

Advisory committee to the Alcohol and Drugs Abuse Program  
for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Disabled  
Meeting Minutes  
March 9, 2011

**Members Present:** Lauren Casey, Board Member  
Frank Smith, Board Member  
Nancy Yarosh, NJ DVRS  
Frank Latham, NJ Council for Development Disabilities  
Jason Weiland, DDHH  
Carol Uckar, Board Member

**DAS Representative:** Adam Bucon

**Members Absent:** Julie Doerrmann, Board Member  
Kevin Sullivan, GCADA

**Interpreters:** Monica Ayer and Janice Nierstedt

**CART Reporter:** Jeannette Voight

**The minutes:**

The minutes for December 8, 2010 were approved.

**Membership issues:**

We continued the discussion in regards to the possible abolishment of committee. The State began looking at abolishing committees which have financial impact on the State. This committee does not receive any funding except to pay for communication accessibility services. Therefore, the Committee has agreed to move forward to solicit new membership applications for the committee. It was decided to hold off the election of new officers in hopes to have more people on the Committee who could help us with new ideas and recommendations to advise the Commissioner.

Currently there are two positions available for people who are deaf, HOH or disabled and one position available for an individual who has an interest in substance abuse and disability.

The Committee suggested face-to-face interviews as part of the application process; this might help to see who is serious about joining the Advisory Committee. The recommendation was to send out official invitations from the advisory committee which could be extended to all interested contacts. Applications will also be listed on the DAS website. Another suggestion was to send out an application to ACCESS Link. Advertising to the director's association of all the county offices on

disability was another idea. Applications should be sent out within the next month as it must go through the Commissioner's office first. It was agreed that Committee members will reach out to the disability community to assess their willingness to be a member of the Advisory Committee.

The applications are ready to go out and Adam needs at least five people to help to review the applications. Adam will send out an email to obtain volunteers for a Review Committee.

#### **Suggestions for Advertising for the Advisory Board meeting:**

- DDHH Monthly Communicator (or other disability groups)
- DAS website (which includes minutes from previous meetings and gives future dates)
- The Blind or Visually Impaired (if they have a newsletter)
- Signs of Sobriety Publication
- YouTube
- County Offices of the Disabled (newsletter or website)
- Center for Independent Living
- Email (send overview to several organizations with an overview of the committee)
- Disability Coalition
- Community Colleges (class project with compensation)
- ASL Festival at Union County College (April)
- Flyers
- Deaf Awareness Day at Six Flags

#### **Tom Shaw Suggestions:**

Tom Shaw who runs the Mercer County Disability coalition had some suggestions:

- Send official invitation from the advisory board to the different coalitions, the group that represents the disability community.
- Advertising to the different organizations that deliver services to people with a disabilities
- The Director Association of all the county office on disabilities is interested in knowing about the possibility of the "Disabilities and Additions Awareness Month".
- Is there an age limited to joining the advisory board?

#### **Substance Abuse or Disability Awareness (Day, Week or Month?):**

Get more information out to the Association of County Disability Services Directors as they would love to participate.

#### **Age Requirement for joining the Advisory Board:**

Jason recalled they prefer people to be over 21 but was not sure why. He is not sure if that was a State requirement or not, but he thinks it would be a good idea to have high school students

because of the pressures found in schools. It would bring new faces, new ideas and different perspectives in what we now live in, the “technology” world.

Frank Latham who runs a youth leadership program said after we give the youth leadership trainings it is often difficult to find a suitable place for the youth to gain leadership experience. A suggestion was that they could take part on this advisory board.

Adam said there are not many vacant spaces on the Advisory Committee, but recommended they come to an upcoming meeting, as this meeting is open to the public. They can still give their ideas and recommendation. The youth Leadership group could come and speak about their program on what is going on in their community and their perspective. At the same time they can learn what this advisory board does. The coordinator said he would be happy to get the youth groups to come and speak at the next DAS meeting which is in June 2011.

### **Merging issues**

We discussed the possibility of merging with another committee called the Division of Mental Health Advisory Committee for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This committee was created as result of a lawsuit filed approximately twenty years ago.

It was explained the difference between the two is that the Mental Health Advisory Committee is for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing while the DAS committee is for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and other Disabilities. The advisory committee agreed that if we merge we would like to include people with other disabilities, not just the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

The other concern brought up about merging the two committee’s is what would happen to the \$350,000 that now resides with the DAS Advisory group? Will there be other funding designated or would the funding remain the same and need to be used for a wider range of populations of individuals?

### **Obtaining additional money?**

The \$350,000 was given to DAS about 15 years ago. The past few meeting there has been recommendations to have funding increased, but the question has also arisen, how would we go about increasing funds when there is a state budget crisis. How do you apply for grant, as many of them do not focus on people with a hearing loss or disability? It was recommended the focus should be on any available funding and then make it accommodate this Committee’s needs.

It was discussed that possibly the Profession Advisory Committee (PAC) or Citizen’s Advisory Council (CAC) may have some insight on how to go about obtaining other funding. Adam reports CAC works directly with his division and the woman who coordinates the Committee works part time in his office. It was suggested that possibly we could invite her or someone from this group to tell us what they do and we in return tell them what we do.

Another suggestion that this group could investigate is to where additional funding to support these services may be available. That way we will be the one that know about the money first and then we can tell other agencies to apply for the grant or add it to our registry of these notifications. It was suggested that the advisory committee could review the proposal to make sure that it is the best proposal for individuals they are trying to serve. This advisory board could make sure the most appropriate accommodations are being made for specific disabilities.

It was discussed how to increase DEDR funding that is presently at \$350K. It was identified there was a legislative draft done by John Hulick and Javier Robles years ago. The State representative from DAS cannot submit it; it will have to come from the advisory board. Adam will find out from someone at his Division the procedure of how to possibly do this.

### **Subcommittee issues**

Adam will check in with Julie to see what her plans are for moving forward with the Accessibility Subcommittee.

### **Meeting adjourned**