

THE COMMUNICATOR

SUMMER
2019

Phil Murphy, Governor

Sheila Oliver, Lt. Governor

Carole Johnson, Commissioner

Elizabeth Hill, Director

New Jersey is Leading the Way

Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver in August signed two bills, one establishing a Deaf Student's Bill of Rights and the other creating a Working Group on Deaf Education.

The Department of Education is also now required to develop a parent resource guide for both the Department of Education and Department of Health and to collect and report data for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Lt. Governor Oliver proudly signed the bills and included a "hand wave" after the signing as her nod to the deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind community for all their hard work and commitment for the passage of these two bills.

"To ensure that every deaf student in New Jersey acquires the same high quality education as other students, I am proudly signing these two bills today establishing a Deaf Student's Bill of Rights along with other initiatives for research, advocacy, and parental guidance," **Lt. Gov. Oliver said.**

The bill signings were an opportunity for the deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind community to come together in a moment of celebration for all their advocacy on behalf of children and their families who are on their journey for language equity and educational achievement.

"Access to early intervention supports and ongoing services throughout the lives of children who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind can make a significant difference by developing strong language and literacy skills that will help them succeed," Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson said.

The Deaf Student's Bill of Rights requires school districts to provide a number of services including but not limited to: access to appropriate screening and assessment of communication and language needs; access to appropriate early intervention to support the acquisition of solid language bases; adult role models who themselves are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind; access to peers; and access to mental health services from qualified and certified providers fluent in the student's primary mode of communication, including American Sign Language.

The community thanks the primary sponsors of the bills – Senators Shirley K. Turner and M. Teresa Ruiz, and Assembly



members Daniel Benson, Ralph Caputo, Nicholas Chiaravalloti, Mila Jasey, Pamela Lampitt, Raj Mukherji, and Annette Quijano.

The new laws build on existing New Jersey programs, including "Leveling the Playing Field." Last year, the Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH) worked with the Department of Health and the Department of Education, and partners the Marie Katzenbach School for the Deaf and the

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) to implement the ASL Deaf Language Associates program for children ages birth to three and enhance the NJ Deaf Mentor Program.

SPAN provided mentoring to 20 families in the first year alone of the program. Katzenbach provided family playgroups for parents to gather with their deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind children in various locations throughout the state. These playgroups were a way for families to meet and make connections with each other. Katzenbach also conducted Sign Language Proficiency Interviews for potential candidates to work with families and also provided valuable trainings to Deaf Mentors and ASL Deaf Language Associates.

SPAN will continue to expand the Deaf Mentor Program with crucial support from the Department of Health, while Katzenbach will continue to provide conducted Sign Language Proficiency Interviews for candidates, trainings, and family playgroups.

ASL Deaf Language Associates are deaf adults fluent in American Sign Language who support deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind children in their language acquisition and development in child care centers. In partnership with DHS's Division of Family Development, DDHH will connect ASL Associates with families via the Child Care Resource and Referral Centers since that is where many families go to look for child care options and child care subsidies.

"Strengthening the quality of child care across the state has been strong focus for us for the last five years, and language is such a foundational element of early learning," said Human Services Assistant Commissioner Natasha Johnson, who directs the Division of Family Development "A child care center

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Leading the Way...continued

provides the perfect place for teaching sign language to deaf and/or hard of hearing children, and this partnership, where we are connecting sign language specialists with children in child care centers that need them, just makes sense.”

DDHH will also work with the Department of Education to make this service available to those in pre-school programs as well.



Deaf-Blind Awareness Week

Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson, Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired Executive Director Bernice Davis, and DDHH Director Elizabeth Hill promoted Deaf-Blind Awareness Week with a video message. Helen Keller, who was deaf-blind, personally visited New Jersey to testify to the state Legislature in support of a “state Commission for the Blind.” In another example of New Jersey leading the way, in 1910 the Commission’s first director was appointed -- Lydia Hayes, who was young, female, and also blind.

Watch the video [here](#)

Deaf Mentor Kick-Off Event

Human Services Deputy Commissioner Elisa Neira and DDHH Director Elizabeth Hill attended the Deaf Mentor Kick-off event hosted by SPAN and sponsored by DDHH and the Department of Health under the Leveling the Playing Field Initiative.

Deputy Commissioner Neira and Director Hill both gave speeches and greeted the families and Deaf Mentors at the event.

“Your deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind child is perfect exactly the way your child is. Your journey is just beginning and DDHH fully supports families in their efforts to boost language acquisition and development through relationships with Deaf mentors,” Director Hill said.

Thanks to Ms. Mary Jane DiPaolo from Community Child Care Solutions for staffing a booth at the event and providing much needed resources to families. Approximately 27 families attended the event.



