

New Mexico Commission for Deaf & Hard of Hearing



Quarterly Report

FY21 Quarter 2



FY21 Quarter 2 Board Report

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NMCDHH BOARD MEETING

Thursday, March 11, 2021

3:00 p.m.

The meeting will be held remotely via Zoom and the public can view the meeting livestream on YouTube with interpreters and captioning at this link: <https://youtu.be/orHTQgoyVD4>

DRAFT AGENDA

Posted: February 10, 2021

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
- II. Approval of Agenda
- III. Approval of Minutes of December 10, 2020
- IV. Reports
 - a. Auditor Report
 - b. Executive Director Report
 - c. Department Reports
- V. Action Items
- VI. Adjournment

Personal attacks on Commission members, staff, interpreters, or other persons in attendance or absent will not be tolerated. Individuals engaging in this activity will be asked to leave the meeting immediately.

Persons with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations by contacting the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing at 1-800-489-8536 with sufficient lead time to secure necessary services and equipment.



**STATE OF NEW MEXICO
COMMISSION FOR DEAF & HARD OF HEARING**

*Quarterly Board Meeting
Thursday, December 10, 2020
3:00 p.m.*

*The meeting was held remotely via Zoom and the public could view the meeting
livestream on YouTube with interpreting and captioning at
<https://youtu.be/g5TLyYXCKYA>*

***DRAFT – These minutes will be subject to another possible revision and approval by the
commissioners at the next board meeting on March 11, 2021.***

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Concha Dunwell called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m. Lori Neubauer, Administrative Operations Specialist, called roll call.

Present: Mrs. Concha Dunwell
Dr. Rosemary Gallegos
Dr. Michael O'Brien
Mr. Francis Vigil
Dr. Ronald Stern
Mr. John Hooper

Quorum was met.

Six staff members from NMCDHH were present via Zoom: Executive Director Nathan Gomme, Deborah Romero, Lisa Dignan, Corina Gutiérrez, Lori Neubauer, and Jessica Eubank. Jessica Eubank interpreted the meeting along with Andrea Ginn, Gabriella Cravens, and Rachelle Clifford. Assistant Attorney General Delilah Tenorio was also present. Lenore Schatz provided CART transcription.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Concha Dunwell asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

21.4

Commissioner John Hooper made a motion to approve the agenda.
Commissioner Francis Vigil seconded.
Ms. Neubauer took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dunwell – Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Commissioner O'Brien – Yes
Commissioner Stern – Yes

Commissioner Vigil – Yes
Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

III. **APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2020 MINUTES**

Chair Dunwell asked if there were any changes to the minutes from September 10, 2020.

21.5

Commissioner Michael O'Brien made the motion to accept the minutes as written.

Commissioner Francis Vigil seconded.

Ms. Neubauer took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dunwell – Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Commissioner O'Brien – Yes

Commissioner Vigil -Yes

Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Commissioner Stern abstained from voting since he was not present at the September meeting.

Motion passed with majority vote.

IV. **REPORTS**

a. Executive Director Report

Executive Director Nathan Gomme let the board members know that he was currently recovering from the coronavirus. It is not an insignificant illness and made a great impact on him and also made him think more about the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community and their needs during this pandemic. The Commission has addressed many different issues including access to medical services, vaccinations, access to information from the governor's office, the Department of Health, Health and Human Services, etc. with a focus on those in rural New Mexico. Broadband is still very limited in the State's rural areas. Some areas are very lucky to have hot spots and satellite options, but there is not complete coverage in those areas. Those rural areas that do have some form of coverage may have limits on internet speed and may have to choose a very specific mobile carrier. The lack of, or limited coverage has had a big impact on education, medical services, access to information and access to food. Some communities in New Mexico have done a fantastic job of developing local resources. Albuquerque, for example, has a hot spot busses that travels around the city. There still is a serious lack of resources, and that needs to be addressed.

Executive Director Gomme stated that the Commission has had conversations with AARP and a variety of stakeholders to see what we can do to promote 100% broadband access across the state. There will be a meeting with some of the stakeholders in December to discuss those concerns and what we can do to provide internet access in those rural areas. Even though New Mexico has many rural areas, this is not a unique situation to New Mexico. Executive Director Gomme has been in meeting with people from other states that are experiencing similar barriers.

Other issues the Commission needs to address is web access so people can use different platforms such as Zoom, WebEx, and Microsoft Teams. Not all platforms have equal access for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deaf-Blind consumers. Some do not allow the consumer to have good access to the interpreter and others have inferior captioning. For the State of New Mexico, there have been some effective changes. More and more organizations use Zoom and in January there will be a legislative

session held using Zoom. That platform will allow Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, and those with visual disabilities to access the legislative session more effectively. They will have captioning for all of the streamed the legislative hearings, and the Commission has requested that there be a process to request interpreters as well. Recently on the home page of the legislative website they added an option to request and interpreters or other accommodations for the legislative session.

The Commission has been in touch with the Department of Health regarding vaccinations for interpreters and Support Service Providers (SSPs). The vaccine process is a multi-step process. On the priority list are first responders and health care workers, but we have encouraged them to add interpreters and SSPs who provide services to Deaf-Blind individuals or Deaf individuals in the hospital who are have COVID, so that they are kept safe. Personal care providers who work for those who have a vision loss or developmental disabilities also should be prioritized. This is not a simple process especially since it was originally thought that we would have over 50,000 doses, but there has been a reduction in that number for New Mexico. How to allocate those vaccines is an ongoing discussion and something the Commission will continue to work on.

Commissioner Stern complimented the CDHH website and the Vlogs done regarding COVID, and with the vaccination situation he was wondering if we would post something on vaccines and what they can and cannot do. Executive Director Gomme responded that the Commission was working on it. He was in a meeting with a company called Ready Op who is developing an online registration form on websites of places that will be distributing the vaccines. The conversation was to make sure that there is an ASL interpretation of the questions on the form. Also discussed was access for the Blind and Deaf-Blind that use a Braille reader. Websites often use Captcha for security which shows a series of letters and numbers or pictures that distinguish between a bot and a human, but this is an issue for Braille readers. We want the vaccination form, the process, and all information to be accessible. Roger Robb, who makes the Vlogs Dr. Stern referred to, is also involved in this project as well. He will be making Vlogs about the vaccination process, differences between the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, and more.

Commissioner Stern asked if there was any truth to the rumor that Zoom would provide interpreter services for meetings if requested. Executive Director Gomme said that Video Relay Service (VRS) companies that are traditionally used for interpreter services for the Deaf on video phones, are now being used for video meetings on platforms such as Zoom or WebEx. The FCC does permit using VRS for these meetings, but there are concerns about how they are being utilized. We have been encouraging agencies and companies to not allow the use of VRS for video meetings on Zoom and other similar platforms; they need to hire interpreters for these meetings who have the necessary background which is best practices. Recently a court used a VRS interpreter for their proceedings. This was not successful or appropriate. A VRS interpreter should not be used in those situations and we did report it to the National Association for the Deaf (NAD) and plan to pursue this with the FCC. CDHH has found out that they have also been used for education, legal proceedings, mental health appointments, and meetings that are three or four hours long, which limits the availability of VRS interpreters. Executive Director Gomme added that traditional relay services are also overwhelmed and have been used in similar ways. Numbers have increased by 36% in New Mexico for CTS and 16% for other types of relay provided in by our state and our TRS fund pays for that.

Commissioner Gallegos asked if there was any discussion about interpreter access being provided for the governor's press conferences. Executive Director Gomme said that since the governor transitioned the press conferences to a remote location, there has been a challenge in showing the governor, an interpreter, and the PowerPoint presentation simultaneously via Zoom and then streaming that view live to Facebook. There have been various barriers and problems with many ideas suggested. There is a process that would allow for a video on Facebook to be added so that an interpreter could be in the video

through a third-party system. We are pushing that method and we do expect that there will be an interpreter provided on the governor's press conferences soon. Since the press conferences are shown on TV live, we need an interpreter there in real time so that the Deaf Community will not be forced to find out that information later.

Chair Dunwell mentioned that for Hard of Hearing individuals the captioning services are often abysmal. Some captioning services are wonderful, but not all captioning services are equal. Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals who depend on that service are missing large chunks of what is being communicated. Executive Director Gomme responded that television captioning is an FCC issue. We need to encourage the FCC to take steps to improve captioning in more areas. For meetings not on television the issue is internet-based captioning, which there many different versions of and they each use different software. And each version of the software does not have the same reliability. For captioning our meetings, CDHH uses CART and we encourage other state agencies to use CART services because they are best for captioning. He added that on December 21st he will be presenting with three other agencies about best practices for web access.

