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DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DIVISION
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Rique Robb
Administrator

Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Accessibility Subcommittee

MEETING NOTICE

**Date and Time of Meeting: Friday, June 20, 2025
2:30 PM**

Location of Meeting: ZOOM –

MINUTES

1. **Roll Call and Opening Statement:**

Obioma Officer, Executive Director

Members: Thom Duva, Lee Bullock, Paula Koerwitz, Lorraine Belt-Dolan

Excused Absent: Laura Fussell

Guests: Sabrina Schnur, Cecilia Alonso, Kelly Bagnall, Yeni Medina,

CART Provider: Becky Van Auken

Interpreters: Mitch Bartlett & Sonya Stark

Staff: Autumn Blattman & Wendy Thornley

2. **Public Comment:**

No public comment.

3. **For Possible Action:** Approval of draft Minutes of the March 14, 2025, meeting.

Obioma Officer, Executive Director

Lorraine Belt-Dolan motioned to approve the draft minutes. Lee Bullock seconded. The members voted and the motion carried.

4. **For Possible Action:** Nominations, Elections, and/or reappointment of subcommittee member and Chairperson for the Accessibility Subcommittee. Nominations for Chairperson open to current Subcommittee members in good standing and term availability.

Obioma Officer, Executive Director

All members will continue in their current roles until August 31st of 2025 except for the new member, Lorraine Belt-Dolan, accepting the nomination of Chair from Thom Duva. Thom Duva motioned for Lorraine Belt-Dolan to be Chair of this subcommittee. Paula Koerwitz seconded. The members voted and the motion carried.

5. **Presentation and Discussion:** Las Vegas Deaf Seniors (LVDS) Taskforce Presentation on ongoing education of hospitals' communication access and hospitality approach for Deaf and Hard of Hearing patients, next steps, and outcomes to Accessibility Subcommittee Report request of Commissioner voted representative to join the LVDS Medical Taskforce, Dr. Kimberly Bauer-Schaub.

LVDS Representative

Kimberly Bauer-Schaub, Ph.D., Commissioner

Obioma Officer, Executive Director

This agenda item was tabled.

6. **For Information Only:** Review current feedback pertaining to Deaf and Hard of Hearing services, resources and advocacy from the Townhalls held in Elko, Reno and Las Vegas.

Obioma Officer, Executive Director

Obioma reported on a town hall tour conducted throughout the state in October 2024. Feedback was gathered from many community members, documented by the commissioners. In Elko, six community members participated, and the commissioners noted 22 different impressions or observations. The main concern raised in Elko was healthcare accessibility in rural areas, particularly for children's speech therapy and audiology services. There are significant challenges in accessing healthcare services in Elko due to a shortage of providers and long travel times. Providers within a two-hour radius are often fully booked. The size of the Deaf community in Elko is currently unknown, but this issue has been ongoing for years. While some improvements have been made with early intervention equipment, many services still require face-to-face interaction, which families prefer.

Another major concern is the shortage of qualified interpreters, both hearing and Deaf, particularly in rural areas. This issue is seen nationwide and affects schools and education. In Reno, the primary concerns are ADA compliance and cultural competency, with a significant gap in awareness and training regarding these issues.

Funding for training is lacking, but there are efforts to network and partner with organizations to provide professional training. A summit is being planned to discuss these issues further. In Las Vegas, there are gaps in healthcare access, ADA compliance, and interpreter availability, with an overproduction of educational interpreters and a shortage of community interpreters.

Overall, there is a national shortage of interpreters, and ongoing efforts are needed to address these challenges through policy development and community engagement.

7. **For Possible Action:** For Review, Discussion, and Possible Action: Examine and assess assignments related to enhancing accessibility in government and medical settings, as outlined in the State Plan requiring potential legislative attention and commission approval.

Obioma Officer, Executive Director

The group has discussed this before and there were no concerns with accessibility.

8. **For Possible Action:** Approval of tentative Agenda Items for the Next meeting, Friday, September 12, 2025, at 2:30 PM.

Obioma Officer, Executive Director

Possible presentation by educators who are training new interpreters including why the training is leaning more towards education instead of community.

Other suggestions can be sent to Obioma Officer.

9. **Public Comment:**

Obioma Officer: The Deaf Nation World Expo will take place in Las Vegas from July 22nd to 24th. Over 200 vendors related to the Deaf and hard of hearing community will be present. The Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) and the Commission will have booths at the event. It's a free event open to everyone, including Deaf, hard of hearing, hearing individuals, and their families. Interpreters will be available throughout the event. Volunteers are welcome to help at the Commission's booth.

10. **Adjournment (For Possible Action):** Meeting adjourned at 3:29 pm
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AGENDA POSTED AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

Notice of this meeting was posted at the following Aging and Disability Services Office at 3208 Goni Road, Building I, Suite 181, Carson City, NV. 89706. Notice of this meeting was posted on the Internet through the Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division website at [ADSD \(nv.gov\)](https://adsd.nv.gov) and Nevada Public Notices website at <https://notice.nv.gov>