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Maine-Lines: A Newsletter for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened, Winter / Spring 2014

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

Maine Division of Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Late Deafened

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MaineLines - Winter 2014

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Winter 2014 Newsletter from the Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened

Director's Report

I hope you all had a great holiday season. Here we are in 2014, and I hope that this year brings nothing but the best to you.



Commission Update

First, I extend my thanks to everyone on the Commission for the Deaf Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened for their work and time. I would also like to send a special thanks to Patty Sarchi and Sitara Sheikh for serving as chair and vice-chair of the Commission for the past two years.

Next, I welcome Conrad Strack as the new chair and Sitara Sheikh as the vice-chair. I invite you to attend one of our Commission meetings, on which there are 11 available seats.

The open seats are as follows:

- Three Deaf consumers.
- One family member of a consumer who is deaf, hard of hearing or late deafened with an intellectual disability or mental illness.

- Two parents of a deaf or hard-of-hearing student.
- One Deaf high school student.
- One Department of Education representative.
- One Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf certified interpreter.
- One Member-at-large – medical/healthcare provider.
- One Local Education Administrator.

The Commission is working on gathering nominations for the Annual Tea awards. Please nominate people whom you believe deserve to be recognized for their work or contribution to the Deaf Community. The nomination form is available at <http://www.maine.gov/rehab/dod/index.shtml>.

The CDHHLA meets four times a year. The remaining 2014 meeting dates are: April 10, June 12 and October 9, from 4 to 7 p.m., at the Central Maine Commerce Center in Augusta.

Do you want to be part of a group that works to make changes in Maine? Do you have experience related to hearing loss that you would like to share? We would love to have you come to a Commission meeting; meetings are open to the public. If, after attending a Commission meeting, you believe that you have something to offer, please consider serving on this important Commission. We do provide refreshments at the meetings.

To view the Commission's Five-Year Plan visit <http://www.maine.gov/rehab/dod/index.shtml> and scroll down to the Commission's links.

Best Wishes

Terry Morrell, Director

Nancy Melanson Promoted to DOE



I would like to take this opportunity to announce that Nancy Melanson has accepted a promotion. Her new job will be in the Department of Education, and her last day with us at DOL was March 21. I thank Nancy for her 13 years of dedicated service to the Division for the Deaf Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened and the Commission for the Deaf Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened.

Nancy has been a passionate and strong advocate for improving services for people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Late Deafened and for those who have a dual sensory loss. Nancy possesses a vast knowledge of the resources around the state, and her caring, efficient manner in responding to all questions about services and supports has been the cornerstone of the work of the Division on Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened for many years. Her dedication and management of the Annual Tea at the State House over the years has been outstanding. She will be sorely missed!

I know that wherever Nancy goes, she will continue to educate others about hearing loss. It has been a pleasure to work with Nancy, and I feel very fortunate to have worked with her.

Congratulations, Nancy, and please stay in touch!

Terry Morrell

Individuals interested in working for the Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened

Individuals interested in working for the Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened should review the [position description and application information](#) at the State Bureau of Human Resources website. The ability to be American Sign Language conversant with signing skills is necessary.

Maine Center on Deafness (MCD) Updates

As many already know, John Dunleavy is Maine Center on Deafness's interim director. The MCD board plans to advertise, conduct a search, and interview applicants for the permanent executive director position, although there is no timeline yet set.

Everyone at MCD uses sign language, and the agency is working on having a videophone at every desk in the office. MCD has done some remodeling, painting, and some changes in the structure within the office. logistically

We would like to introduce MCD's new staff: a finance person, Erik Monty; a front desk receptionist, Emily LaRose, who is a recent graduate of the University of Southern Maine interpreting program; Scott Murray, Deaf-Blind Equipment Program coordinator; Michelle Ames, advocate and the lead for the Peer Support Group and the visual gestural classes, replacing Greg Scheuer who briefly provided advocacy services; Denise Adams, coordinator for MCD's new vocational, Work! Program (Denise is a former Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf and Teacher of the Deaf); and Gwen Ives, in MCD's Bangor office, covering that city and the north. MCD has begun a collaboration with the Disability Rights Center and Pine Tree Legal to answer questions that require an attorney's attention.

MCD is partnering with the city of Portland Commission for People with Disabilities; it is approved as an official city Commission. A Community Forum was held on March 24 at the Portland Public Library for people with disabilities to come and discuss issues regarding how the city of Portland can improve on the quality of life for people with disabilities who are live, work or play in the city of Portland.

