

Monthly Communicator

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

January 2016 | www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/home/index.html

Chris Christie, Governor

Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor

Elizabeth Connolly, Acting Commissioner

David Alexander, Director



Director's Corner by David C. Alexander, Ph.D., Director

Assistive Listening Devices Loan Library

Distance and noise are two factors that create difficult listening conditions. **Assistive Listening Systems** can minimize the impact of these two factors. These systems combine a transmitter placed near the desired sounds, which is wirelessly linked to a small receiver that you wear. This receiver, in turn, delivers those sounds directly into the amplification device in your ear(s).

The New Jersey Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing operates an **Assistive Listening Device Loan Program**. This program enables people with hearing loss, as well as community organizations, to borrow the devices on a trial basis from county libraries. Two types of systems are available: Personal FM Systems for use up to 150 feet, and Wide Area FM Systems for use in larger spaces. Both systems are portable and come with simple instructions. They readily connect to all types of hearing aids and cochlear implants, and also work with ear-buds or lightweight headsets.

A list of participating libraries can be found [here](#).

For further information please contact the NJ Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at (609) 588-2648 or (800) 792-8339 toll free in New Jersey.

Social Work Interns Gain Experience with DDHH

Two social work interns from Rutgers University are gaining experience with DDHH. The interns are **Ian Zapcic** and **Allison Strobel**. They are graduate students studying for their Masters in Social Work and will be graduating in May of 2016. The interns spend one day a week on average with the division and have taken on some projects. They attend division meetings and are learning about the many programs and services offered by DDHH. Allison is attending domestic violence trainings and meetings with staff member **Catie Purrazzella**. Ian is participating in the design of a template for reporting data on the various programs and services offered by the DDHH.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community News

The Web sites below are a great resource to read about activities involving people with hearing loss in New Jersey.

- [NJ Hearing Loss Association](#)
- [New Jersey Deaf News](#)

Deaf Self-Advocacy Training for Deaf Advocates *by Catie Purrazzella, Service Coordinator*

Last December, the Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing worked in collaboration with the Deaf Advocacy Project to provide deaf self-advocacy training to deaf advocates. The training covered information on civil rights laws and provided tools on how to advocate for the communication access needs of deaf survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault in different settings such as hospitals and police departments.

New Social Security Administration Liaison

During the last several years, the Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has been working in collaboration with Carl Robinson, Public Affairs Specialist, from the Social Security Administration (SSA) to address communication access issues for deaf and hard of hearing consumers at SSA field offices. We are sad to announce that Carl has retired and we want to recognize and thank Carl for his excellent service. We are looking forward to continuing our collaboration with our new liaisons, Richard Bailey, SSA Area Director and Viktorya Vinokurov, SSA Area Office Supervisor. We will continue to address any communication access issues with both individuals. If anyone needs assistance with requesting for communication access at a field office, please contact Catie Purrazzella at Catherine.purrazzella@dhs.state.nj.us or (609) 503-4862.

DDD and DDHH Collaboration

DDHH staff met with representatives from the Division of Developmental Disabilities' Director's office and the Department of Human Services' Deputy Commissioner. This was in follow-up to an ongoing discussion on how to improve services to consumers who have a developmental disability and hearing loss. Policies are being reviewed so as to ensure that appropriate communication access is provided to all clients in need. In addition, a DDD liaison was appointed to facilitate efforts when DDHH staff need to raise an issue on behalf of a consumer.

DDHH Advisory Council Plans Meet and Greet for PresidentgElect

Three major New Jersey agencies for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing recently conducted elections. New presidents were selected by "The New Jersey Registry for Interpreters of the Deaf", "New Jersey Association of the Deaf" and the "Hearing Loss Association of America-NJ."

The DDHH is planning a meet and greet Ua cb[the presidentg-elect and members of the DDHH advisory council. This will include a brief presentation of their respective agencies and how the community can all work collaboratively toward mutual goals. This event will occur at the next meeting of the DDHH Advisory Council to be held on Friday, January 29, 2016. More information about the council meeting and location can be found below.

New Jersey Relay Services Offers New Speech to Speech Service

The NJ CapTel website, at www.njcaptel.com, has a new look to make it more attractive, engaging, and easier for visitors to find the right solutions for their telecommunications needs. The website includes information about a new enhancement of traditional Speech to Speech service, *Video-Assisted Speech-to-Speech (VA STS)*. The new website can be viewed [here](#).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friday, January 29, 2016

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

DDHH Advisory Council Meeting
East Brunswick Public Library

Speakers: *Eileen Forestal, NJRID President;*
Joel Strasser, HLAA-NJ President; Khanh Lao, NJAD President



DDHH Regular Office Hours: Monday – Friday: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Office Closed: Friday, January 1 - New Year's Day

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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