Commissioner Vigil commented that historically disenfranchised and marginalized groups such as the Deaf community have difficulty in school-based education communication, and this is paramount right now. He asked how we could meet with different agencies such as the Public Education Department to bring this digital divide to the forefront in the next legislative session. He mentioned that it is a utility issue as well. Executive Director Gomme agreed and stated he had already started discussions with a variety of entities. The Disability Access and Functional Needs group has frequent discussion about the need for access and the different issues that we see in rural communities that are not acceptable. He added that the previous day, the National Association of State Agencies for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NASADHH) had this discussion. NASADHH will draft a letter to the FCC on the reality of rural communities not receiving internet services and how during this pandemic it is essential to have access.

Commissioner O'Brien added that this issue of communication in rural communities affects students and people with disabilities at a higher level, and as a result we have inequitable services, education, and opportunity for those individuals. These are long-term losses.

Commissioner Stern asked if NAD was on board with the letter to the FCC to make internet services a utility. Executive Director Gomme said the NAD, Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI) and the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) were onboard. The National Rehabilitation Association and other agencies were suggested, and Executive Director Gomme said that they were working to build a coalition on national and local levels to address this issue.

There was also discussion regarding DVR's Order of Selection which is still in place. Commissioner O'Brien said that there will be two public meetings, December 18th at 10:00 a.m. and December 22nd at 2:00 p.m. that will be captioned and have interpreters. The purpose of the meetings is to review the Order of Selection plan and then to review changes in their manual of operating procedures following a federal evaluation. There were several changes that they required DVR to make, and some changes they made on their own. Commissioner O'Brien stated that historically, the Order of Selection is due to a financial issue, but recently has also been a staffing issue since they don't have enough staff. They will be hiring more staff and they have already taken more than 1400 off the wait list in the last year. However, another 860 individuals remain on the wait list.

b. Department Reports Q & A

There were no questions on the Community Advocacy or Community Engagement reports. On the Administrative Services Department, Commissioner Hooper noted that the TRS revenue was around \$339,000 and asked if that was less than last year. Deborah Romero, CFO, said that it was about \$100,000 less and we are continuing to see a decline in the TRS revenue. Executive Director Gomme added that we have given the Legislative Finance Committee information and stated that this issue needs to be addressed. We have shown them the continuous decline, and despite changes in the language, this remains an issue. He said CDHH needs a larger amount of money collected or they must do a deep audit to determine where this money is being submitted to. The E911 service saw an increase in funding that correlates with the increase of funding we anticipated. Senator Rodriguez is aware of this issue and that it must be urgently addressed. There will already be a 5% reduction in the State's general funds in January.

V. ACTION ITEMS

a. Adoption of Revised OMA Resolution

The CDHH attorney, Delilah Tenorio, stated that she was available during the meeting in case there were questions regarding the OMA Resolution. She explained that the biggest change was language changes in paragraphs nine and ten for clarification on when a meeting is closed to the public and regarding emergency meetings. The changes made the language more fluid and eliminated redundancy. Other than that, there were no substantive changes.

21.6

Commissioner Ronald Stern made a motion to adopt the OMA as revised.

Commissioner John Hooper seconded.

Ms. Neubauer took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dunwell – Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Commissioner O'Brien – Yes

Commissioner Vigil – Yes

Commissioner Stern – Yes

Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

b. Election of Officers

For the election of Chair, Vice-Chair Francis Vigil took over for Chair Concha Dunwell. Vice-Chair Vigil asked for nominations for the position of Chair. Commissioner Hooper nominated Commissioner Dunwell to continue as Chair. Commissioner Dunwell accepted. There were no other nominations.

21.7

Commissioner Michael O'Brien moved to elect Commissioner Dunwell as Chair

Commissioner John Hooper seconded.

Ms. Neubauer took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dunwell – Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Commissioner O'Brien – Yes

Commissioner Vigil – Yes

Commissioner Stern – Yes

Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

For the position of Vice-Chair, Chair Dunwell asked for nominations. Chair Dunwell said she would like to nominate Commissioner Michael O'Brien. Commissioner O'Brien accepted. There were no other nominations.

21.8

Commissioner John Hooper made a motion to elect Commissioner O'Brien as Vice-Chair
Commissioner Francis Vigil seconded.
Ms. Neubauer took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dunwell – Yes	Commissioner Gallegos – Yes
Commissioner O'Brien – Yes	Commissioner Vigil – Yes
Commissioner Stern – Yes	Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

For the position of Secretary, Chair Dunwell asked for nominations. Commissioner Rosemary Gallegos nominated Commissioner Francis Vigil. Commissioner Vigil accepted. There were no other nominations.

21.9

Commissioner John Hooper made a motion to elect Commissioner Vigil as Secretary
Commissioner Michael O'Brien seconded.
Ms. Neubauer took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dunwell – Yes	Commissioner Gallegos – Yes
Commissioner O'Brien – Yes	Commissioner Vigil – Yes
Commissioner Stern – Yes	Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

c. Dates for 2021 Board Meetings

The following dates were set by the board for meetings in the coming year:

- Thursday, March 11, 2021
- Thursday, June 10, 2021
- Thursday, September 9, 2021
- Thursday, December 9, 2021

All meetings will start at 3:00 p.m.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

21.10

Commissioner John Hooper made a motion to adjourn.
Commissioner Francis Vigil seconded.
Ms. Neubauer took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dunwell – Yes	Commissioner Gallegos – Yes
Commissioner O'Brien – Yes	Commissioner Vigil - Yes
Commissioner Stern – Yes	Commissioner Hooper - Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:41 p.m.

Executive Summary

G. Nathan Gomme, Executive Director

Commissioners and Community Members:

The second quarter of FY21 has come and gone and with that came some progress in our services to the community and a stark realization that by the time we meet for our board meeting that we will be in the one-year mark of this pandemic. I would like to say that we have it all figured out and that we have overcome the pandemic, but all I can say is that we have worked to improve access for our community here in the state.

Education, Innovation, and long hours have become the hallmarks of everyone in this agency. We have done everything we can to remain safe and protected but we still had some scary moments. Through it all though we saw some great and productive changes that I want to touch on. First our collaboration with several agencies in the Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Group resulted in adding both interpreters and Support Service Providers (SSPs) to the 1A group for vaccines, from there we began the work of getting them secured with appointments for the vaccine. Second that same collaborative relationship bridged a gap to ensure captions are provided during every webcast at the Roundhouse. That very same relationship connected us to the right contacts to ensure that we address the technical barrier to showing interpreters during the COVID-19 press conferences. In short, during a time where connection feels missing in our lives, our agency has built meaningful relationships that have changed a number of things here in New Mexico. I would like to touch on some specifics in this report.

Access to the tools that are used via internet remains a large concern of mine. It is no longer a lack of tools to access the internet that is the barrier it is the lack of the internet itself. As I explained in the last report, we tried to figure out stop gaps to internet access deficiencies and system to work around the lack of access in some of our more rural areas. Our discussions with groups such as the AARP resulted in a growing consensus that these stopgaps while helpful did not adequately address the number of barriers we see across the state. The AARP and several other stakeholders were able to make that point to the extent that we saw several bills prepared for the legislative session looking to address the lack of internet access and the fragmented approach. While that approach is taken, I continued to work with representatives from the Emergency Management groups to see if we could use that created portable internet solution from Teltex in Emergency ADA Kits which not only brought the tools for access but also brought the internet to the locations during emergencies. We have a built concept of what the kit will look like and are working to see what types of funding would be available to address this deficiency. The new products we are looking at such as a

tablet using Google Live Transcribe can only be used to its maximum potential throughout the state when internet is available in all parts of the state. We no longer have barriers that we do not have solutions for, instead we have solutions which do not have the infrastructure to support. I plan to continue seeing what my feedback and input can do to increase access and bring attention to this issue.

Our work with the AFN Group has yielded some great results. I cannot say enough about the work that these members do, and I honestly believe we have a great collection of agencies providing their input and expertise in a way that improves our state. As we approached the Christmas season, we got word that interpreters and SSP were officially getting added to the list of positions eligible to get the vaccine in the 1A group. This meant that these crucial members of our community that we depend on for communication and transportation would be able to get the vaccine and be better protected when providing these important services. Just as soon as we heard that news, Lisa Dignan and I began working on the logistics with the Department of Health. This meant working with the Event Code Framework to get these individuals registered and an appointment all while the DOH staff were still working out the system. Lots of trial and error, but this was the result of a collaborative effort where our voices were heard. Several other stakeholders were also able to get their essential staff and guardians on the list. I want to be clear that we are fortunate to live in a state that sees the same value I see when we talk about these crucial staff and make sure we get them taken care of. The next step is getting our most vulnerable members of the community vaccinated. I am already working with the same team to get that done and I hope to have announcements about scheduled events soon. I am already hearing that our community is getting their event codes and we are working to get the sites up to speed on access concerns. Just like the vaccine registration we are getting these things addressed as they move forward. Often, I feel like I am securing a lug nut on a tire while the car is in the middle of race. I think several of us including Lisa Dignan and Roger Robb often feel that way but that's what it takes to address this large crisis.