Emmaleigh Hardy, a Deaf student studying fire science at Southern Maine Community College, has been assisting MCD with the grant that was awarded to the towns of Scarborough and Falmouth to distribute battery operated (10-year battery) smoke detectors, carbon monoxide (CO) detectors, including vibrating alarms (separately), to people who live in those two communities. The smoke and CO detectors were waiting at MCD and couldn't be installed without the vibrating alarms; the vibrating alarms are now at MCD. However, the program is again on hold until we get flashing alerts in addition to the vibrating ones. MCD has a waiting list of 40 people. *Note, These alarms are not for people who rent homes; renters should have their landlord provide them with the appropriate equipment for fire signals.* Instead, this program is for Mainers who own their own homes. Once the lights are in, the alarms will be distributed and installed. No hardware is used to install and the old devices are left in place.

The Elderly, Low-Income Hearing Aid Program waiting list continues to grow steadily, and tiers have been established to help those most in need first. Because of the lengthy waiting list, if an applicant already has one hearing aid or, if applicants have old technology and want to replace it with newer technology, they are now being dropped down to a lower priority in their current tier.

For those readers who are on Facebook, please like the [MCD Facebook page](#). We sometimes post late-breaking news and events there.

A Q&A with Karen Keim, MEOC and METS



Karen Keim has worked in education for most of her career, with a brief break to try life as a starving artist. She has been fortunate to travel extensively, visiting all 50 states and several foreign countries. When she says she loves living in Maine, she compares it to where she has been and counts herself lucky to live in such a beautiful place.

Where do you work and what do you do?

I work at the University of Maine's Educational Opportunity Center (MEOC) and Talent Search (METS) programs. Part of UMaine's community outreach efforts, both programs seek to provide equal access to education beyond high school. The METS program works with grades 6 through 12 to help students graduate from high school and be prepared to enter college on equal footing as those who come from a more advantaged upbringing. MEOC focuses on college access issues for adults, serving 2,650 adults statewide who are actively exploring a college education. Both programs are part of the Federal TRIO programs that seek to break the cycle of poverty through education. TRIO focuses on assuring that the least advantaged segments of the population have a realistic chance to enter and graduate from a post-secondary institution.

As associate director of both programs, I manage the day-to-day operations of both grants, ensuring that we meet our goals and objectives on both an individual and project-wide basis. I am also responsible for advocating for the needs of our students; therefore, I represent their interests on several commissions, boards, and advisory committees. I am also the president of the New England Education Association, which represents 125 college access programs and 150,000 students in New England (nearly 7,000 of whom live in Maine).

What are some of your successes?

TRIO WORKS! Both programs have been continuously funded by the U.S. Department of Education because of the success rate of the students with whom we work. The advisors who work directly with our project participants are amazing, innovative, supportive and successful in getting each person the tools they need to be successful in college. I work with amazing people who care passionately about the people they serve.

What are some of your challenges?

Most of the challenges we face in the TRIO programs are related to cuts to the funding. This past year, federal sequestration cut 5.23 percent of our funds, resulting in a devastating loss of staff and students from both programs. Funding levels have not increased, and our projects have been asked to do more with less. The challenge is always finding ways to deliver our programs in a more economical manner that doesn't dilute the program or the results we have with our students. The point is Congress needs to stop placing the budget cuts on the backs of our poorest citizens. A college education is the way out of poverty, TRIO programs are a wise investment in the future of our nation.

What would you like to see happen for those that whom you work with?

I would like to see all students have equal access to quality education to help them meet their full potential. Funding opportunities for education is are not keeping pace with the costs of education. I would like to see innovative strategies in funding for our neediest students. I want every student in Maine who wants to earn a college degree to be supported in their pursuit of education. I would like to

see an alignment between high school curriculum and college and work -readiness standards so that students leaving high school are college ready. We know that students who take challenging high school classes are more likely to be successful in college; therefore, those classes should be more accessible to all students. Our funding priorities in this state and nation need to focus on expanding education.

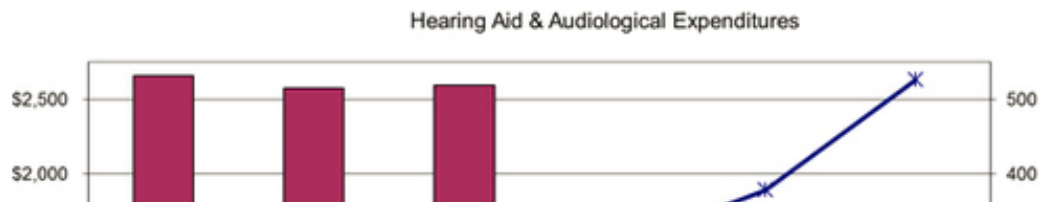
Is there anything you feel is important to mention?

