



**\* Louisiana Commission for the Deaf  
SFY 2015 Regular Commission Meeting  
Meeting Minutes of November 7, 2014**

I. Call To Order -Meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM by Thelma Covello, Vice-Chairperson.

A. Silent Prayer – Vice-Chair Covello

B. Pledge of Allegiance – J. Vincent

C. Roll Call – Jairus Methvin – A quorum of Commissioners was present.

D. Announcements/Comments/Persons Requesting to Address the Board –

Scott Crawford – National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP)/I-Can-Connect

Paula Rodriguez, LCSW, CI, Director, Deaf Focus – ILEEAD Summit for Deaf Education Reform

Ed Breeden, Parent

Juliet Barbin, Deaf Focus

**Commissioners present:**

Dr. Moises Arriaga

Dr. Nancy Benham

Thelma Covello

John K. Davis

Deanna Hardy

Leslie Knowles

Dr. Lee Mendoza

Gary Montgomery

Secretary Suzy Sonnier

John Vincent

Naomi DeDual (non-voting)

**Commissioners not present:**

Representative Regina Barrow

Brandi Berkeley

Louis Cannon

Senator Yvonne Dorsey-Colomb

Nancy Hicks

Carolyn Jarrels

**Commission Staff present:**

Jairus Methvin, Program Manager and Elaine Scivicque, Administrative Specialist

**Interpreters:** Shirley Delahoussaye, Dawn Melendez, Rose Ray

II Approval of November 7, 2014 Meeting Agenda – Motion: J. Vincent- to amend agenda to include Hearing Aid Tax Credit to IV. B. 2. Substitute Motion: Sec. S. Sonnier/Dr. L. Mendoza - to approve agenda as amended to include Hearing Aid Tax Credit. Motion passed unanimously.

III Approval of August 8, 2014 Meeting Minutes – Motion: J.K. Davis/ Dr. N. Benham - to accept August 8, 2014 minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**IV Business Requiring Commission Action:**

**A. Old Business:**

1. Text to 911 - Retain item on agenda

**B. New Business:**

1. Advocacy/Education/Outreach on ADA, Titles I-IV, and related – Motion: Dr. M. Arriaga/Sec. S. Sonnier –to provide notice to the LA State Medical Society, American Academy of Pediatrics (LA Chapter), and all other organizations on Louisiana law (i.e. R.S. 22:245; R.S. 22:1027;

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1. **Advocacy continued:** R.S. 40:2208) which indicate requirements for doing business as a healthcare provider and providing coverage of interpreting expenses for persons who are Deaf, in order to access the healthcare providers' services. Motion passed unanimously.

2. **Hearing Aid Tax Credit – Motion:** J. Vincent/J.K. Davis - to remove item from agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

**V. Business for Information Purposes/Reports:**

**A. Officer Reports:**

**T. Covello – Vice-Chair** –reports concern that Deaf persons may not have the right contact information of which organizations are providing interpreting services in the state; and may not have contact information for the LCD Regional Service Centers. Also, when Deaf persons are not satisfied with some interpreters' skills, they can and should request specific interpreters who can communicate effectively.

**John K. Davis, Secretary** – reports concern about how communication or interpreting services may be accessed and provided for a potential Deaf Ebola patient, if quarantined.

**B. LCD Director's Report – N. DeDual:** Shared the purpose, authority and responsibility of LCD staff and board for coordination, facilitation and/or provision of accessibility services; and provided a detailed list of SFY 2015 payments for administration, telecommunication equipment, hearing aids, and payments to contractors for professional services including equipment distribution; hearing aid administration; ASL interpreting services; and SSP services. Provided SFY 2015 1st quarter performance reports of consumers served statewide..

**C. Relay Administration Board Report:** N. DeDual – No updates to pending litigation – Stephen Leon vs. LPSC/RAB other than previous denial of plaintiff's motion for summary judgment.

**D. Commissioner Reports:**

**Deaf – J.K. Davis** – no additional report

**Professional Rep – Dr. Moises Arriaga** – CMS has announced it will retain current policy on BAHA coverage; and it will remain on their coverage list. The research being conducted at LSUHSC on deaf-blindness with vestibular (balance) dysfunction is an international accomplishment; and more research volunteers are needed to participate in clinical trials.

**Professional Rep – Ellis Roussel** – The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs is coordinating the next Americans with Disabilities Act conference workshop – details will be announced soon.

**Rep w/ Hearing Loss – Jack Vincent** – Informed of federal companion bills (H.R. 1317 and S. 1694) introduced in 2013 for hearing aid tax credits for middle-income taxpayers. I will advocate for this and keep the commission apprised.

**Parent – D. Hardy** – no report



LRID – L. Knowles – At the LRID Fall conference held at the Lafayette Athletic Association of the Deaf, officers were elected for 2015: Alvina Malcolm, President; Wendi Coker, VP; Gayle Burnett, Treasurer; Alla Tarasyuk, Member-At-Large; Shirley Delahoussaye, LAD rep. On Friday evening, entertainment was provided by Keith Wann and Wink Smith, and Michael Bothel. Also reports that Delgado Community College has signed an agreement with UNO to allow 60 of 66 college credits to transfer from Delgado to UNO toward completion of a bachelor’s degree which is the minimum academic requirement for national certification by Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

**E. State Agency Reports:**

LRS/VR – G. Montgomery –As of 07/01/14, LRS is serving all Eligibility Groups I, II, and III; and emphasis on transition from school to work remains to be a top priority.

DHH – Dr. L. Mendoza – While Ebola is of great concern in Louisiana and the nation, there are no known cases of Ebola in Louisiana. Louisiana Health & Hospitals has launched a new wellness initiative, Well Ahead, which identifies Well Spots - schools, restaurants, hospitals, and various organizations that are smoke-free, have healthy, nutritious menus, and offer workplace fitness arrangements. At the previous meeting, I identified three well-spots and now there are 50+.

LSD – Dr. Nancy Benham – LSD drama club performed the play, Aladdin. In February, the next drama play, Peter Pan, will be presented. The last week in January, LSD will host the Mason-Dixon tournament. February 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>, LSD students will host the Regional Academic Bowl competition and volunteers are greatly needed. The LSD Parent Pupil Education Program (PPEP) is conducting numerous outreaches throughout the state to provide parents and families with information and resources about educational routes (i.e. manual/ASL and oral/aural).

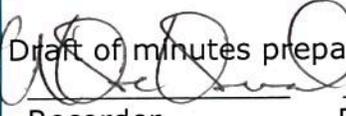
DCFS – Sec. Suzy Sonnier - DCFS works closely with all state departments to ensure family supports are available and social service needs are met, both in good times and in emergencies or disasters. DCFS has recently transitioned the Early Childhood Programs to the Dept. of Education. November is National Adoption Month and numerous activities are planned for this campaign. DCFS is committed to ensuring no barriers to access services for persons with hearing loss. DCFS has 500+ community partners with whom there are multiple resources and services.

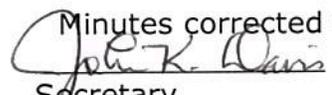
**F. Legislator Reports:**

None

**VI Date, Time, Place of Next Commission Meeting – January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015 – 10 AM – Rm. 118 - Bienville**

**VII Adjournment –G. Montgomery/Sec. S. Sonnier motioned to adjourn at 11:55 AM. Motion passed unanimously.**

Draft of minutes prepared 11/25/14  
  
 Recorder Date 9/3/15

Minutes corrected on 8/28/15.  
  
 Secretary Date 9.3.2015

c. LCD master file; LCD Board Members; LCD Staff