



DHHCAN Meeting

April 1, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held online using the Zoom video-conferencing platform

ROLL CALL

Voting Members	Organizational Partners	Others
Zainab Alkebsi, NAD	Caroline Pezzarossi, ADARA	Dawn Watts , Interpreter
Eric Kaika, TDI	Neal Tucker, RID	Natalie Ennis, CART Captioner
Marcia Zisman, GUAA	Barbara Raimondo, CEASD	Jan Nishimura, Interpreter
Art Roehrig, AADB	Eileen McCartin, NVRC	Tona Swagert, Interpreter
Lise Hamlin, HLAA	Jessica Kennedy, CSD	
Barbara Martin, ALDA		
Mark Hill, CPADO		
Al Sonnenstrahl, DSA		

Communication protocols were shared.

Introductions were made. Zainab welcomed Jessica Kennedy who is the new representative for CSD since the previous representative, Tyrone Giordano, has a new position elsewhere.

Meeting called to order: 12:01p.

Quorum: Met

Chair's Report

- Updates on the NAD's response to the coronavirus pandemic can be found under the Civil Rights Protection and Enforcement and Employment policy reports.
- Congratulations to Eric Kaika, the new CEO of TDI.

Vice-Chair's Report

No report

Secretary's Report

- Eric mentioned that he has the minutes from the March meeting which Marcia was unable to attend. Eric Kaika chaired the meeting in Zainab's place and Eric Raff took the minutes. Since there was no quorum, the minutes do not need to be voted on.
- Thanks to the CART captioner, Natalie, who will provide the transcript of today's meeting which will be very useful when drafting the minutes.

Treasurer's Report

- The balance as of February 28th was \$28,543.55. As of yesterday the on-line balance was \$28,076.76.

POLICY REPORTS

CIVIL RIGHTS PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT

- The NAD has been working on policy responses to the pandemic. Along with other organizations, the NAD released guidelines on healthcare communication access during the crisis. Traditional communication approaches in medical settings have been abandoned by overwhelmed hospitals and new strategies must be adopted out of necessity. Two position papers were released - one for hospitals and the other for consumer advocates - the latter of which provides guidance on how we can best prepare ourselves prior to going to the hospital and what should happen once we enter the hospital. Both documents can be found on the websites of the NAD, HLAA, as well as other organizations.

EDUCATION

- Information is being sent out to members via their Facebook page including resources that are available for schools that are online. Some schools have been struggling because they are on spring break and it takes time to make the necessary changes so that students can continue with their education. CEASD wants to stress to the education community that everyone is in this together. They will continue sharing information and resources and supporting each other.

EMPLOYMENT

- Jessica has no updates for employment from Tyrone but this is something that she will be happy to focus on. She and Zainab will talk offline.
- Art mentioned challenges that DeafBlind employees are currently facing with respect to SSPs and people wanting to avoid touching and coming close. This also affects DeafBlind individuals who are unable to go to doctors' offices or the hospital due to lack of transportation. SSPs are considered non-essential employees in all states except for Minnesota. He recommends that we propose that the federal government make changes to the classification of SSPs. Zainab pointed out that the NAD is aware of this which not only affects employment but education as well. CDIs and SSPs are not willing to go to clients' homes. Zainab also pointed out that the federal level is not where these classifications are happening but rather at the state level within Governor's Offices. She suggests that this be discussed during new business - how we can ensure CDIs and SSPs are considered essential employees.
- The NAD is developing guidelines for access to remote workplace meetings. Not all Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind citizens' needs are being considered nor met. Access may be limited for those employees working in a predominately hearing workplace.

HEALTH CARE

- A reminder to look at the aforementioned policy guidance documents that have been posted on the HLAA, NAD, TDI, Gallaudet and many other websites. Be sure to share this with your constituents with appropriate credit to those who developed the documents.
- It is best to link to one of the previously mentioned websites when sharing the policy documents as the documents are living documents that will be tweaked depending on what is going on related to the pandemic. Providing links to the websites will ensure readers are accessing the most recent version.
- It's very important to have a communication app downloaded on cell phones before going to the hospital and to put important things in plastic bags and make sure no one touches them. This will be added to the guidance document.
- No movement on the over the counter hearing aids.
- NAD contacted the Center for Disease Control (CDC) encouraging them to make their information accessible for our community. After 3 weeks, CDC finally provided captions with some of their videos. Not all of the videos are accessible, the NAD's goal is 100% accessibility.
- NAD has developed advocacy letters for situations that are occurring during this crisis, i.e, governor briefings without interpreters, tv stations not captioning briefings or not including the interpreter in the frame.