As I said in the beginning of this report that same collaboration with the AFN group has led to a few more positive outcomes. Our work with the Legislative Council resulted in the addition of captioning to the Webcasts of the Legislative Session this year. We also worked to encourage the Legislative Staff to considering using an alternative platform which has been much more accessible for several community members with disabilities. This discussion continued throughout the 2nd quarter and by the end of December we saw the shift from one platform to the other and the beginning implementation of closed captions during hearings. That solution is the product of working around a problem with the tools we have. Another issue occurred when we started seeing press briefings done remotely and the technology did allow for the envisioned showing of interpretation services. One of the challenges is in using the right resources, the other is when those resources have limitations. This requires innovation and troubleshooting. I think every

staff member in my agency has had to put up with me testing and collaborating to figure out work arounds to barriers in the emerging technologies that are becoming common due to this pandemic. I cannot take a lot of the credit for the solutions that we have found or thought of here in the state, a lot of that credit goes to experts and programmers who listen to our complaints and give me ideas. The conversations I have had are with neighboring states and states far from here. Much like our communication cards, the connections I have made nationally over the years have paid off. After that innovation comes walkthroughs. We have created several documents explaining how to do certain things with certain technology. The end result is that we either go the simple route or create something completely new, but at the end of the day we have captions during the session and interpreters on screen during a streamed event that wasn't created to show interpreters, a speaker, and the presentation. Keeping up with the constant changes is difficult, but we continue to work towards fixing the barriers we see. We are going to continue working to ensure that even those who cannot access the press conferences for example online have the same level of access to the interpretation and information on broadcast tv for now we have assurances in place that we will see an interpreter from now on during the COVID-19 press briefings.

We continue to see an increased usage of relay services in our community. Our January to December of 2020 reflected a 33% increase in use of Captioned Telephone services for our state and while not as substantial we also saw a 10% increase in our traditional relay usage. These numbers are most likely attributed to two factors. The increased population working from home and the lack of internet infrastructure in our more rural areas. That coupled with traditional use of relay services for phone calls means that we should expect to see this trend continue. With the increased use of telephonic visits and supplemental use of relay tools which will likely continue even after this pandemic, I do not see a decrease in our relay numbers occurring without a sudden change in how we interact. One thing I want to note is that our state seems to be moving against the tide in this area. Other states seem to have no issues with increases which I suspect is due to the fact that their internet infrastructure is more robust. I am hoping with our annual report to the FCC that we will see if this trend is limited to only our state or if we will see similar issues where there are more rural areas. Another topic that I continue to discuss is the need to get text-to-911 worked out in our state as we move forward to Real Time Text. I recently scheduled a meeting with our representatives here in the state to see what can be done to get text-to-911 done and the next generation 911 (NG911). With a point of contact in this discussion we can finally see what is happening and will be happening with access issues to 911 services. With Real Time Text it looks like we are still having issues with interoperability. In the next few months, we are hoping to hear from the cellular providers what the plans are to address these issues and ensure the transition as we continue to move forward in

phasing out older TTY transmissions that are still be used due to the reliability in the coding.

As we approach the legislative session at the end of the quarter, we are looking to see an increase in general fund appropriations to offset our declining revenue from the surcharge. Part of the issue continues to be the fact that we cannot get a straight answer on what is causing the discrepancy in the collections. The bottom line at this point is that everything that can be done has been done with the current language for the collection and the carriers and telecommunications systems keep changing what they bill for in their packages. These changes can have an impact on how much is collected from each person's phone bill because if the bulk of the payments, for example, is to a device and they charge a minimal amount for the actual services outside of the collection language, then that means we see a smaller percentage, vice versa if the company bills less for a device but more for the services then we see a larger percentage. The collection process is complicated and using a percentage to calculate the amount we receive is too dependent to what the carriers and telecommunications companies bill for. A good example of this is how much you pay for a packaged cable service might be high, but the phone component of that package is small and therefore the percentage of that smaller part is what is collected. I plan to explain this during the session and make sure everyone understands how the billing structure of these packages has an effect on the overall collection when it is percentage based. The agency is still requesting a higher amount of funds for our Deaf-Blind, Deaf Plus, and Deaf Seniors services over previous year allocations especially with the needs during this pandemic. While we expect to see everyone see cuts this year it is important that we have funding for these services at higher amounts than in previous years. Our Vendor continues to work with the community to ensure they are receiving services but changes in their structure are putting delays in getting some services set up. We anticipate that they will be crucial when it comes to getting our vulnerable population vaccinated with the SSP's playing a large role as well as the Case Management Service. This will hopefully highlight the need for such a program in these times.

As we continue to move forward with updates and the vaccination process, we will continue to see more and more VLOGs produced by Roger Robb and his colleagues. This information that is shared via these VLOGs is a vital part of why I think our community has been able to remain safe and proactive during the pandemic. We continue to work and get pertinent information from the Department of Health and other stakeholders about what is occurring here in New Mexico related to the registration pages and the frameworks that are in place for restrictions. As we continue to move forward, we are hoping to get information on the vaccination sites and what reasonable accommodations will be provided as we move forward with getting the initial shot and then the booster shots. Details continue to evolve and that means a lot of going back to

edit or add additional details to these VLOGs so often Roger Robb is working odd hours to get these videos out. We were fortunate to develop the mechanism to create these videos and when we first started doing these videos, we were just using them to show you how to get to our office space and who we were. Little did we know that these videos would become resources of such importance. With health matters in this pandemic being so vital we are glad that we can make such a difference and we are already looking to see what the future will hold in these productions.

As we move forward into the third quarter, I want to mention that the idea of the holidays and the upcoming spring months can be difficult during this pandemic. Mental health is just as important as our physical health. I have no doubt this current environment has been challenging in different ways for each of us. It is important that we allow for breaks and recovery time and acknowledge that none of us expected that in the month of March of 2021, that I would still be talking from a position of uncertainty as to what the future brings. No one works any less at the agency and I have to tell people often to stop working and take a break. It is with this in mind that I want to point out that everyone in this agency is anxious to return to some concept of normal. They all continue to move forward and improve access in our state. I am honored to work with them, and I hope the board is able to see that even with the unusual state of affairs how dedicated they are. Already I am having conversations with national partners about the 2021 events that were supposed to happen and the reality that they won't be because of the lasting impact from this pandemic. We don't know when we will be in our office like normal, but we hope that with the work that has been done thus far that day comes sooner rather than later. Until that time, though, we will continue to do our best to serve our community in our state.

Thank you,

G. Nathan Gomme

Community Advocacy

Corina Gutierrez, Director of Community Advocacy

Individual/System Advocacy & Public Policy

The Department of Community Advocacy continues to impact and empower individuals in our community with communication access.

Community Advocacy / Communication Access

Throughout the pandemic our community which includes individuals who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, and Speech Disability continue to face barriers with communication access to healthcare providers, courts, clinical offices, law enforcement, Social Security Administration, Housing and Urban Development, and local employers. Our department continued to do this during the second quarter even as we continued to work remotely due to the pandemic.

Our Director of Community Advocacy, Corina Gutiérrez, worked with individuals regarding communication access this quarter. Ms. Gutiérrez continues to receive advocacy cases regarding communication access and assigns the cases to her advocate staff, Mr. Dennis Stidham, Ms. Myra Sandoval and Ms. Susana Santillan. Ms. Gutiérrez works on primarily systems level barriers that she receives complaints about.

This past quarter Ms. Gutiérrez worked with healthcare providers, the Public Employees Retirement Association of New Mexico (PERA), and Children, Youth & Families Department (CYFD). The healthcare providers that Ms. Gutiérrez is working with acknowledge the mistakes they have made by not providing communication access for our Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing community and for making the decision to provide Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) to our Deaf-Blind community when our Deaf-Blind community depends primarily on on-site interpreters. Ms. Gutiérrez has developed a great relationship with the coordinators from each of the healthcare providers. Ms. Gutiérrez continues to be on the Patient and Family Advisory Committee (PFAC), and she works with many directors from each department at UNMH. This provides her with the opportunity to educate them about our community and about how varied communication access can be because each individual has different communication access needs. She provided information about the Support Service Provider Program here in New Mexico to health care providers, she explained, who they are, and what they do. SSPs have specific responsibilities and Ms. Gutiérrez explained the situation that occurred at UNMH when they declined to allow the SSP to come in the hospital with a Deaf-Blind patient. This continues to be a situation where education is crucial and with the information, the directors have a better understanding of the role of SSPs. The Director of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI), Fabian Armijo, collaborated with Ms. Gutiérrez to develop UNMH ID badges for all SSPs to reduce barriers for

access. When SSPs work with Deaf-Blind patients and bring them to UNMH, they can use their ID badge to go in so the staff at UNMH will not deny them access to working with the Deaf-Blind patients. Mr. Armijo worked with the Agency Director of the Community Outreach Program for the Deaf (COPD) to provide ID badges for all SSPs. Ms. Gutiérrez was impressed with the committee from PFAC who said they would take care of the situation and fix the problems immediately. She will continue to work with and educate them about our community. Also, Mr. Armijo shared at the committee meeting that they are creating a third position for ASL interpreter at UNMH. They already have two ASL interpreters there.