Are you a Sign Language Interpreter and Currently on DDHH's Directory?

If you are a sign language interpreter and on DDHH's Directory, please make sure that your contact information is current. If you have moved, changed phone numbers, or have a different email address, please be sure to contact the office to make sure your information is updated. DDHH depends on current contact information, especially in cases of emergency, to be able to reach interpreters on a timely basis. To update your information, please call the office at **609-588-2648** or email DDHH.communications2@dhs.state.nj.us. Thank you!



*(Left)
Director Elizabeth Hill,
Mary Jane DiPaolo, and
Deputy Commissioner
Elisa Neira greeted
families at the
Deaf Mentor Kick-Off
Event.*

*(Top Right) Director
Elizabeth Hill
welcoming families to
the Deaf Mentor
Kick-Off Event.*



New Jersey Association of the Deaf Conference

DDHH Director Elizabeth Hill attended NJAD's biennial conference in Toms River. The conference had workshops that included SPAN's Deaf Mentor Program. DDHH had a booth at the conference to provide resources and information about our services, and Director Hill spoke a few words in support of the deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind community.

"NJAD's conference theme – 'Deaf empowerment: Equality and Equity' - perfectly captured what we, as a society, need to be looking at," Director Hill said. "Equality does not necessarily mean equity. Equality does not mean things are fair. NJAD is striving to ensure that the Deaf community has equitable access to language, communication, and services. DDHH was proud to be a sponsor of NJAD's conference."

Hearing Loss Association of America Conference

DDHH Director Elizabeth Hill attended the Hearing Loss Association of America's national conference in Rochester, NY. The conference had many workshops on cochlear implants, self-advocacy, the latest research in genetics, and featured a keynote speaker, Rachel Alexander, who is deaf-blind. The conference's exhibit hall had many vendors with updated equipment.

"Attending HLAA was very informative," Director Hill said. "It was a pleasure to meet HLAA's new Board Chair, Mr. Richard Einhorn, and collaborate with DDHH's hard of hearing supporters from New Jersey. I am thankful that I was able to attend."



Director Elizabeth Hill (second from left) with NJ resident Latisha Porter-Vaughn, and other attendees at the Hearing Loss Association of America conference.



Deaf Sensitivity Trainings

Deaf Specialist Jaclyne Brown and Hard of Hearing Specialist Baylie Sappir are continuing their Deaf Sensitivity Trainings and getting rave reviews.

These trainings will soon expand to child care centers and pre-school programs. Ms. Brown and Ms. Sappir traveled throughout New Jersey to provide trainings to multiple county boards of social services. Deaf and hard of hearing consumers access county social services every day for services such as food assistance, Medicaid, and public assistance. This summer included trainings in Cape May, Burlington and Gloucester counties, and Newark.

Other training sites were: the Joseph Kohn Training Center, Alaris at Rahway, and the Commission of Blind and Visual Impaired.

An upcoming training will be at Golden Gate Childcare center in Vineland as part of our Leveling the Playing Field initiative.

If you want to request a training, please contact Ms. Brown at DDHH at 609-503-4862 or Jaclyne.Brown@dhs.state.nj.us.



Emergency Preparedness

Today we are experiencing an increase in a number of weather-related disasters. For us here in New Jersey, flooding and hurricanes seem to be the most common types of disasters. The question is "Are you prepared?" Those who are deaf and hard of hearing need to be prepared.

Being prepared includes several tasks.

The first is a "go bag."

This is a bag that stores a number of key items. Think of a situation where you have to evacuate and, while you are at a shelter, your home is a complete loss. If you do not have documentation to prove who you are, your ability to get needed services will be difficult. Safeguard your driver's license or passport. Do you have a credit card or two? Do you have spare cash? Do you have a hearing aid or cochlear implant? Be sure to include extra batteries and charger for the rechargeable batteries. Most of us have a cell phone. Be sure to include your cell phone charger. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has a number of web pages to guide you in being prepared with your "go bag." Check them out [here](#).

Also, be sure to have an emergency kit. The Red Cross has a suggested list which you should have in your emergency kit. Check out this [link](#) for more info.

If you shelter in place, there are additional items that you will want to have on hand to be prepared. The New Jersey Office of Emergency Management is an excellent source for this information. Visit [here](#).

An important thing to remember is to sign up with Register Ready. By signing up with Register Ready you help your local emergency planners to prepare for when an emergency is declared. The information gathered identifies where their resources need to be directed. Please remember Register Ready is NOT an emergency evacuation service. Interested persons can voluntarily sign up [here](#).

