**MCDHH Statewide Advisory Council Meeting Agenda**

**Zoom - Remote**

**April 17, 2025**

**5:30 – 7:30 PM**

**SAC Members present:**

**Michelle Motta Dardeno (MMD)**

**Ellen Perkins (EP)**

**Dottie Griffith (DG)**

**Zinma Camelio (ZC)**

**Brock Cordeiro (BC)**

**Jessica Rich (JR)**

**Jonathan Ozek (JO)**

**Attendees from the community:**

Eveleen Cunningham (EC)

Darian Gambrell (DG)

Ruth Moore (RM)

Leslie Puerce **(LP)**

**MCDHH Staff:**

**Commissioner Opeoluwa Sotonwa (OS)**

**Heather Daley (HD)**

**Sharon Harrison (SH)**

**Sehin Mekuria (SM)**

**Holly Pearson (HP)**

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| **Agenda Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action Item** |
| **Welcome** | Established Quorum |  |
| **Review of Minutes from March 20, 2025** | MMD welcomed attendees and gave a brief personal update before reviewing the agenda. The first item was approval of the March 20th meeting minutes.  EP submitted two corrections: her name was listed as attending when she had not, and JR's name was missing from the attendee list. HD confirmed both changes had already been made. OS suggested noting the updates as amendments rather than issuing revised minutes.  MMD called for a motion to approve the amended minutes. EP made the motion, DG seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.  **Amendments Approved:**   * Remove EP from attendance list. * Add JR to attendance list. |  |
| **Chairperson’s Report** | MMD updated the SAC on the following:   * **State House Constituents’ Day:**   + Scheduling requests submitted; awaiting confirmation.   + Further planning, including program and task assignments, will follow. * **Internship Opportunity:**   + A potential high school intern, Samuel, is being considered for May 19–30.   + Samuel is hearing but interested in public health and the Deaf community.   + Volunteers (JO, ZC, JR) offered to speak with the intern about SAC.   OS supported the initiative, aligning it with strategic goals on workforce development and communication access.  MMD suggested intern tasks include:   * Drafting legislative talking points with BC and JO. * Observing the May 15 SAC meeting. * Optional presentation at the June 12 meeting.   With no further business or questions, MMD concluded her report and passed the floor to BC. | **ACTION**: HD to confirm date for State House Constituents’ Day and share updates.  **ACTION:** MMD will coordinate with JO, BC, and the intern to assign a legislative topic for talking point development.  **ACTION:** JO, ZC, and JR will participate in informational conversations with the intern.  **ACTION:** JO to send information about the May 3rd events in Framingham and Newton. |
| **Legislative Task Force Report -**Tracking Bills for 2025 – 2026 | BC reported:   * 61 bills currently under review; four with recent activity. * Two are companion bills; public hearings have concluded.   BC emphasized:   * Community testimony can still be submitted. * Council members should contact legislators to encourage co-sponsorship.   MMD proposed that the intern assist with updating the Excel spreadsheet for tracking bills between the May and June meetings, to which BC agreed, as he will be unavailable due to travel. The action item here is for the intern to help update and monitor the spreadsheet during that period.  JO inquired about the ASL-related bill for public schools. BC indicated that he would look further into the specifics of the bill, and OS clarified that the bill, known as the ASL Inclusion Act, aims to classify ASL as a foreign language for graduation purposes in Massachusetts public high schools.  JR inquired about coordinated advocacy actions. BC confirmed that while formal petitions can be helpful, the most effective course is for individuals and organizations to contact their representatives directly and submit testimony showing their support.  EC raised concerns about the lack of funding for interpreters at the Council on Aging in Bourne, Cape Cod. She requested support in advocating for more funding. BC suggested contacting local legislators, such as Senator Dylan Fernandez and Representatives Steven Xiarhos and David Vieira, for assistance in addressing this issue. OS noted that many agencies are facing budget cuts and advised EC to advocate for funding directly with the Executive Office of Aging and Independence. | **ACTION:** *Intern Assignment:* Update legislative spreadsheet and monitor bill activity. |
| **Commissioner’s Report** | **MCDHH Updates from the Commissioner**  *(PowerPoint presentation attached)*  Following the Commissioner’s presentation, MMD opened the floor for questions from SAC members and the public.  JO expressed interest in joining the Commissioner’s upcoming visit to the Beverly School for the Deaf, sharing his personal connection as an alumnus of the school. OS welcomed this opportunity, noting that Jonathan’s involvement would be an inspiration to the students.  With no further questions, OS concluded his report, and MMD thanked him for the informative and thorough update. | **ACTION:** HD to notify Beverly School for the Deaf of JO’s attendance. |
| **SAC Members** |  |  |
| **SAC Announcements, Next Meeting** | **Announcements**  MMD opened the floor to SAC members to share community updates and events.   * **JO:**   + Worcester Red Sox Deaf Awareness Night – May 23   + Commissioner to appear at HLAA Boston Chapter – May 14   + Boston Red Sox Disability Pride Celebration – June 3 * **DG:**   + LEAD-K K5 Awareness Run at The Learning Center – May 4   + Massachusetts Association for the Deaf annual meeting in Holyoke (TBD) * **ZC:**   + Success Leadership & Horizon Camps in VT – April 25–29   + Recreational Day in Weston – June 7   + Audiological transition seminar – May 29 (scholarships available for camps)   RM shared highlights from recent events, including OS’ attendance at the Willie Ross School for the Deaf Gala and the honoring of George Basley. She also promoted the April 26 community forum at Holyoke Community College hosted by MSAD and WMAD.  OS acknowledged RM’s beautiful eulogy for George Basley and provided an important update about EBT card outages from April 26th to 27th to improve fraud prevention system upgrades.  With no further business and no additional public comments, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM. The next SAC meeting will be held on Thursday, May 15, 2025at **5:30 PM.**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | ~~1~~ | ~~September 19, 2024~~ | | ~~2~~ | ~~October 17, 2024~~ | | ~~3~~ | ~~November 14, 2024~~ | | ~~4~~ | ~~December 19, 2024~~ | | ~~5~~ | ~~January 16, 2025~~ | | ~~6~~ | ~~February 20, 2025~~ | | ~~7~~ | ~~March 20, 2025~~ | | ~~8~~ | ~~April 17, 2025~~ | | 9 | May 15, 2025 | | 10 | June 12, 2025 | |  |