HOUSING

- Although there were no updates from Al, Zainab pointed out that there are programs to ease financial concerns during the pandemic to assist those struggling to pay their rent or mortgage.

- HUD announced on March 18th that there will be a suspension of all foreclosures and evictions with 60 days notice. This applies to FHA mortgages. HUD will also be proposing new guidelines related to government-owned properties which includes Section 8A housing.
- Banks have announced that they will defer mortgage payments for 4 months with no interest.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION SERVICES, AND VIDEO PROGRAMMING

- Other than the one filing mentioned last month, there were no other filings made in March. There will be an emergency filing soon related to DeafBlind accessibility to VRS using myMMX db which enables DeafBlind individuals to communicate with VRS interpreters in emergency situations. The sign on is due today. Eric was asked to send this out again.

TRANSPORTATION

- Zainab expressed thanks for the support on the commercial driver's licenses (CDL) filing.
- NAD has been working with Senator Casey's office on Senate Bill 3473 - Airline Information and Entertainment Access Act.

OLD BUSINESS:

Deaf History Month

At a previous NAD conference, a motion was made to annually observe Deaf History Month from March 13-April 15. The motion passed and became a NAD priority; however, people began expressing disappointment and confusion and preferred an entire month instead of half of one and half of another month. At a more recent NAD conference, a resolution was approved to observe Deaf History Month in April. This resolution does not carry as much weight as the NAD priority. This issue remains unresolved and would need to be addressed and voted on by delegates at this summer's NAD conference. It is not yet known if the conference will proceed as scheduled.

March 13 was selected to commemorate when Gallaudet's Deaf President Now (DPN) movement began in 1988.

HR 224 was presented from a representative from Ohio. The bill is at the committee level now and they need to decide if it will be advanced to the entire House. The bill mentions that the NAD formally recognizes March 13 to April 15 as Deaf History month. If the NAD changes their position, they would have to communicate with the committee, which includes our ally Representative Takano.

NEW BUSINESS:

There was discussion on how to proceed with the very serious DeafBlind issues we are seeing with the pandemic. Art will be in touch with officials in Minnesota to request their guidelines for our review. Once received, Art can start a new email thread to discuss these issues. Subject line will be bolded "DeafBlind Access Issues". We could have a follow-up zoom meeting to discuss this further.

We should also reach out to Eric Raff and Kelby Brick who hopefully have networks with state governors through NASADHH which could be utilized to advocate within Governors' offices for reclassification. This would be a quicker way to make sure this issue is recognized and deemed critical.

A resolution was passed to work together to address the DeafBlind issue.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mark attended the 2-day Interpreter Summit in February which he felt was incredible and where he learned a lot. The summit focused on the interpreter issues and was attended by Deaf community representatives, interpreters, people who head interpreter training programs and accreditation. It was a very intense summit with panels, questions, discussions, roundtables and brainstorming on how to improve the interpreting field. Kudos to Kim Bianco-Majeri, NAD's state legislative coordinator who planned it. Kim is now developing a white paper based on feedback collected during the summit.

NAD sent a letter to the White House and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) about 2 weeks ago. To date, there has been no response from the White House. Unlike with previous administrations there is no disability liaison with whom we can address disability access issues. There will be a meeting with the NAB this afternoon and the letter will be discussed.

The NAD office has been closed since March 15th. All staff are now working from home, still responding to emails and answering calls. Regarding questions about the upcoming conference, they have been monitoring the situation closely and talking with the hotel. Stay tuned.

The National Association of Governors (NGA) is co-chaired by Larry Hogan (R-MD) and Andrew Cuomo (D-NY). While Hogan is providing an interpreter during his press conferences, Cuomo is not. RID struggled to convince Cuomo's office to do so, they are resistant to providing an interpreter live on the screen and instead are providing a link to access to ASL on a website. Could DHHCAN partner with the NGA to develop best practices papers? Since the new business portion of our meeting is already closed, this may be something to discuss through email.

The next DHHCAN meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 6th and will likely be a virtual one. Zainab has sent out the information including the Zoom/CART/Hand Raising tool links.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.