from the Executive Board Meeting held on December 3, 2021, were reviewed and accepted as well.

During Mrs. Hatzel's Executive Board report, key points discussed during the Executive Board Meeting on December 3<sup>rd</sup> were summarized. According to Ms. Hatzel, members of the Executive Board discussed four upcoming terms expiring June 30, 2022. Three Governor-appointed representatives will expire: Kentucky Speech-Language-Hearing Association (KSHA), Kentucky Association of the Deaf (KAD), and Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). The fourth Board member whose term will expire is the Service Provider representative.

## Agency Report

### Legislation

Senate Bill 105 ("Bella's Bill"), sponsored by Senator Max Wise has been reintroduced during the 2022 legislative session. This Bill would include cytomegalovirus (CMV) testing as part of the newborn screening program and require Department for Public Health to provide public educational resources related to CMV. Additional information about CMV is located here: [www.bellasbill4cmv.com](http://www.bellasbill4cmv.com).

## **Budget**

KCDHH has requested a 15<sup>th</sup> position, Interpreter Supervisor. The Cabinet Secretary's office will consider KCDHH's request along with the requests of other agencies. The Governor's Office ranks the priorities for each Cabinet and will include highest rank priorities in the state budget that will be submitted to the General Assembly.

## **Personnel**

KCDHH currently has three vacant positions: Administrative Secretary; Document Processing Specialist; and Policy Specialist.

## **Tornados in Western Kentucky**

Damaging tornadoes hit the Western Kentucky area the first week of December. The Governor's Office applied for a state of emergency which was approved by President Biden.

During the time of the disaster, KCDHH created a resource page which included how an individual can replace any telecommunication device and hearing aid. Several informational video logs were posted and shared on KCDHH's social media platforms.

## **Deaf-Blind Web Pages Added to KCDHH's Website**

KCDHH launched new Deaf-Blind web pages on December 1, 2021 as part of KCDHH's website. The new Deaf-Blind tab provides access to a wealth of information and resources for Deaf-Blind consumers, family members, educators, and service providers. Coffee Chat videos, located under the "Awareness and Advocacy" section of the Deaf-Blind pages also feature Deaf-Blind Kentuckians as well as representatives from the Helen Keller National Center, the Kentucky Deaf-Blind Project, and the Kentucky Department of Education.

## **Residence at Courtyard Crossings**

KCDHH was on hand for a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new Spire Development Residences at Courtyard Crossing to see former KCDHH Commissioner Betty Timon's dream become a reality with the opening of residences offering barrier-free living for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. The Community Room is named after Mrs. Timon in honor of her enduring advocacy for deaf and hard of hearing consumers.

The new Courtyard Crossings are located at 133-B McCullum Pike, Independence, Kentucky. The residence offers 30 one-bedroom apartment homes and 17 two-bedroom apartment homes equipped with accessibility features.

## Additional Quarterly Activities Supporting KCDHH Goals

Note: Most trainings, outreach events and meetings were conducted/attended virtually due to Covid-19 precaution and prevention measures being taken.

- University of Kentucky College of Communication and Information – *Outreach*
- 2021 Kentucky Leadership, Equality, Accessibility, and Diversity Conference – *Meeting*
- Emerging Leaders Program Meeting – *Meeting*
- Data Base Meeting – *Meeting*
- Health and Medical Preparedness Advisory Committee Meeting – *Meeting*
- DeaFestival 2022 Planning Committee Meeting - *Meeting*
- National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing – *Meeting*
- Vocational Rehabilitation Meeting - *Meeting*
- Department for Community Based Services – *Meeting*
- Kentucky Board of Interpreters Meeting – *Meeting*
- Telecommunications Access Program – *Meeting*

## New Business

During New Business, Commissioners reviewed the draft version of KCDHH's Strategic Plan which will be implemented July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2024. During the April Quarterly Board Meeting, the Strategic Plan will be finalized and require a vote of acceptance by Board members.

## KCDHH Study Groups

### Education Study Group

**Chair: Amy Hatzel**

According to Ms. Hatzel, this Study Group will continue to collaborate with Andrew Waters regarding the review of current First Step regulations. Guidance will be provided to determine what changes are necessary in these regulations to accommodate Deaf and hard of hearing students' needs for language learning and language acquisition oversight.

Conversations will continue among Common Group partners to discuss the potential need for a legislative sponsor to pursue changes to the kindergarten physical form to reflect specific audiological screening that encompasses the speech ranges at 20dB minimum.

## **Kentucky Deaf-Blind Community Study Group**

**Chair: Jeannie Taylor**

According to Ms. Taylor, the Study Group's final meeting was held December 7, 2021. A final report was delivered to the Commission Board which documented that all goals had been achieved. Several areas for further development were identified and discussed during the final report.

Despite diversity within Kentucky's deaf-blind community, they all have the same essential needs: to lead full, productive, and satisfying lives with equal and appropriate access to the community where they live and work.

## **Other Announcements and Additional Actions of the Commission Board**

- The next Executive Board Meeting will be held via Zoom March 4, 2022 from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. (Eastern)
- The 173<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Commission Meeting will be held on April 22, 2022 via Zoom from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. (Eastern). Hearing accessibility will be provided by CART and ASL Interpreters.
- The TAP Advisory Board Meeting will be held in April, 2021 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. (Eastern).

## **In Closing**

The 172<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Board Meeting was adjourned.

Jeannie Taylor, Commissioner  
HLAA Representative  
[Jeannie@hearinglosskentucky.org](mailto:Jeannie@hearinglosskentucky.org)  
February 3, 2022