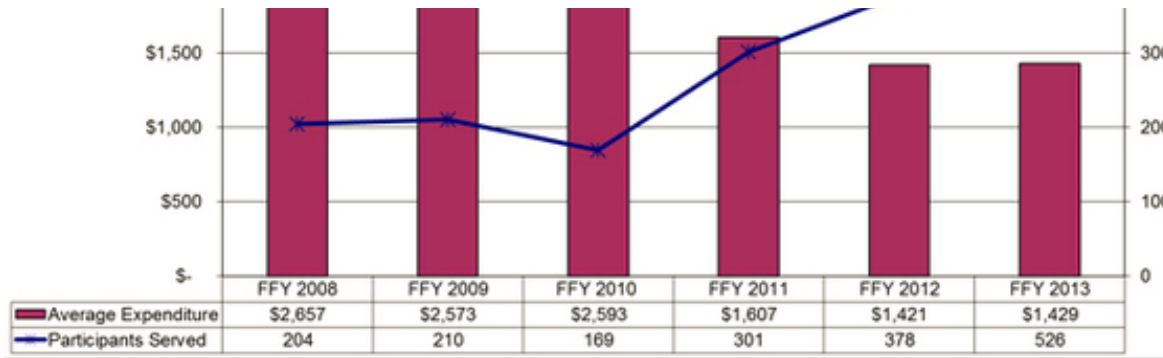
You can be anything with the proper training and opportunity,; invest in yourself, and get an education. Maine colleges and universities are the perfect places to explore your options. Not ready? Maine Adult Education is a great place to build skills to become ready, check out a college transition class near you today!

Hearing Aid Purchases and Expenditures

AUDIOLOGY EXAMS	FFY 2008	FFY 2009	FFY 2010	FFY 2011	FFY 2012	FFY 2013
Participants Served	25	39	27	37	89	90
Total Expenditures	\$ 10,532	\$ 18,334	\$ 8,434	\$ 8,774	\$ 29,939	\$ 15,845
Average Expenditure per Participant	\$ 421	\$ 470	\$ 312	\$ 237	\$ 336	\$ 176
HEARING AIDS						
Participants Served	194	184	155	285	353	495
Total Expenditures	\$ 544,694	\$ 519,547	\$ 429,664	\$ 474,814	\$ 507,122	\$ 735,813
Average Expenditure per Participant	\$ 2,808	\$ 2,824	\$ 2,772	\$ 1,666	\$ 1,437	\$ 1,486
All Hearing Expenditures						
Participants Served	204	210	169	301	378	526
Total Expenditures	\$ 542,028	\$ 540,392	\$ 438,272	\$ 483,588	\$ 537,061	\$ 751,668
Average Expenditure	\$ 2,657	\$ 2,573	\$ 2,593	\$ 1,607	\$ 1,421	\$ 1,429

During Fiscal Year 2013, the department has provided hearing aids to 495 participants in the Vocational Rehabilitation program. Since instituting the hearing aid protocol, we have been able to save on the costs of hearing aids. Overall we have served 526 participants.





The Average Expenditure has decreased since FFY 2008, while Participants Served has increased, showing a greater efficiency rate comparable to cost.

Celebration of Deaf Culture Week

ANNUAL TEA and AWARDS

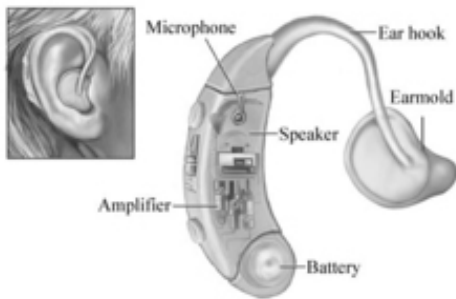
Maine Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened [invites you to the Annual Tea](#) in celebration of Deaf Culture Week on Thursday, September 18, 2014 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the State House Hall of Flags.

Please respond by September 10, 2014 to Terry L. Morrell at Terry.L.Morrell@maine.gov, (207) 470-7668 (VP) or (207) 623-7957 (TTY).

ASL Interpreters and Cart will be provided. Please contact Terry by September 1, if you need other Communication accommodations.

[Tea Awards Nomination Form](#)

Wanted: Used Hearing Aids



Do you have a pair of hearing aids in a drawer? Want to put them to good use? Mail them to the Penobscot Community Health Center/Warren Center. they will fix them and pass them along to an individual in need.

Penobscot Community Health Center (PCHC)/Warren Center
P.O. Box 439, Bangor, Maine 04401

Tel. 941-2850 (V); 877-542-9000 (V); 941-4932 (TTY)

www.pchcbangor.org

Court Interpreter Qualification Process



The State of Maine is home to 52 spoken-language Court interpreters representing 24 languages and 15 countries of origin.



