

# Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

## 2021 Legislative Session – Advocacy Agenda (81<sup>st</sup> Session)

The following topic areas and points may be presented as public comment in legislative hearings during the 81<sup>st</sup> session by the Commission Chair, Co-Chair or their designee.

### Feedback:

Laura:

#### Health Care/Mental Health

- The quality of healthcare, including mental health services is dependent on receiving these services through an individual's primary language to ~~assure~~ ensure patient comprehension and understanding of medical advice.
- ~~Having~~ Providing access to appropriate qualified interpreters is both the responsibility of the facility (hospitals, inpatient/outpatient services, clinics etc) and the medical insurance providers.

#### Awareness/Advocacy

- Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing use a variety of communication methods to access services. ~~A more inclusive approach to published, Nevada needs to be more inclusive of this population when publishing public materials ensures reasonable accommodations are integrated and appropriately budgeted. which includes budgeting appropriately for accommodations.—~~
- State and local government entities, which are bound by ADA and diversity inclusion should make known such available accommodations for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals readily apparent in every capacity possible including posted signage and in regular correspondence. ~~There needs to be a clear statement from state and local governments on the rights of individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, and the accommodations available to meet their needs.~~
- Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing need to have the same access as any other individual, which means a respect of their rights and chosen mode of communication.

#### Interpreters

- Nevada is experiencing a shortage in qualified interpreters (CHI and CDI) which has resulted in lack of access to effective communication for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. Having access to effective communication is critical to daily living needs.
- Increasing education opportunities for interpreters ~~can~~ will enhance the quality of interpretation and further support the needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.

#### Employment

- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nevadans have experienced communication barriers ~~difficulties with when securing seeking in-state employment. due to the lack of accessible accommodations,~~ The novel COVID-19 virus has intensified these challenges

and has added a *physical* layer ~~of to this~~ difficulty (face masks) for this population, including inaccessibility to essential ~~when needing to access~~ unemployment benefits.

## Education

- There needs to be a clear plan of action from the Department of Education on the transition activities and the coordination of services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students beyond high school.
  - Under federal WIOA legislation, there is the expectation that schools and Vocational Rehabilitation agencies work at the state and local level to facilitate the transition of students into the world of work. Nevada VR is working with schools to support students with disabilities (including DHH). Lora Turner would be a good point of contact to share what official agreements may be in place already.

## Emergency Preparedness

- People with disabilities are more likely to be ~~uninformed~~ excluded from traditional modes of information sharing which results in putting them at greater risk of ~~increasing their risk to~~ danger during an emergency situation. It is important for information to be accessible to people with disabilities in efforts to aid them in making informed decisions during critical situations.
- Accessible information includes making materials/presentations available in plain terms in multiple languages including American Sign Language ~~having the information available in plain language, in different languages, including American sign language and/or at a readability level acceptable for a public audience.~~