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Maine-Lines: A Newsletter for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened, Summer 2007

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

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

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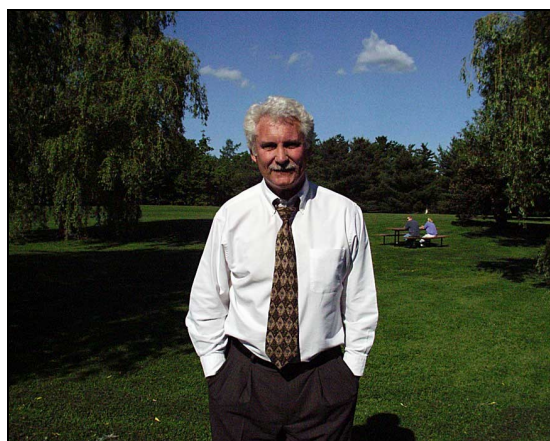
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DIVISION OF DEAFNESS

MAINE-LINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF, HARD OF HEARING OR LATE-DEAFENED

New Director for the Division of Deafness



John Shattuck, Director, Division of Deafness

John Shattuck is the new Director for the Division of Deafness; he started his new responsibilities on January 29, 2007. John has been an advocate and friend of Maine's Deaf and hard-of-hearing communities for many years.

He began working with Maine's Deaf community in 1979 as a Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf (RCD) in the Rockland Office. While working in Rockland, he distinguished himself and gained the respect of his clients, supervisor and fellow staff. Before moving to Maine, John had worked in New York in the Mental Health field.

John held many positions in the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services: Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf, Case Work Supervisor, Regional Manager, Deputy Director, and also Director of the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services.

While John was Bureau Director, he worked very hard to get the positions of Director and Assistant to the Director for the Division of Deafness reinstated, which started the Division of Deafness again. He also advocated for more funds for the Telecommunications Equipment Program and the Civil Rights Program for Maine Center on Deafness.

John left the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services to direct the Baxter Compensation Authority for the entire claims process. He worked very hard to ensure that all abuse survivors from GBSD/MSD were heard, compensated and received appropriate supports.

John received the Clifton Rodgers Award in 2006 at the Blaine House Tea.

John is very happy to be the new division director and looks forward to working with the Division of Deafness for the Deaf and hard-of-hearing communities.



Nancy Melanson & John Shattuck, Division of Deafness

The Division of Deafness has Moved!

The Division of Deafness has moved to the Central Maine Commerce Center at 45 Commerce Drive in Augusta approximately 1 mile past the Augusta CareerCenter.

Directions to the Division of Deafness

From the South:

Take 95 to Exit 112 B (Augusta-Belgrade Exit).

Turn right onto Route 27 North.

Drive 1.5 miles.

Turn left onto Commerce Drive (you will see a sign: Central Maine Commerce Center).

Drive down a short distance and you will see the building on your right.

Park in the Department of Labor (DOL) parking lot.

Enter through the DOL door (East side of the building), and follow the signs directing you to the Department of Labor reception. At reception ask for the Division of Deafness.

From the North:

Take 95 to Exit 112 (Augusta-Belgrade Exit).

Turn right onto Route 27 North.

Drive 1.3 miles.

Turn left onto Commerce Drive (you will see a sign: Central Maine Commerce Center).

Drive down a short distance and you will see the building on your right.

Park in the Department of Labor (DOL) parking lot.

Enter through the DOL door (East side of the building), and follow the signs directing you to the Department of Labor reception. At reception ask for the Division of Deafness.

Contact information:

Division of Deafness

#150 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

www.maine.gov/rehab/dod

John Shattuck, Director

Tel: 623-7957 (V)

1-888-755-0023 (Toll free TTY)

E-mail: John.G.Shattuck@Maine.Gov

Nancy Melanson, Assistant to the Director

Tel: 623-7958 (V)

1-888-755-0023 (Toll free TTY)

623-7998 (TTY)

E-mail: Nancy.A.Melanson@Maine.Gov

Advisory Council to the Division of Deafness



John Dunleavy, Chair of the Division of Deafness Advisory Council

The purpose of the Council is to advise and assist the Division of Deafness in evaluating and improving the quality and effectiveness of its assigned responsibilities of serving deaf, hard-of-hearing and late-deafened individuals. For more detailed information regarding the By-Laws for the Council, please contact the Division of Deafness.

