



**LOUISIANA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF**  
**Board of Commissioners**

January 20, 2023 9:00am-1:00pm

**Minutes**

**I. Roll Call & Introductions**

- a. Meeting called to order by Chair, Dr. Natalie Delgado, 9:06am
- b. Members Present: secretary- Dr. Ashley Argrave, Melissa Bayham, Brad Wellons, Sajata Varner, Jimmy Challis Gore, Vice Chair- Jason Isch, Sherry Powell-proxy Aaron Magee, Davondra Brown, Chair- Dr. Natalie Delgado, Denise Crochet, Marissa Ramos, Cammy Gaspar, Bambi Polotzola, Megan Wimberly, SSD - proxy Ty Manieri
- c. Members Absent: Lynne Gomez, Representative Scott McKnight, Senator Sharon Hewitt
- d. LCD Staff: Jana Broussard, Vanessa Magnon, Jazmyne Lemar, Victoria Reguiera, Brittany Welch
- e. Ancillary support: Interpreters: Malachi Mooney, Sylvie Sullivan, Annette Poche, Lissa Gill; Remote Captionist provided by CC Group

**II. Approval of Agenda (Isch, Gore)**

- a. MOTION: Magee: defer agenda item New Business Number 3, supervisor not here (Magee, Isch) all in favor, motion carries
- b. MOTION: Gaspar: Item 1 revise wording to "admitted patients" to "all healthcare facilities" (Gaspar, Isch) majority in favor, motion carries

**III. Approval of Minutes**

- a. October 21, 2022 (Gore, Argrave)
- b. October 26, 2022 (Isch, Crochet)

**IV. Public Comment:**

- a. Dan Arabie: Services for DeafBlind people are slow; please don't neglect the DeafBlind population. There are still issues with SSP services.

**V. Reports**

- a. Officer Reports:
  - i. Chair: no report
  - ii. Vice chair: Jay Isch, LAD is now open for enrollment for \$1 and the conference is June 4, 2023. Dr. Delgado will be our keynote speaker with another guest speaker. Sheena lyles will also be performing. I invite you all for more community involvement.
  - i. Secretary: no report
- b. Legislative Reports: No reports at this time
- c. State Representative Reports
  - i. LRS: Bayham, Working with Jana Broussard and Megan Wimberly to improve vocational rehabilitation services for Deafblind people.
  - ii. DCFS: no report
  - iii. LDH: Davondra Brown, LDH developed an Office of Women's Health.



Bureau of Community Partnerships and Health Equity is looking to develop something in regards to communication equity and would like people on this board to provide feedback.

- iv. OBH: no reports
- v. GODA: Bambi Polotzola, In December, we sent a letter to the technology committee to get an update on accessibility on technology for the legislative session. This passed in 2020 and now 2023 and these technology updates have not happened yet. We are waiting on a response.
- vi. SSD/LSD: Meeting Tuesday 1/24/23 in regards to the hiring for the new Superintendent. Public meeting starts at 1:30pm.
- d. Reports from Community Organizations:
  - i. LAD: Jimmy Gore, Disappointed that there hasn't been community involvement or transparency with the progress of the hiring of the new superintendent.
  - ii. LRID: Denise Crochet, LRID hosted a fall conference. We look forward to expanding our Legal qualified interpreters.
- e. Reports from Appointed Commissioners:
  - i. Deaf Blind Representative, Megan Wimberly:
    - 1. We have been working with Melissa Bayham and Jana Broussard to support DB who are looking for work.
    - 2. Encourage anyone who wants to join the DB advisory committee.
    - 3. Response to Dan Arabie: looking for someone who can improve those services through trainings or similar.
- f. Director's Report: Jana Broussard:
  - i. Attended Deaf Organization Executive Conference hosted by Innivee Strategies in Connecticut in November. Also in attendance was Wendi Coker from Deaf Action Center in Shreveport and Jay Isch from Deaf Focus.
  - ii. Public-Facing Interpreter Registry: Louisiana Interactive is developing the registry and will be completed soon. Reminder this will be available to the public.
  - iii. Interpreter Assessment Report: Innivee Strategies has completed the Statewide Interpreter Assessment. This report concludes national research, statewide focus groups and survey results and will be distributed soon.
  - iv. Telecommunication Equipment Distribution 2 goals: 1. improve equipment 2. revise the process of how we order and deliver equipment statewide. Completion goal is the end of this fiscal year.
    - 1. Bambi Polotzola: Are we able to use Medicaid waivers for certain populations to use for assistive technology? Furthermore, can we think of this more broadly? The state can put together a plan to support the DDBHH community. The federal government sometimes matches those funds and can save some of our funds.
    - 2. Davondra Brown: I will discuss further in Old Business #2 but I will include a Medicaid waiver and work with Director Broussard with this.
  - v. Budget Report: Quarter 2, July 1-Dec.31 we have collected \$1.8 million



and operating expenses are to date \$1.2 million. YE balance is \$6.5 million. It is high because we do have 5 million that is run over from past years. The budgeted amount is about \$5.9 million which has increased because we voted on a budget increase to payoff the hearing aid wait list.