Ms. Gutiérrez was assigned to be the chair of After-Action Report (AAR) for Deaf-Blind community. She worked hard to arrange two meetings through Zoom and to get four Deaf-Blind community members and two Oral Deaf-Blind community members involved and to arrange three SSPs to work with and support the participants. The purpose for the joint AAR meeting with the Deaf-Blind and Oral Deaf-Blind members was to gather information about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Once Ms. Gutiérrez collected their stories, she sent the report to Lisa McNiven, Disability Consultant with the New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability and is involved in the Access & Functional Needs (AFN) committee statewide in NM. Ms. McNiven reported she would share the report with the AFN committee.

Ms. Gutiérrez worked with Brian Milburn from Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD) Learns and connected him to her Interagency Transition Alliance (ITA) members. Brian explained about CSD Learns and its program. Also, Ms. Gutiérrez worked with Julie Ballinger, the Southwest ADA Center Affiliate in Albuquerque, to arrange three ADA trainings for our agency during 1st quarter and one ADA training during this quarter. The trainings were successful and beneficial for our staff.

Community Advocacy Specialist Myra Sandoval had some difficult work during the pandemic and was able to put a lot of the recent training she attended to good use. Ms. Sandoval worked closely with clinics to ensure that they provide sign language interpreters for some Deaf and Deaf-Blind patients when utilizing their services. The initial situation saw the clinic deny a request for sign language interpreters for the Deaf and Deaf-Blind patients' appointments and told the Deaf and Deaf-Blind patients to bring their own interpreters to their appointments. Ms. Sandoval worked diligently to educate them about the clinic's responsibility to provide effective communication access for their Deaf and Deaf-Blind patients. They finally seemed to understand that under the Americans with Disabilities Act they were and are responsible to provide effective communication access. The clinic made the requests and the Deaf and Deaf-Blind patients were happy with this positive outcome.

Ms. Sandoval also worked with a few Deaf individuals with communication access barriers at their place of employment. It has long been a struggle to help employers understand what it means to have effective communication available to Deaf employees. This has not gone away during the pandemic. The employers had several meetings with all of the employees, but they excluded the Deaf employees. After these meetings they handed out paperwork to the Deaf employees that related to safety and

other important information, but the employees were not able to receive it in real time. Another factor was an issue with understanding what was in the paperwork due to difficulties understanding English. Rather than allow them to participate in the meetings and provide direct explanations and allow the Deaf employees to be involved in discussions, the employers simply asked them to read and sign the papers. Because of the barriers to critical information, the Deaf employees knew not to sign their names on any documents. They worked with Ms. Sandoval to ensure that employers were informed and educated about effective communication. Ms. Sandoval explained that English is not their first language of every Deaf people, and it is not always effective to use written English as a means of providing this type of information. Written English documents could be difficult especially if there is jargon or legal terminology for any employee to read and to understand, this is even more true when it is not their first language. It would be more effective for them to provide signed language interpreters during these meetings with their colleagues. The outcome of the education session was successful. They provided their employees the interpreters needed to have access their meetings.

Ms. Sandoval worked with staff at the office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to ensure that they understood their responsibility to provide signed language interpreters for Deaf residents who need to recertify their eligibility to live at their places. HUD did not provide signed language interpreters because the agency hired new managers who were not yet aware of their responsibility. However, with the help of Ms. Sandoval, they understood their responsibilities and they hired a signed language interpreter, and they were able to recertify the Deaf residents.

Community Advocacy Specialist Dennis Stidham worked with different healthcare providers/clinics, the Emergency Department (this is the new term for Emergency Rooms and the acronym is ED), apartments, courts and attorneys, as well as few different employers regarding communication access. As for healthcare providers/clinics and the ED, Mr. Stidham worked with the staff at these locations to educate them on VRI. VRI is not as beneficial for use when working with Deaf-Blind and/or Deaf Plus patients. They need to provide on-site interpreters for effective communication. Mr. Stidham now has a good relationship with the Language Coordinator from one of the healthcare providers due to the work together to resolve the issue. The Deaf-Blind and Deaf Plus patients will now have an onsite sign language interpreter for their appointments.

In another situation Mr. Stidham worked with office managers and apartment managers about the possibility of adding increased visibility modifications for the Deaf-Blind residents. This included painting each stair yellow and adding visible fire alarms. The managers provided accommodations by painting yellow on the stairs and replacing the fire alarms inside the residents' homes to include brighter lighted notification. The managers also added doorbells with lighted notifications. These were all positive outcomes of Mr. Stidham's work.

Mr. Stidham worked with an attorney to ensure that a Deaf client did not have to use a video phone which did not provide effective communication access to a court

proceeding. The video phone being used was not effective no matter how it would have been used in court due to the complexity of the process and side conversation that would need to happen. Mr. Stidham explained that in order to have effective access, this Deaf client need to be physically present in court instead of using the video phone. The attorney agreed and worked with the clerk and judge at the courthouse. The case was postponed to a later date so the Deaf individual could go to the court safely in person. We recommended that the court not use this communication tool for any offsite court cases in the future and instead look at other mechanisms for virtual cases for our community.

Mr. Stidham dealt with issues related to employee access. He worked with managers to ensure that effective communication access was provided to their employees. The managers provided signed language interpreters, so the Deaf applicants had effective communication access for their interviews.

Community Education

Mr. Robb completed 8 presentations/trainings during the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2021.

This is the breakdown of the presentations/trainings Mr. Robb completed:

- Deaf Culture for 911 Hearing Loss Sensitivity (Medical) - 3
- Deaf Culture – 3
- Hearing Loss Sensitivity for Metro Judges - 1
- NMCDHH Overview - 1

The agencies/organizations/businesses that Mr. Robb provided the presentations/trainings to were:

- Lea Brookline College
- Lea County 911 Dispatchers
- Metro Court
- UNM Signed Language Interpreter Program (UNM SLIP)

Other staff provided 21 presentations/trainings as well. The total of number of presentations/trainings is 29 for this quarter. Presentations done by other staff include presentations for Brookline College, Hearing Loss Association, Christus St. Vincent, and UNM SLIP. One staff member co-presented with Mr. Robb when they did the presentation for the Metro Court Judges. The staff focused on the interpreting portion of the presentation while Mr. Robb focused on the Hearing Loss Sensitivity portion. Mr. Sena from Relay New Mexico also provided presentations to the community as well about 911 services through relay.

Systemic Advocacy

Mr. Robb has 5 new Systemic Advocacy Cases that have been ongoing for the 2nd quarter of Fiscal Year 2021.

- Mr. Robb continues to be involved with the Access & Functional Needs Coalition meetings. These meetings are beneficial because of the different resources that he shared with the Advocacy department.
- Mr. Robb continues to be involved with the 2020 Census. He created a vlog to remind the community that the Census would be ending on October 15, 2020 and shared the vlog with stakeholders.
- With the November 3rd, 2020 elections, he was able to develop and produce 5 different vlogs and got the Secretary of State and the NM Elections Board's blessing to distribute them to the stakeholders.
- Mr. Robb had a meeting with people from ReadyOP and N.M. Department of Health to discuss creating an ASL video on the vaccine consent form.

This is a summary of the cases that he focused on:

- Access & Functional Needs Leadership
- Access & Functional Needs All Agencies Coalition
- DFA – Census
- Secretary of State
- NM Elections Board
- ReadyOP

Special Projects

COVID-19 Project:

Mr. Robb was very busy during the 2nd quarter of Fiscal Year 2021 developing many vlogs. He worked on 14 different vlogs regarding COVID-19 over the past three months. Here are the vlog titles in order of production date along with their summaries. Mr. Robb has logged over 100 hours on the vlogs which includes researching, developing scripts, providing ASL gloss, video shooting and post-production.

1. NM Governor Announces New Restrictions to slow spread of COVID-19

The vlog focused on new restrictions such as food or drink establishments serving alcohol must close at 10 p.m., reducing mass gatherings from 10 to 5 individuals, hotels and motels who completed the N.M. Safe Certified programs will reduce the maximum occupancy from 75% to 60% and individuals traveling from "high risk" states must quarantine for 14 days. Also, after the distribution of the vlog, new information was added which included houses of worships will continue to operate at 40%, State parks that are open will allow overnight camping, and such.

