

Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

2021 Legislative Session – Advocacy Agenda (81st Session)

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

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 understanding of medical advice.
- Having access to appropriate interpreters is both the responsibility of the hospitals, inpatient/outpatient services, and the medical insurance providers.

Awareness/ Advocacy

- Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing use a variety of communication methods to access services, Nevada needs to be more inclusive of this population when publishing public materials which includes budgeting appropriately for accommodations.
- 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 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 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 difficulties with securing employment due to the lack of accessible accommodations, the novel COVID-19 virus has intensified these challenges and has added a layer

of difficulty for this population 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.
- Hiring teachers of the Deaf who are Deaf themselves provide a language model for students which is significant to a student's development and success in the classroom.

Emergency Preparedness

- People with disabilities are more likely to be uninformed which results in increasing their risk to danger. 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 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.