Legal interpreters pictured right to left: Meryl Troop, Tina Morrison, Lois Morin and Mary Mackay

The State of Maine Judicial Branch began qualifying spoken-language legal interpreters for the Maine State Courts in the spring of 2008. The Judicial Branch is the only entity in Maine that provides legal qualification and national certification for spoken-language interpreting.

The spoken-language qualification process is rigorous, and involves a written examination, oral proficiency interview, a two-day orientation with the Courts, and a background check.

In addition, each interpreter must abide by the Standards of Professional Conduct for Interpreters Providing Services in Judicial Proceedings. This document details the code of conduct and ethical obligations governing interpreters appointed by the Maine Courts. Once qualified, the court interpreter is issued an identification badge, and is considered to be an officer of the court.

Maine has a tiered system of qualification: new court interpreters are considered Tier I; court interpreters with advanced training and 50+ hours of legal interpreting experience are considered Tier II; and court interpreters who have successfully passed the national, state or federal certification exams are considered Tier III.

The Judicial Branch does not certify American Sign Language (ASL) legal interpreters. The national certification process to become a legal ASL interpreter is equally rigorous, and involves a written exam and legal performance test. Maine law requires that Specialist Certificate: Legal (SC:L) ASL interpreters be appointed for all court proceedings. Maine currently has ten (10) ASL interpreters with the SC:L designation. Both spoken-language and ASL interpreters are available to provide in-person interpreting services for the Courts state-wide.

In the News

- [Southwest to Offer Captioning on Wireless IFE](#)
- [Multistate Hearing Aid Cooperative Leads to Increase in People Served](#)
- [FCC Moves to Upgrade TV Closed Captioning Quality](#)
- [A Guide to Services for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late Deafened Available Online](#)
- [Goodwill is Hiring Direct Support Professionals with ASL Requirement - Freeport and Portland](#)

Employment Services for People with Disabilities

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, also known as VR, assists individuals who have disabilities to get and keep a job. VR works with adults, as well as with eligible students to coordinate information and resources as they transition to the world of work.

To be eligible you must:

- Have a documented disability that prevents you from getting or keeping a job.
- Need VR services to keep a job. (Eligibility must be determined in 60 days. Medical records

can usually provide the necessary documentation.)

If you are receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) based on a disability and have an interest in working, you are presumed eligible for VR services.

To apply for VR, you need to [call one of our offices](#) and schedule an appointment with a VR counselor. The counselor will explain the program and learn more about you and your goals. You are strongly encouraged to view the [online VR orientation video](#) prior to applying for services.

Every person's employment plan is different. Your VR counselor will work with you to decide what jobs best fit your interests and skills. You'll also consider where you live, the current job market, and what transportation is available. VR will consider any service you need to achieve the agreed-upon vocational goal.

As you identify careers, VR can provide information about the skills and training you need. If training is necessary, VR may help with the cost of the program. VR may also buy tools, uniforms or basic equipment needed to start a job. Sometimes VR can assist with payment for some medical/psychological services. If you need a job coach (on-the-job support), VR will provide one.

In general, services end 90 days after you start working.

It does not cost you anything to apply for services. There is no charge for testing, vocational evaluation, counseling, or job placement assistance. If you are eligible for services, your counselor will ask you about your income and expenses. Depending upon your income, you may be asked to contribute to the cost of VR services. VR cannot pay for any services you received before you applied to VR, or any services not agreed upon with your counselor and written in your Individualized Plan for Employment.

CONTACTS

The [Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened](#) provides a program of services to Deaf, hard of hearing and late-deafened people in Maine, which includes information and referral, advocacy, and accessibility promotion.

Terry Morrell, Director

Tel: 470-7668 (VP)

TTY: 623-7957

Email: Terry.L.Morrell@maine.gov

Department of Labor, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- Nancy Hickey, Deaf Counselor - 207-433-5234 (VP)
- Terry Morrell, Supervisor - 207-470-7668 (VP)
- Ginny Pelletier, Rehab. Assistant - 207-470-7670 (VP)
- John Post, Deaf Counselor - 207-591-4128 (VP) Portland or 207-514-0184 (VP) Lewiston
- Joe Roquebecil, Deaf Counselor - 207-221-5526 (VP)
- Sitara Sheikh, Deaf Counselor - 207-226-7270 (VP); 207-287-6252 (TTY)

Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Administrative Office

150 State House Station, Augusta 04333-0150

Tel: (207) 623-6799 - TTY users please us Maine Relay 711 - Fax: 287-5292

Office Directory by Town, including Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Division for the Blind and

Visually Impaired: <http://www.maine.gov/rehab/offices.shtml>

The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity in employment and programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

For more information regarding the Bureau of Rehabilitation, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Hearing Aid Procurement visit http://www.maine.gov/rehab/ha_procurement/index.shtml



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