2. Combined Quarantine & Visitation

The vlog focused on the executive order regarding quarantine exceptions such as people employed by airlines, military personnel and their dependents, emergency first responders coming to N.M. to help fight forest fires, etc. It also explained the new guidelines for long-term care facilities. People could visit their loved ones if they adhered to the requirements such as being healthy with no COVID-19 symptoms,

wearing PPE, and doing social distancing of 6 feet apart wearing a face mask or 12 feet apart without one.

3. Latest COVID-19 in N.M. Update – October 23, 2020

The vlog focused on Rapid Response Watchlist which basically targets hot spots where if 4 rapid responses are recorded for a particular business, it will have to be closed for 2 weeks. It also explained that the N.M. Safe Certification which previously was focused on hotels, motels, and such has been expanded to include food and drink establishments.

4. Reenacting Statewide Public Health Restrictions for N.M

The vlog focused on re-enacting the statewide order to close in-person services for non-essential activities such as barbershops, gyms, movie theaters, casinos, golf courses, and such. Essential businesses such as grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, etc. can continue to operate if they reduce the operations and workforce to the greatest possible extent.

5. Important Messages for N.M.

The vlog focused on 3 different topics. The first one was about seeking medical help if a person is experiencing severe COVID-19 symptoms instead of calling the COVID hotline which is intended to be a resource for general COVID-19 questions. The second topic focused on the importance of getting a flu shot to reduce the possibility of getting a combination of COVID-19 and flu. The third topic focused on the COVID-19 Tracing Response.

6. 2 Important Messages for N.M.

The vlog focused on the 3 tier benchmarks (Red, Yellow, and Green) based on the positivity rates and the daily case averages for each county in N.M. Also, the vlog focused on the revised restrictions on Big-Box retailers due to some confusion and questions to a previous revision of criteria.

7. Red to Green Framework for N.M. Part 1: Introduction

The vlog focused on the introduction of the Red to Green Framework.

8. Red to Green Framework Part 2: Red Level

The vlog focused on the restrictions for the red level with a list of different entities and the restrictions for different maximum occupancy percentages. Note: This vlog went through a revision because the original vlog had percentages that had been updated.

9. Red to Green Framework Part 3: Yellow Level

The vlog focused on the restrictions for the yellow level with a list of different entities and the restrictions at different maximum occupancy percentages. Note: This vlog went through a revision after the original vlog had some different percentages that had been updated.

10. Red to Green Framework Part 4: Green Level

The vlog focused on the restrictions for the green level with list of different entities and the restrictions at different maximum occupancy percentage. Note: This vlog went through a revision after the original vlog had some different percentages that had been updated.

11. Red to Green Framework Part 5: Additional Information & Resources

The vlog focused on additional information on the procedure of changing from Red to Yellow or vice versa. Also, resources such as Red to Green Framework link and essential business detailed links were provided at the end of the vlog.

12. N.M. Department of Health Issues 2 Public Health Orders – December 10, 2020

The vlog focused on the 2 public health orders to help reduce the unsustainable strain on health care providers and hospitals. The first one was the temporary limitation on non-essential surgeries. The second one was recognizing the activation of “Crisis Care” standards which would expedite the credentialing process for the health care workers.

13. N.M. is Marching Toward Yellow Level

The vlog focused on the results of the Red to Green Benchmarks which indicated some counties getting very close to the 5% threshold, cutting their positivity rates by more than 50% over the last 2 weeks and cutting the daily case rates by more than 50%.

14. Vaccine Registration for N.M. – December 23, 2020

The vlog focused on step-by-step registration process on the vaccine portal to receive a vaccine when it is available.

Mr. Robb produced 5 Election vlogs in partnership with the N.M. Election Board and the Secretary of State.

- 2020 N.M. Election: Introduction
- 2020 N.M. Election: How to Register Online
- 2020 N.M. Election: Absentee Ballot Application
- 2020 N.M. Election: Absentee/Mail-in Voting
- 2020 N.M. Election: In Person Voting

He also did a vlog for the 2020 Census.

- Breaking News: 2020 Census Ends October 15, 2020

Deaf-Blind and Deaf Plus Program

The Community Outreach Program for the Deaf-NM Deaf-Blind or Deaf Plus (Deaf/Hard of Hearing with a significant disability) has maintained its strength and has served 28

clients in total to date – 15 of whom are Deaf-Blind and 13 of whom are Deaf Plus. These 28 New Mexicans live in 9 of New Mexico's 33 counties. We are thankful that COPD continued to provide trainings which include the Support Service Providers during this quarter.

The Support Service Providers provide support to Deaf-Blind and Deaf Plus clients when they want to participate in community events. They provided support to Deaf-Blind and Deaf Plus clients at the following activities and events for the second quarter:

Due to Covid-19, the following activities have been suspended:

- The Trailblazers (deafblind group) – both meetings and outings
- Zia Deaf-Blind Club – both meetings and outings
- Deaf Senior Citizens of Greater Albuquerque - meetings
- Deaf Culture Center - meetings
- New Mexico Deaf-Blind Task Force – meetings

COPD provided SSP support for Deaf-Blind and Deaf Plus consumers to participate in the New Mexico Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's After Action Report (AAR) meetings which were held on October 6th and 13th.

COPD has also provided transportation to three consumers for COVID testing.

Outreach & Telecommunications

Telecommunications Equipment Distribution (TED) Program

The Telecommunication Equipment Distribution (TED) Program lends telecommunication devices at no cost to qualifying New Mexico residents who need assistance in communicating via telephone. Equipment includes amplified telephones, iPads, speech assistive devices, notification systems, loud ringers, and assistive listening with neckloops.

Equipment

We completed an updated TED catalog and application this quarter. Several changes were made to the catalog and application which removed items that are now discontinued and the addition of new models of existing equipment as well as brand new equipment. The new models of equipment includes the Clarity XLC8 and the Panasonic KX-TGM450S. We also added new equipment such as Silent Call Medallion Smoke Detector. We made several changes that represent the incremental changes we have seen with existing equipment and also worked on clarifying the language in both the catalog and application. These are all great quality of life changes and should make the future changes to these documents much easier in the future. Both documents are live and the application is fillable online but can be printed upon request.

We continue to evaluate updated equipment and new items. Some new items we are currently evaluating are the GLT and In-line amplifier. GLT is an acronym for Google Live Transcribe is actually an Android Tablet which is locked to only utilize the Live Transcribe feature which can caption speech from both sides of a conversation. The text shows on a screen in almost real time. Currently the program works great with English and some specific languages. This program and tablet are a potential alternative to using other technology to call into virtual meetings using some of the meeting platforms currently available. This device can also be used to support amplified devices such as the Clarity XLC8. The captions created with this program are not intended to replace CA assisted relay services however with the dependency on remote virtual meeting tools it has become difficult to utilize typical captioning phones. The second item is the In-line Amplifier which is made by Teltex. It is an item that can be connected to phones, tablets, and computers. It provides clear communication through a number of different headsets including Apple EarPods. We continue to review and assess if there are products that can support the residents of New Mexico who are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Deaf-Blind, and/or Speech-Disabled.

Equipment distributed for the first quarter is as follows:

Phone	Total items distributed
Clarity Alto	0

Clarity Alto Plus	0
Clarity BT914	0
Clarity D704	0
Clarity D714	0
Clarity JV35	0
Clarity XLC2+	14
Clarity XLC7BT	28
Clarity XLC8	28
ClearSounds A1600BT	18
ClearSounds CSC600ER	22
Panasonic KX-TGM430B	11
Panasonic KX-TGM450S	0
Geemarc Ampli550	0
CapTel 840	6
iPad	
Deaf Package	9
Hard of Hearing Package	45
Deaf-Blind Package	0
Speech Package	18
iPad mini	
Deaf Package	0
Hard of Hearing Package	9
Deaf-Blind Package	0
Speech Package	0
Total Phone/iPad Equipment Distributed Count:	208

Accessories	Total items distributed
Amplicom NL100 Neckloop	0
Bellman Mino with neckloop	8
Bellman High Powered Neckloop (no device)	0
Clarity CE50 Bluetooth Neckloop	3
Clarity SR100 Super Phone Ringer	0
Clarity HA40 In-line Telephone Amplifier	0
ClearSounds Quattro Pro	0
ClearSounds ANS3000 Answering Machine	15
ClearSounds CS-CR200 Phone Ringer	0
ClearSounds CS-WIL95 Amplifier	0
Comfort Audio Duett Neckloop	8
Geemarc LH10PK Neckloop	0
Griffin Labs SolaTone	0
Griffin Labs SolaTone Plus	0

Griffin Labs EMOTE	0
Krown RA 05 Amplified Ringer with Strobe	4
Serene Innovations CentralAlert CA360	6
Serene Innovations CentralAlert CA380	13
Serene Innovations RF-200 Alerting System	5
Serene Innovations SA-40 Cell Phone Amplifier	6
Serene Innovations UA-45 Universal Phone Amplifier	0
Silent Call Medallion Kit	0
SonicAlert HA360MKBR	20
SonicAlert HA360BRK	3
Surge Protector (Phones and accessories)	13
Total Accessories Equipment Distributed Count:	104
Total Overall Equipment Distributed Count:	312

Relay New Mexico (RNM) and NMCDHH Outreach

Dennis Stidham has been planning events throughout the second quarter. Due to the concerns with the virus and concerns about our senior community would not benefit from our events we were not able to have any this quarter. Most of the groups Dennis has contacted are worried that due to using the virtual platforms they would not benefit from the events. A lot of this is due to people thinking that the virus concerns will go away, and they can meet again in person but as we continue to move through the months it became evident that an in-person event would not happen. For next quarter, Mr. Stidham already has two booth events scheduled.