"Family preparedness is an important component of keeping yourself and your family safe during an emergency or disaster," said Lt. Joseph Geleta, director of Department of Human Services' Office of Emergency Management "Be sure to have a family emergency plan, a disaster supply kit and stay connected through emergency notification networks. Your actions now will make a difference during times of disaster."

New Jersey Association of the Deaf President Annmarie Buraczkeski shared her Superstorm Sandy experiences with FEMA's Community Emergency Preparedness. Her story is available on YouTube [here](#).

If you want to be involved and help out in times of emergency, consider joining your local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) at www.ready.gov/community-emergency-response-team. The New Jersey Association of the Deaf has hosted training for deaf members interested in joining CERT and may also be contacted for more information.

DDHH Advisory Council meets on the 29th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

DDHH's Advisory Council met in July at the East Brunswick Public Library. The day happened to coincide on the 29th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Advisory Council viewed presentations from Easter Seals and Bridges to Employment, both of which contract with the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Despite the passage of the ADA, employment for deaf and hard of hearing individuals remains lower than for the general population. The presentations were a timely reminder of the work that remains ahead of us.

Thank you to Easter Seals and Bridges to Employment for attending our Advisory Council!



Motor Vehicle Commission Information



The Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) can secure an interpreter for a deaf or hard of hearing applicant who is unable to read and understand English concepts, and needs an interpreter to translate in their primary language - American Sign Language - to access the tests to receive a driver's license. When a deaf or hard of hearing applicant takes the written test, they are to use the interpreter on the screen. If a deaf or hard of hearing applicant fails the test, they can request an interpreter to come to the MVC. The applicants should call (609) 292-6500 if there are any issues with requesting an interpreter and/or to request an interpreter for the next test.

As for the road test, deaf and hard of hearing applicants can request a sign language interpreter for communication before and after the test. This way, when a deaf or hard of hearing applicant comes for the test, the applicant will have opportunity to use an interpreter to ask questions and to receive instructions through American Sign Language.

www.state.nj.us/mvc/pdf/about/PRN_2017_271.pdf

If you want to know more details on this topic or need assistance with any other issues, please contact DDHH Deaf Specialist, Jaclyne Brown at 609-503-4862.

Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI) 2019 Biennial Conference



TDI hosted their 2019 Biennial Conference at Gallaudet University in August. DDHH Director Elizabeth Hill attended, and National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's presented on "The Untapped Potential of State Agencies: Opportunities for Collaboration."

Audience members asked questions about how state agencies can support consumers, CART certification, voting accessibility, access to interpreter services, and more.

In addition to the presentation, lots of information was given about emerging issues in technology. Much was discussed about real-time text as a tool for deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind individuals to access emergency services. More information about real-time text is below. Other issues that were discussed include the transition to next-generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1) services for Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), the need for captioning metrics, and ensuring that technology is designed to be accessible for deaf-blind individuals and those of diverse backgrounds.

More information on real-time text

On December 15, 2016, the FCC adopted rules to facilitate a transition from text telephony (TTY) technology to real-time text (RTT) technology.

RTT allows for text to be transmitted while it is being typed through wireless handsets that use IP-based technology. There is no need to type an entire message, hit "send", and then wait for a reply. This differentiates it from SMS texting. There is no delay between sending and receiving. Your wireless handset likely has RTT capability. And likewise, this technology will be available with NG 9-1-1 which will give deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind individuals better options to call 9-1-1, and enable PSAPs faster communication capabilities for emergency calls.

Not all 9-1-1 centers have SMS capability. With the advent of NG 9-1-1 and RTT, deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind individuals will have ensured access to emergency calls. RTT allows for simultaneous communications which means faster response times – critical in times of emergencies. There is no need to buy any specialized equipment. You can simply use your wireless device to place the RTT call. With RTT, you can use the "@" key, alphabets in multiple languages, and emojis, allowing conversations using the full "international character set."

Hard of hearing users will be interested to know that both RTT and voice can be used, either at the same time or interchangeably, during the same call.



National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NASADHH)

DDHH Director Elizabeth Hill participated in the National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's 2019 Annual Policy Summit for the Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing at Gallaudet University. The summit is a gathering of state directors of agencies of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing to discuss common policy issues and challenges and to share ideas on initiatives that are working in each of our states.

Some of the issues that were discussed include the challenges of working with healthcare providers to provide communication access; ways to address gaps in employment for deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind individuals; the need for captioning metrics given the challenges of automated speech recognition technology; and Real-time text for next-generation 9-1-1 capability.

Thanks to the Association's board for arranging federal agencies and speakers to meet with Director Hill and other directors, including the Federal Communications Commission, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Rehabilitation Services Administration, among others.

The next Association meeting in 2020 will be at the National Association of the Deaf conference in Chicago, IL.

