**MCDHH Statewide Advisory Council Meeting Agenda**

**Zoom - Remote**

**June 12, 2025**

**5:30 – 7:30 PM**

**SAC Members present:**

**Michelle Motta Dardeno (MMD)**

**Ellen Perkins (EP)**

**Dorothy Griffith (DO)**

**Jonathan Ozek (JO)**

**Nini Silver (NS)**

**Attendees from the community:**

Elizabeth Dardeno (ED)

Shannon Pollock (SP)

Lee Nettles (LN)

Anthony Russo (AR)

Shannon Pollock (SP)

Carol Agate (CA)

**MCDHH Staff:**

**Commissioner Opeoluwa Sotonwa (OS)**

**Heather Daley (HD)**

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| **Agenda Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action Item** |
| **Welcome** | MMD called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Quorum was discussed. OS noted that with the addition of new member NS, the quorum requirement has changed. With four members present, the Council proceeded with the meeting, acknowledging that official approval of the previous minutes would be deferred until a quorum could be confirmed.**Welcome and Introductions*** MMD welcomed participants and introduced her daughter, Elizabeth, who is Hard of Hearing, serving as a State House intern, and will take notes for the ADA office.
* Elizabeth introduced herself as a student at Bentley University and a member of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing community.
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| **Review of Minutes from May 15, 2025** | The review and approval of the previous meeting minutes was postponed due to the lack of quorum.  |  |
| **Chairperson’s Report** | MMD provided updates on State House Day:* State House Day 2025:Scheduled for Tuesday, September 23, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Attempts to reschedule were unsuccessful. SAC members were reminded to keep potential conflicts (religious or other) in mind for future planning.
* Governor’s proclamation and press release have been requested and are in progress.
* SAC awards nominations will be solicited via email.
* Save-the-date flyers will be distributed to community organizations, colleges, and schools serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing students.
* Members were encouraged to suggest guest speakers, including legislators with interest in the Deaf community, and send suggestions to MMD and EP, with HD copied.
* MMD noted that further details, including potential themes and activities for the day, will be communicated in future updates.
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| **Legislative Task Force Report -**Tracking Bills for 2025 – 2026 | **HB 3946 (Hearing Aid Bill) –** *Filed by Rep. Sean Garballey*JO reported on the status of House Bill 3946. Key points included:* The bill has been filed and currently has seven cosponsors: Representatives Garballey, Giannino, Eldridge, Comerford, Madaro, Moran, and Sabadosa.
* Interest in co-sponsorship continues to grow.

**Deaf Senior Citizens of America (DSCA) Request*** OS noted that a separate bill request was sent by DSCA, requesting SAC involvement in recommending an amendment.
* SAC members will review the emailed request and discuss at a later date.

**HB 796 (Deaf Senior Citizens Bill) –** *Sponsored by Rep. Steven Ultrino (Malden)** DG provided personal context supporting HB 796, highlighting accessibility challenges for Deaf seniors in care facilities. MMD noted that she will contact Representative Ultrino to invite him to speak at a future SAC meeting regarding the bill.
 | **Action:** MMD will reach out to Rep. Ultrino to invite him to a future SAC meeting. |
| **Commissioner’s Report** | **MCDHH Updates from the Commissioner***(PowerPoint presentation attached)*Following the Commissioner’s report, MMD invited questions from SAC members. * JO inquired about the duration of the hiring freeze, which OS explained would last until September unless modified by the Governor, and also sought clarification on digital accessibility requirements, which OS addressed.
* NS asked about MCDHH involvement with ICE; OS explained MCDHH can coordinate with state and local agencies but has limited authority over federal agencies, and they are monitoring the situation in collaboration with the Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI)
* DG requested clarification on ORI, which was provided in the Zoom chat.
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| **SAC Members**  | MMD opened the floor for updates and announcements:JO shared upcoming events:* June 18: HLAA Boston Chapter presentation on InnoCaption app.
* June 21: Family event at Spectacle Island (Boston Harbor Islands, in partnership with DEAF, Inc. and Boston Children’s Hospital).
* June 26: GBH hosts *Disability Reframed: A Growing Community*.
* July: City of Boston ADA Day (35th Anniversary).
* Summer 2025: SPED program offers summer camps for Deaf/HH youth.

NS:* Hosting a workshop at DEAF, Inc. (Lawrence office) on June 13 to help community members learn how to contact legislators regarding the Hearing Aid Bill (HB 3946).
* Encouraged members to begin preparing testimony and letters in advance of the bill’s hearing.
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| **SAC Announcements, Next Meeting**  | MMD thanked SAC members for their service and engagement. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM, with wishes for a safe, restful summer and a reminder to stay engaged in planning State House Day (Sept. 23).Next scheduled meeting: September 2025 (date TBD). |  |