Relay New Mexico (Hamilton Relay) was able to conduct some more events this quarter which were all virtual. These events are typically done in various virtual set ups including Microsoft Teams, GoToMeeting, and Zoom to name a few. The events are not traditional set ups and can be hit or miss for visitors. Now more than ever we need to continue to reach out to every person we can so they can utilize relay services to their fullest. Much like Dennis has experienced though, it can be difficult to get interest during these virtual events at times especially earlier in the quarter unless there is a large group backing the event. Just as a note, the location is where the event is based, with these events occurring virtually there are often people from various parts of the state.

Virtual Events conducted include:

Events	Location	Date	Visitors
Lea County Authority	Hobbs	10/6/2020	Virtual (30)
Lea County Authority	Hobbs	10/20/2020	Virtual (20)
Meals on Wheels	Albuquerque	10/23/2020	Virtual (6)
New Mexico Speech 7 Hearing Association Convention	Albuquerque	10/23/2020	Virtual (125)
New Mexico Speech & Hearing Association Convention	Albuquerque	10/24/2020	Virtual (55)
Family Caregiver Conference	Albuquerque	11/6/2020	Virtual (1)
Family Caregiver Conference	Albuquerque	11/7/2020	Virtual (1)
UNM hospital Speech/Language/Swallow Center	Albuquerque	12/17/2020	Virtual (16)
		Total:	Virtual (254)

Las Cruces Satellite Office

Susana Santillan, Las Cruces Community Advocacy Specialist

Individual Advocacy and Service Coordination

During the 2nd quarter of FY21, Mrs. Santillan from the Las Cruces Office assisted 19 individuals. Services included Advocacy, Service Coordination, and Information and Referrals as necessary to remove communication barriers.

Las Cruces Staff Accomplishments

Assisted a veteran who was diagnosed with profound hearing loss and has mobility issues. He requested advocacy assistance because he was having issues communicating with the staff on duty about his needs with his service dog in the place he was staying. Part of the issue was that the staff person's mask increased the difficulty this individual had in understanding what was being said. This is an issue for our Hard of Hearing community. The individual tried to explain his need for the service animal, but due to the communication barriers made it difficult. After Mrs. Santillan was brought into the discussion, she contacted the manager and sent him a summary of the situation, as well as information regarding Title II of the ADA; Mrs. Santillan gave the manager information service animals in particular. The manager plans to meet with the staff about this situation, so this will not happen again. Mrs. Santillan contacted the veteran and told him the status of his advocacy request.

- Advocacy services were provided to a Deaf individual who requested a sign language interpreter for an appointment with a doctor. She was told she must bring her own interpreter and will have to reschedule her appointment. Mrs. Santillan contacted the office and spoke with the Office Manager to discuss the matter at hand. She requested a contact email to forward information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Overview, Title III of the ADA, Who Pays for Interpreters, and How to Find a Sign Language Interpreter. After a couple of days, Mrs. Santillan contacted the doctor's office and spoke with the Office Assistant to follow up on the status. The Office Assistant said they already have a sign language interpreter scheduled. Mrs. Santillan contacted the individual to let her know the outcome.

COVID-19

- Mrs. Santillan continues to work on an ongoing Southern New Mexico COVID-19 Project. She looks into the different cities in southern New Mexico to ensure that their social media are accessible for the Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing community. She provided an Accessible Virtual Meetings Guide to the City Clerks. This guide has information on virtual meeting accessibility. It includes information on what to do before the meeting, using an accessible virtual conferencing platform, providing accommodations, and online disability etiquette.
- Mrs. Santillan continues to educate members of our community regarding the COVID-19 crisis restrictions by answering questions regarding the use of masks,

social distancing, and virtual accessibility. She also provides information and referral regarding resources for food and housing assistance.

System Advocacy Services

Mrs. Santillan provided the following System Advocacy Services:

- Provided adding captions and subtitles tips for an intern for the Beloved Community film project.
- Provided information regarding accessible virtual meetings guidance to the Executive Director for New Mexico First who inquired about closed captioning for an advocacy training to make the event accessible for participants with hearing loss.
- Provided the NMCDHH Brochure, Fact Sheet: Financial Assistance for Hearing Aids, and Presentation Request Form to the following agencies: United Healthcare, Western Sky Community Care, Cultural Competency Quality and Risk Adjustment Department
- Mrs. Santillan continues to participate in virtual meetings to network and educate them regarding reducing barriers for New Mexicans with a hearing loss and provided New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NMCDHH) services, information, and referral resources to many places who are meeting virtually; several of which are in the communication collaboration list.
- Mrs. Santillan continues to provide resources to agencies, businesses, individuals, and families as needed.

Community Collaboration:

Mrs. Santillan promoted our visibility by Community Collaboration involvement with the following entities:

- Aging & Long-Term Services Department-
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
- Behavioral Health Planning Council Adult/Substance Abuse/Medicaid Subcommittee
- City of Las Cruces Council
- Community Academy - SW NM
- Deming, NM Silver City Care Center
- Doña Ana Community College
- Doña Ana County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)
- FCC Monthly Consumer Information
- First Responder ECHO
- Hear Now Program
- Interagency Council
- Las Cruces American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
- Las Cruces Housing Authority
- Las Cruces Library
- Las Cruces Lions Club HARP/Hearing Aid Recycling Program
- Las Cruces Livingston Hearing Aids Center
- LC3 Behavioral Health Collaborative Policy & Advocacy Committee
- Luna County Health Council

- New Mexico First
- New Mexico Technology Assistance Program
- NM Workforce Connection
- NM Workforce Connection SAWDB Monitoring Committee
- NM Workforce Connection Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board Monitoring/Performance Committee Meeting
- Project ECHO University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center
- Ruidoso School to Work Transition Training Meeting (SWTT)
- Southwest ADA Center
- Southwestern Area Workforce
- State Independent Living Council (SILC)
- State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)
- The Arc of New Mexico
- The Las Cruces Lion's Club Community Center.
- Unified Prevention Coalition
- Unified Prevention Coalition Advocacy Committee
- United Healthcare
- UNM Center for Development and Disability, Partners for Employment
- Western Sky Community Care

Monthly-ongoing basis collaborations:

- Adult Mental Health/Substance Abuse/Medicaid Subcommittee
- Behavioral Health Local Collaborative 3
- Beloved Community
- Blue Cross Blue Shield Roswell, NM
- Center for Health Innovation
- City of Las Cruces Americans with Disabilities Advisory Committee
- City of Las Cruces Thomas Branigan Memorial Public Library
- Disability Rights New Mexico
- Doña Ana Communities United
- Doña Ana County Humane Society
- Families & Youth, Inc.
- Human Services Department Behavioral Health Services Division
- Las Cruces Behavioral Health Local Collaborative 3
- Las Cruces De Norte Lions Club
- Las Cruces New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
- Las Cruces Interagency Council
- Little Creek Behavioral Health
- Luna County Health Council
- National Alliance on Mental Illness, Southern New Mexico
- New Mexico Alliance of Health Councils and Public Health Partners
- New Mexico's Aging & Long-Term Services Department the Ombudsman Program
- PRIDE Industries Inc.