Did you know that Text to 9-1-1 is available in New Jersey?

For deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind individuals, the ability to contact 9-1-1 has not always been accessible. The State of New Jersey's Office of Emergency Telecommunication Services in cooperation with Verizon Wireless, AT&T, T-Mobile, and Sprint and a select number of public safety agencies have been able to implement Text to 9-1-1 on an interim basis.

This permits the sending of SMS* text messages to 9-1-1 when a voice call is not possible or practical.

If you need to use text to 9-1-1:

Do Not attempt to send videos or photos with your texts. Limit your messaging to text only. Be as specific as possible when providing your location. Provide as much of the following information as possible:

- Exact address to include unit/apartment number and city
- Business name
- The names of both streets at the nearest intersection
- Landmarks



Once the texting session is initiated, **DO NOT EXIT THE CONVERSATION** until the 9-1-1 operator has told you to do so.

As with all text messages, 9-1-1 text messages can take longer to receive, may be delivered out of order, or may not be received at all.

Photos and videos cannot be sent to 9-1-1 at this time.

Text-to-9-1-1 cannot include more than one person. Do not copy your emergency text to anyone other than 9-1-1. Wait until you are safe to notify others of your situation.

At this time translation services for text-to-9-1-1 are not available; please text in English only.

How do send a Text to 9-1-1?

1. Open the message app on your phone or wireless device.
2. In "To" type "911" (there is no need to add "-")
3. In the message field, type the location (address and municipality) and a brief description of the problem.
4. Then press "SEND".

SAVE THE DATE

September 28, 2019

NJ Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and
NJ Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Present:

Certified Deaf Interpreter/
Deaf Interpreter Panel Discussion
(Presented in ASL)
9:00 am - Noon
and
Deaf-Blind Consumer Panel Discussion
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Signs of Sobriety
100 Scotch Rd
Ewing, NJ

FREE to Community Members
CEUs - \$45 for one panel or \$80 for both panels
**Lunch is not included **

Free Playgroup

**For Children Who are Deaf and
Hard of Hearing
Ages 15 months to 5 years**

Locations in Trenton, Jackson and Burlington.
(Additional dates and locations to follow.)

Come Join Us!

- *Experience a language rich environment in both American Sign Language and English
- *Receive information about educational services in NJ
- *Network with other families
- *Share resources
- *Join in activities run by certified Teachers of the Deaf
(Please bring a snack)

Sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing under the Level the Playing Field initiative.

**Marie H. Katzenbach
School for the Deaf**

Locations:

*Katzenbach School for the Deaf
Early Childhood Building
320 Sullivan Way
West Trenton, NJ 08628

*Millie's Angels
2156 W. County Line Rd
Jackson, NJ 08527

*Burlington County Library
5 Pioneer BLVD
Westampton Township, NJ 08060

RSVP:
* Name/Contact Info/location
* Age of child
* Siblings attending

Email: Megan Roszko/Deborah Bilik
playgroup@mkdsd.org
Phone: 732-233-7970
VP: 609-269-2318

320 Sullivan Way
Trenton, NJ 08628

Megan Roszko/Deborah Bilik
playgroup@mkdsd.org

Phone: (732) 233 7970
VP: (609) 269 -2318



NJ Department of Human Services
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**New Jersey Department of Human Services
Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

ASL Development for Children Ages 0-5 Services

Did you know that your deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind child can receive **FREE** language acquisition services through an American Sign Language Deaf Language Associate?

For more information about this program, contact:

**Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
PO Box 074**

Trenton, NJ 08625-0074

609-588-2648 - Voice

609-503-4862 - Videophone

609-588-2528 Fax

Ddhh.Communications2@dhs.state.nj.us

<https://nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/home/>



NJ Department of Human Services

Phil Murphy, Governor | Sheila Oliver, Lt. Governor | Carole Johnson, Commissioner



**The Next
DDHH Advisory Council Meeting**

Friday, October 25, 2019

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

East Brunswick Public Library

2 Jean Walling Civic Center, East Brunswick, NJ 08816

Guest Speaker/Presenter: Christine L. Matus

Topic: The importance of estate planning and special needs planning services for both children and adults. This topic is designed to educate you so that you can control your future, protect your hard-earned savings and have peace of mind. This presentation will be done in an easy-to-understand format that helps you learn and create a plan of action for protecting your family, your life savings and your legacy.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

Sign Language Interpreters, Communication Access Realtime Translation Services, and Assistive Listening Devices will be provided.

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

CONTACT INFORMATION:

The NJ Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

PO Box 074, Trenton NJ 08625

Ph: 609-588-2648 Fax: 609-588-2528

VP: 609-498-7019