

Monthly Communicator

NJ Department of Human Services | Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

SEPTEMBER 2015 | www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/home/index.html

Chris Christie, Governor

Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor

Elizabeth Connolly, Acting Commissioner

David Alexander, Director

Medicare/Medicaid: Hearing Aid Assistance?

People often inquire if NJ Medicare or Medicaid provides coverage for hearing aids. Medicare is the federal health plan for citizens 65 years of age and older and /or people with significant disabilities. Medicaid provides medical assistance for qualifying individuals with low incomes and few resources. Medicaid is funded jointly by State and Federal governments in order to provide States the ability to offer adequate medical care to residents in need.

Unfortunately, NJ Medicare does not cover hearing aids. On the other hand, NJ Medicaid does provide hearing aid benefits, though not all state Medicaid programs do. The reason is that hearing services are optional under Federal guidelines and as a result states are not required to cover hearing health services for adults.

Covered services in New Jersey may include hearing exams, hearing aids, repairs, replacement as needed, and batteries. These are available under certain plans in which beneficiaries may be enrolled and may differ among plans. Eligible participants should consult with their State Medicaid program for information and a list of participating vendors.

Deaf Self Advocacy Training Curriculum

During 2014, Deaf Self Advocacy Training workshops were conducted by DDHH in collaboration with *Northeastern University Regional Interpreter Education Center (NURIEC)* and the *New Jersey Association of the Deaf (NJAD)*. The purpose of the training was to teach a group of individuals who are Deaf and hard of hearing how to empower their peers with the knowledge and skills to self-advocate for sign language interpreters. Until recently, the curriculum was available only to those who attended the training. Recently however, NURIEC announced that the entire DSAT Curriculum is now available [online](#).

This is an excellent resource for those interested in self advocacy training.

ADA 2010 Revised Requirements: Effective Communication

Twenty five years ago this past July 2015, the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) was signed into law making clear that people with disabilities should experience equal opportunity , independent living, economic self sufficiency and full participation in all aspects of our society. During the past two decades, communities have become more communication accessible for people who are deaf and hard of hearing due to the ADA. The ADA requires public entities to communicate effectively with people who are deaf and hard of hearing. It uses the terms “auxiliary aids and services” to refer to a wide range of tools and strategies to achieve effective communication. Because the nature of communication differs from program to program, the rules allow for flexibility in determining effective communication solutions. The goal is to find a practical solution that fits the circumstances, taking into consideration the nature, length and complexity of the communication, as well as, the person’s normal method(s) of communication.

The Department of Justice published revised final regulations implementing the ADA for Title II and Title III. These requirements clarify and refine issues that have risen over the past two decades and contain new and updated requirements. They are available in an excellent resource titled [ADA 2010 Revised Requirements: Effective Communication](#) .

NJ Hearing Aid Project

Since its launch in January 2014, the New Jersey Hearing Aid Project (NJHAP) has dispensed nearly 100 free refurbished hearing aids to low income senior citizens. Montclair State University is collaborating with the New Jersey Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Sertoma/Hearing Charities of America on this project. For additional information, [click here](#).

Sign Language Now Accepted for Credit in NJ High Schools

Gov. Chris Christie signed bill S1760 which requires high schools to let students fulfill their foreign language graduation requirement by taking sign language courses instead of spoken languages like Spanish or French. It states that American Sign Language “shall be recognized as a world language for the purpose of meeting any state or local world language requirement for high school graduation.”

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Trainings for Deaf Volunteer Advocates

By Catie Purrazzella, DDHH Service Coordinator

In May's **Monthly Communicator**, I wrote an article about 16 hour training for Deaf Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Volunteer Advocates. This was a part of the 80 hours of training that is necessary in order to become a volunteer confidential victim advocate. For those who attended and are still interested in becoming a volunteer advocate, Womanspace has scheduled ongoing training series this fall.

Those who missed the 16 hour training still can come to the whole training series and get all the information to become victim advocates for the deaf community. Feel free to share with everyone you know that would like to take the training but missed the May training series. Please let us know ASAP which trainings you will be attending so we can schedule interpreters efficiently.

As the Division's Service Coordinator, I will be participating in the trainings to develop a better understanding of how to meet deaf victims' needs. If you would like to receive a copy of the training schedule or have questions, please contact Michelle Cline or Annmarie Buraczeski at njdeafadvocacy@gmail.com or call Catie Purrazzella at (609) 503-4862.

ACTIVITIES

■ DEAF FEST 2015

DDHH will be co-sponsoring DEAF FEST 2015 on Sunday, September 20, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Middlesex County Fairgrounds, 655 Cranbury Road, East Brunswick, New Jersey. For additional information, [click here](#).

■ A workshop is planned by **PepNet 2**. It is for high school students who are Deaf and hard of hearing who will be transitioning to either college or work and will take place at MKSD on September 26 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. The workshop will include a keynote, breakout sessions, exhibitors, and panel discussion.

■ The **Hearing Loss Association of America New Jersey** will hold its **Walk4Hearing** on Sunday, October 18, 2015 at Mercer County Park, West Windsor, New Jersey. For additional information and to register, [click here](#)

Calendar of Events

October 30, 2015

DDHH Advisory Council Meeting
TBA

DDHH Regular Office Hours: Monday – Friday: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Office closed : Monday, Sept. 7 - Labor Day

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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