- Rio Grande Hearing Center, Dr. Robert G. Ivey
- Ruidoso South West Transition Team
- Sierra Health Council
- Social Security Administration, Roswell, NM
- Southern New Mexico Society for Human Resource Management
- Southwestern Area Workforce Developmental Board Disabilities Committee
- Southwestern Area Workforce Developmental Board Monitoring/Performance Committee
- State of New Mexico Disability Determination Services
- Thriving Families Community Action Agency of Southern New Mexico
- Tresco, Inc.
- Unified Prevention Coalition for Doña Ana County, Las Cruces, NM
- VISTA Timebank
- Wellness Medical Management
- WESST Farmington
- WESST Las Cruces Region
- WESST Roswell Region

This quarter the Las Cruces office staff removed 1,141 communication barriers for our community in various settings.

Booths and Presentations: Due to COVID-19, the Las Cruces office provided two resource information booths virtually.

2nd Quarter October-December			
Events	Location	Date	Participants
1. Dona Ana Community United Team Meeting	Zoom Meeting	11/19/2020	19
2. FCC Monthly Consumer Information Call	Microsoft Teams Meeting	12/8/2020	17
	Total Participants		36

Community Engagement

Lisa Dignan, M.Ed., CI and CT, Director of Community Engagement

Director of Community Engagement Highlights

- Thanks to skillful advocacy by Executive Director Nathan Gomme and several other individuals within state agencies serving individuals with disabilities, the New Mexico Department of Health included signed language interpreters in the 1A category for the COVID-19 vaccine. To facilitate vaccination of interpreters working in New Mexico, I undertook a project to compile a list of interpreters with the cooperation of interpreter referral agencies statewide. I am contacting as many interpreters as possible to get them to register on the NMDOH Vaccine Registration Portal with the correct information to identify them as interpreters in the priority 1A category. As the Portal and the process changes, I am sending ongoing updates to the community. This will be an ongoing project for several months while the vaccine rollout continues.
- The COVID-19 Resources page on the NMCDHH website continues to expand. Resources are shared via all available channels such as the NMCDHH email newsletter and social media accounts, including the recently reactivated NMCDHH Instagram account.
- The Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board met in November for a Rule Hearing and regular meeting at which they approved all the proposed rule changes that had been pending since before the pandemic began. The rule changes must be published according to all rulemaking requirements before implementation.
- Progress on the redesign of the NMCDHH website continues. The goal was to have the new site live by the end of 2020, but additional time is needed for completion and training the NMCDHH staff to use the new Content Management System.
- The Fall 2020 session of New Mexico Mentoring concluded with five of six pairs successfully completing the session.
- The Spring 2021 session will begin in January with a small but committed group of three mentor-mentee pairs from Albuquerque, Los Ranchos, and Santa Fe.
- Our skills with accessibility features in Zoom continue to grow and are being leveraged to make meetings of the NMCDHH Board, the Council for Purchasing from Persons with Disabilities, and many other meetings and presentations more successful.
- Roger Robb and I were invited to provide a presentation via Zoom to the Judges of the Metropolitan Court in Albuquerque. The training was very successful and well received, and we were happy to learn that Metro will be transitioning to Zoom for their remote hearings, which will increase accessibility for Deaf and Hard of Hearing participants.
- I participated in several remote training sessions related to the Americans with Disabilities Act, Zoom features, and remote interpreting best practices.

- I worked with several entities to provide guidance on issues related to communication access including:
 - Santa Fe Community College
 - Aging and Long-Term Services Department
 - Northern New Mexico College
 - UNMH
 - Albuquerque Children’s Court
 - Other individuals and private businesses

Joint Project: EIPA Written Test

In order to qualify for a New Mexico Educational Interpreter License, interpreters must take and pass the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) Performance and Written Exams. Both exams are meant to assess an interpreter’s interpreting ability as well as their knowledge of relevant laws and practices within the education system. As mentioned briefly last quarter, the individual who has proctored the EIPA Written Exam for many years in New Mexico recently retired, leaving a gap in the process for interpreters who are pursuing their New Mexico Educational Interpreting license. This license is vital to ensure quality interpreters who do not have their National Interpreter Certification are able to work in educational settings with Deaf and Hard of Hearing staff and students throughout the state of New Mexico, and especially in rural areas.

To fill that gap Lisa Dignan and Jessica Eubank both completed the process of becoming proctors for the EIPA Written Exam. The Written Exam is an online, multiple choice, pass/fail assessment. Examinees have 4 hours to complete the assessment. Proctors are responsible for setting up the exam software, checking in attendees, and ensuring a secure and honest testing environment. NMCDHH has also taken steps to ensure that the testing environment is following safe COVID-19 guidelines and social distancing. This includes only allowing one examinee to test at a time, sanitization of testing equipment before and after each use, using the large conference room to promote social distancing, and requiring both proctor and examinee to appropriately wear face masks for the entire testing session.

Interpreters who have already met the EIPA Performance Exam requirement are being prioritized to register to test. Once they pass the Written Test, they are qualified for the Educational Interpreting license.

Communication Development Specialist and Apprentice Program Highlights

Ms. Eubank has effectively worked on several projects while teleworking:

- Providing ongoing virtual Apprentice sessions in professional development. This quarter was focused on interpreter ethics, understanding the Code of Professional Conduct, and applying the Code of Professional Conduct to ethical situations in interpreting.
- Attending 42.5 hours of professional development workshops and trainings. This includes 3 days spent at a Terp Academy virtual conference with nationally recognized speakers on a variety of topics.

- Ms. Eubank attended two workshops taught by Robyn Dean during the Terp Academy conference. Ms. Dean is one of the authors of the Demand Control Schema that we use in Supervision and Reflective Practice with the apprentice interpreters to teach them how to approach interpreting ethics. Ms. Eubank was able to ask Ms. Dean questions about the Demand Control Schema and its application that will greatly benefit her work with the apprentices.
- Hosting 3 virtual interpreter socials for local interpreters. These were opportunities for interpreters to safely socialize with their peers and to talk about how life and work have been impacted by the pandemic. A total of 13 interpreters from Albuquerque and Santa Fe attended, and we received positive feedback from attendees.
- Proctoring 2 Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment Written Exams for interpreters from the Albuquerque area. We took care to proctor the exams in such a way as to follow all COVID-19 safety protocols and social distancing.
- NMCDHH provided 84.75 hours of interpreting services in the second quarter.
- Referral agencies were not used at all this quarter.
- There were no unfilled interpreting requests.

The Apprentice Interpreter Program:

- All three Apprentices have continued to show wonderful dedication and commitment to improve their skills. Even though “Zoom fatigue” is a real strain as we continue to work remotely, our apprentices have continued to put forth the effort to be available for any interpreting or professional development we ask of them.
- Community interpreting work is still scarce for new interpreters in this prolonged public health emergency. Unfortunately, this includes interpreting work with NMCDHH that is appropriate to the apprentices’ current skill level. However, the staff in the Community Advocacy Department have been working with our department to expand opportunities for apprentices to observe those assignments they may not be ready to interpret, as well as working to create more opportunities for “hands up” work in the near future.
- The apprentices have expressed concern over their fingerspelling receptive skills, so we worked with members of the Community Advocacy department staff to create fingerspelling videos that the apprentices can use as practice. We have heard good feedback as the apprentices continue to challenge themselves with these videos.
- The Apprentice Program hosted a virtual Holiday Party in December for current and former NMCDHH apprentices. This was a wonderful opportunity to introduce the new apprentices with their colleagues, and to engage in conversation about our work while also encouraging a spirit of collegiality across our diverse group.
- Apprentices engaged in 66 hours of observation, interpreting, and professional development work in the second quarter.

Human Resources

Second quarter HR activities included:

- Attended several Human Resources Council meetings and training webinars hosted by SPO and the Employee Benefit Bureau.
- Worked with managers to complete employee interim evaluations for agency staff.
- Worked with staff to use personal leave and annual leave before the end of the year.

- Monitored changes in Emergency Leave policies and procedures.
- Monitored changes to requesting exemptions to the current hiring freeze.

NMCDHH Library

- The library is still closed due to the public health emergency. We have made special allowances for a few of our contractors to borrow items when we could do so safely.
- Due dates have been extended for seven items that are still on loan and we are working with those patrons to safely return those materials.
- The online library can be accessed at <https://NMCDHH.librarika.com>, where people can view all of our library materials, reserve items, and review their loan history.
- Currently 106 people have registered for access to the database.