1. Bambi Polotzola: What is the delay in the SSP contract? While services are not being withheld, Affiliated Blind is coming out of pocket to pay for those services.
2. Jana Broussard: The delay is in multiple areas in the state department. No issues with the contract or contractor.

## VI. Old Business

- a. LCD Administrative Code – Update on current drafting, timeline, and changes per Act 128: Broussard- LCD Administrative code is very outdated. We provided a draft with revisions last meeting, and our goal to submit was delayed because the interpreting report was not complete yet.
  - i. Interpreting Ad Hoc Committee: We are encouraging people with expertise in this area to join this committee.
- b. Request for Adult Group Homes/Assisted Living/Training for Professionals- La. Department of Health update from Health Equity and Action Team: Davondra Brown met with HEAT Health Equity Action Teams, provided an update on the discussion, not an official report.
  - i. Village DuLac in Lafayette used primarily for DDB residents, Amelia Manor in Scott, LA privately owned and has recruited staff and personnel who are Deaf and DB with ASL and ASL tactile skills. There is a unit dedicated to DDBHH and trains staff on Deaf Culture and ASL.
  - ii. We reached out to a place in Ohio who established an assistive living home in Ohio. Initial funding was provided by the Ohio school for the Deaf Alumni Association. Deaf owned and operated.
  - iii. Survey and research has said that many Deaf prefer to live at their own homes not group homes.
  - iv. There are multiple virtual services such as mental health and other services to those people in other homes who are DDBHH.
  - v. Public Comment: Dan Arabie: rectifies some of the comments regarding Amelia Manor. He has received countless complaints from residents regarding staff still not able to effectively communicate with the residents. We still need our own facilities that can offer DDBHH resident and staff with more opportunities.
    1. Davondra Brown: We will have further discussions and bring DDBHH people in on those conversations.
    2. MOTION: (Isch, Gore) established a subcommittee to start having discussion and researching how to set up a facility for assisted living or independent living for DDBHH people.
    3. MOTION substitution (Brown, Ramos start discussion to address concerns related to housing including assisted living, independent



living, nursing care for DDBHH people. Motion carries. This conversation will be started by Commissioner Brown, HEAT, Director Broussard, and stakeholders.

4. MOTION (Gore, Isch) to end the discussion
  5. MOTION removed (Gore)
- c. Consideration of Actions by the La Commission for the Deaf (LCD) Board of Commissioners to Elevate Community Concerns to the Special School District (SSD) Board of Directors- Update on letter sent and meeting request per October 26, 2022 Special Session- Bambi Polotzola:
- i. LCD sent a letter to the SSD Board and they are looking for a new attorney to attend our meeting so that joining meeting has been postponed. SSD Board is meeting this Tuesday to discuss the hiring of a new attorney as well as including the Superintendent hiring.
  - vi. Additionally, Polotzola has been added to the SSD board and believes the legislation is problematic. All policy and procedures went under the new board with those changes and they do not have the capacity to run the School District. It requires a lot of work and expertise including policies and procedures and so there are still a lot of holes in their operation.

## VII. New Business

- a. Efficiency of Requesting and Obtaining Interpreters Specifically in Emergency Room Settings: Natalie Delgado-
  - i. We need better availability with providing interpreters for people in medical situations. Perhaps LCD can provide trainings for hospitals or make materials to share to these hospital settings.
  - ii. Jay Isch: HCR 80 related to DDBHH choice to interpreting training. Currently, not sure how training is happening. What happened with HCR 80?
    1. Jana Broussard: HCR 80 developed 7 different recommendations. One was related to LCD and LDH establishing guidance for best practices for effective communication. We have the guidelines completed, but request assistance for a roll out plan.
    2. Bambi Polotzola asked if the recommendations say what to do with those guidelines and best practices. Broussard replied no they do not specifically say. Polotzola agreed to begin discussion.
    3. Dr. Ashley Argrave: possible solution to establish a point or contact person who knows what to do.
  - iii. Public Comment:
    1. Kristy Guidry- provided personal account of her mother's experience recently in a hospital setting, and issues she faced with communication access.
- b. Medical Personnel's Understanding and Provision of American Sign Language



Interpreters for Admitted Patients All Healthcare Facilities Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act: Dr. Natalie Delgado-

- i. Combined A and B agenda items for comments and solutions.
- c. Building Capacity for Deaf Children and Families within the Department of Children and Family Service's Foster Care Program. Item Deferred
- d. Leadership Cohort for Development of Louisiana's Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Current and Future Leaders: combined discussion with item e.
- e. La Commission for the Deaf Program- Executive Director Search- Plan and Timeline
  - i. Jana Broussard: both agenda items d and e- contracts have been delayed. Leadership Cohort would start in March 2023 to March 2024 and Executive Search would be delayed to March 2023 which means the selection would be delayed to August 2023.
  - ii. MOTION: (Isch, Wellons) to approve the Director's recommendation to extend the Leadership Cohort as well as the Executive Search. None opposed, Motion carries.

**VIII. Adjournment – MOTION: (Isch, Wellons)** Meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.