Library Usage - FY 2021					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Patrons	3	0			3
Items Loaned	3	0			3

Administration & Finance

Deborah Romero, Director of Administrative Services

FY21 - 1st Quarter Board Report - Administrative Services @ September 30,2020						
Category	2021 Budget	Expenditures	Encumbered	Remaining Budget	% Expended	
200 PERSONNEL SERVICES	1,199,300.00	474,170.14		725,129.86	39.54%	
300 CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	1,995,300.00	307,673.66	440,381.23	1,247,245.11	15.42%	
400 OTHER	282,100.00	108,662.40	82,303.97	91,133.63	38.52%	
500 OTHER FINANCING USES	116,500.00			116,500.00	0.00%	
Total	3,593,200.00	890,506.20	522,685.20	2,180,008.60	24.78%	
FY21 Collected Revenue July 2020 - December 2020						
Month	General Fund Allotment		TRS Revenue			
Subtotal	\$240,200.00		\$692,534.36			

Data & Statistics

As required by Legislative Performance Measures

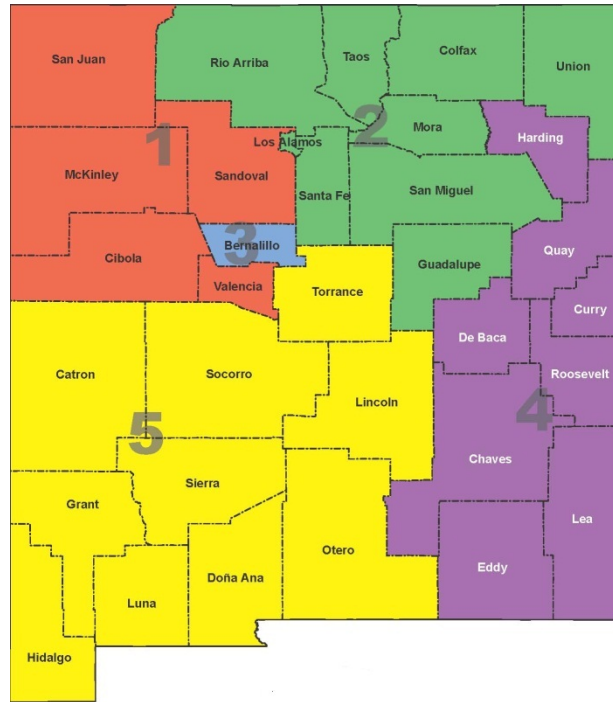
Fiscal Year 2021

Legislative Performance Measure	Target	Year to Date	YTD % of Goal Met
Number of workshops & training sessions conducted	135	43	32%
Number of outreach events coordinated	122	16	13%
Average number of relay minutes per month	10,000	9506.26	95%
Number of accessible technology distributions	1070	550	51%
Number of communication barriers addressed	20,000	11359	57%
Number of interpreters in CDHH sponsored professional development	300	48	16%

Fiscal Year 2020

Legislative Performance Measure	Target	Year to Date	YTD % of Goal Met
Number of workshops & training sessions conducted	135	80	59%
Number of outreach events coordinated	122	101	83%
Average number of relay minutes per month	10,000	9567	96%
Number of accessible technology distributions	1070	1674	156%
Number of communication barriers addressed	20,000	13,057	65%
Number of interpreters in CDHH sponsored professional development	200	77	39%

Clients by Region



	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	Year to Date
Region 1	8	8			16
Region 2	16	13			29
Region 3	68	33			101
Region 4	14	4			18
Region 5	53	26			79
Total Clients by Quarter	159	84			243

Clients by Self-Identified Disability

	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	Year to Date
Deaf	65	25			90
Hard of Hearing	55	34			89
Deaf-Blind	9	4			13
Speech Disabled	3	2			5
Hearing	27	19			46
Total Clients by Quarter	159	84			243



Date: January 11, 2021

To: Nathan Gomme – Executive Director – New Mexico Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

From: Michael O'Brien, Ed.D., CRC, CVE– Administrator – Rehabilitation Service Unit, New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR)
Christine Fuller Supported Employment and Deaf & Hard of Hearing Coordinator

Re: MOU Goals and Performance – Report for Second Quarter SFY2021

**New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
NMDVR Performance Measures FY 21
Second Quarter SFY2021 October 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020.**

NMDVR Liaisons

New Mexico Association for the Deaf – Currently vacant.

NM Chapter – Hearing Loss Association of America – Christine Fuller Supported Employment and Deaf & Hard of Hearing Coordinator.

NMDVR Service Provision:

Order of Selection – NMDVR is currently under active Order of Selection. Currently, the Most Significantly Disabled (MSD) category is open and individuals who are MSD are being served. All other categories are put on a wait list until resources (staff and funding) become available. The categories identified under order of selection are: Most Significantly Disabled (MSD), Significantly Disabled (SD), and All Other Eligible Participants (AOEP). NMDVR has been releasing names off the waitlist, as resources permit. The releases are based on 1) those individuals who are in the Significantly Disabled (SD) category and then 2) date of application. All applicants are provided Information and Referral services when they are added to the wait list. On November 9, 2020, DVR released 200 names off the waitlist. A total of 1044 individuals have come off the waitlist since September of 2019 (838 since June 2020).

Information and Referral- A list of places within the community the applicant may be able to get assistance while on the wait list.

Counseling and Guidance – Counseling and Guidance is available to all DVR eligible individuals receiving services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Other Hearing Impediments- This is a category within the DVR AWARE database: It includes individuals who have: Tinnitus, Meniere's etc.

Performance Measures – All statistics are for this quarter only.

Sign Language Interpreting: Three (3) individuals have received sign language Interpreter services. A total of **\$412.72** has been authorized and expended for this service.

Hearing Aids and /or other hearing devices: Five (5) individuals received hearing aids and/or other devices. A total of **\$ 10,752.00** has been authorized and expended for this service.

Closed Successfully Rehabilitated (employed):

Five (5) individuals who are Deaf have been closed successfully rehabilitated.

Three (3) individuals who are Hard of Hearing have been closed successfully rehabilitated.

No (0) individuals who have Other Hearing Impediments have been closed successfully rehabilitated.

Employment Information

Average number of hours worked for individuals who are Deaf/Deaf-Blind/Hard of Hearing or Other Hearing Impediments is 30 hours per week. Average wage at closure is \$14.25 per hour.

Caseload Activity

Two Hundred fifteen (215) individuals who are Deaf/Deaf-Blind have been opened and/or opened and closed.

Two hundred ninety-eight (298) individuals who are Hard of Hearing and/or Other Hearing Impediments have been opened and/or opened and closed.

Six hundred-eight (608) individuals who are Deaf/Deaf-Blind/Hard of Hearing and/or Other Hearing Impediments have been opened and/or opened and closed.

Ineligible for VR Services

Zero (0) individuals who are Deaf/Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing or Other Hearing Impediments have been determined as ineligible for VR services.

Transition Services

One hundred fourteen (114) individuals who are Deaf/Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing or Other Hearing Impediments have been identified as receiving Pre-ETS and/or Transition services.

This is how DVR is providing services during COVID-19;

- All DVR offices are closed to the public until further notice.
- We are sending one person a day to the check mail.
- All DVR staff are working from home.
- We are only working via the phone and internet.
- Bus passes and direct checks are being sent via mail.
- Individuals with disabilities can apply electronically via our web page at www.dvr.state.nm.us
- These individuals will be called by staff to schedule an initial interview via phone or computer.
- Current DVR participants, vendors, etc. can call the 1-800 number attached for the office they want to reach. Individual office phones are being forwarded to the staff.

Respectfully Submitted:

Michael O'Brien, Ed.D., CRC, CVE
Administrator – Rehabilitation Service Unit

Christine Fuller
Supported Employment/Deaf Hard of Hearing Coordinator



Collaborating Agency Quarterly Report

Agency Name: Signed Language Interpreting Practice Board, RLD
 Report By: Theresa Montoya, Board Administrator
 Expiration Date: June 30, 2021

Quarter Reported:

1st (July-Sept) ___ 2nd (Oct-Dec) X 3rd (Jan-Mar) ___ 4th (Apr-June) ___

Memorandum of Understanding:

New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing will:

- A. Transfer \$25,000 as appropriated in the General Appropriation Act of 2020 to the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board for purposes of carrying out the provisions of the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Act at NMSA 1978, Section 61-34-1 to 17.

Regulation and Licensing Department will:

- A. Deposit the transfer of \$25,000 with Signed Language Interpreting Practices Fund and use the funds only for purposes of carrying out the provisions of the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Act per NMSA 1978, Section 61-34-13.
- B. Provide quarterly reports to the NMCDHH Director of Community Engagement including:
 - a. Number of licenses issued
 - b. Dates of Signed Language Interpreting Practices Act Board Meetings
 - c. Number of complaints
 - d. Number of license denials, suspensions, and revocations
- C. Provide budget reports for the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Fund upon request with appropriate advance notice.

Performance Report

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Licenses Issued	4	2 Community; 2 Provisional
Complaints	0	
License denials, suspensions, and revocations	0	

Dates of Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board Meetings:

Last meeting: November 23, 2020 – Rule Hearing and Regular Board Meeting.

Next meeting: February 22, 2021

Agendas and draft minutes are available at the Board website:

www.rld.state.nm.us/boards/Signed_Language_Interpreting_Practices_Members_and_Meetings.aspx