There are twenty-seven members serving on the Council with John Dunleavy as the Chair. The next page has a listing of all current members. For contact information on the council members, please contact the Division of Deafness.

The Council meets in January, April, June, and October. The next Division of Deafness Advisory Council meeting is October 11, 2007 from 5:30 P.M. to 8:15 P.M. It will be held at the Department of Labor, 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta in the Frances Perkins conference room. This meeting is open to the public.



Division of Deafness Advisory Council, June 14, 2007

First	Last	Position
Bruce	Munro-Ludders	Deaf Individual # 1
Diane	Poulin	Deaf Individual # 2
Peter	Martineau	Deaf Individual # 3
Tammy	Estes	Deaf Individual # 4
Larry	Taub	Deaf Individual # 5
John	Dunleavy	Deaf Individual # 6
Kristine	Dach	Deaf Individual # 7
Willie	Tarr	Deaf Individual # 8
Jan	DeVinney	Hard-of-Hearing Individual # 1
Shell	Moore	Hard-of-Hearing Individual # 2
Terry	Valente	Parent of GDSB Student
Anne	Banger	Parent of Deaf or HoH Individual # 1
Terri	Thompson	Parent of Deaf or HoH Individual # 2
Pat	Slater	Educator of the Deaf
Kathryn	Girardin	Hearing Aid Dealer
Anne	Giroux	Audiologist
Vacant		Rep from State/Fed Agency # 1
Darla	Chafin	Rep from State/Fed Agency # 2
Vacant		Rep from State/Fed Agency # 3
Dan	Crawford	Rep from State/Fed Agency # 4
Beth	Edmonds	Legislator
Betsy	Reifman	RID Interpreter
Judy	Plano	Legal Representative
Vacant		Med/Health Care Provider
Amy	Sneirson	Member-at-Large # 1
Tracey	Frederick	Member-at-Large # 2
Jonathan	Connick	Member-at-Large # 3



Left to Right: Tara Johnson (Interpreter), Diane Poulin, Maura Nolin (Interpreter), Dan Crawford, & Darla Chafin, Division of Deafness Advisory Council, June 14, 2007

Legislation Update:

LD 289: An Act To Revise the Definition of Service Dog: Originally introduced to establish training and accreditation standards for service dogs and their trainers. It was voted on as ought to pass with an amendment to study the issue and report back to the legislature in January 2008. Members of the study group will include representatives from MCD, Disability Rights Center, and service animal trainers. The study group will make recommendations in the report.

LD 536: An Act to Promote Efficiency in the Use of the Communications Equipment Fund: This bill proposes a shift of \$62,500 from an underutilized Telecommunications Emergency Alert Service fund to the Telecommunications Equipment Fund. Increases the fund by \$62,500. This bill was signed into law.

LD 740: An Act to Promote the Safety of Deaf or Hard-of-hearing Drivers: This bill provides a Deaf or hard-of-hearing symbol on an individual's drivers license. This is done on a voluntary basis. This bill was signed into law.

LD 752: An Act to Streamline Licensure for Sign Language Interpreters: This bill proposed to delete the requirement that 100 hours of instruction in the interpreting process be within the past five years. It was voted on as "ought not to pass" and will not happen.

LD 1055: An Act to Establish the Hearing Assistance Program for Low-income Persons Who are Elderly or Disabled: This bill was to establish a program in the DoD that would provide funds for low-income Deaf or hard-of-hearing people to purchase hearing aids. This bill was amended to do a needs study in cooperation with the Department of Human Services to determine the costs involved, and possible resources available to administer such a program. Members will include a member of the Deaf community and a member of the DoD Advisory Council's late deafened/hard of hearing ad-hoc committee.

LD 1142: An Act to Enhance the Newborn Hearing Program: This bill expands the Department of Human Services' evaluation and tracking of newborns and infants with hearing loss for children up to 3 years of age. It also requires audiologists to report assessment findings to the Department of Health and Human Services. This bill was signed into law.

LD 1239: Resolve, to Establish a Working Group to Study the Effectiveness and Timeliness of Early Identification for Children with Hearing Loss in Maine:

This bill will establish a study group to assess current resources and report back to the legislature next session with proposed recommendations. This bill was voted on as "ought to pass as amended."

LD 1514: An Act to Require Health Insurance Coverage for Hearing Aids:

Originally this bill required health insurance providers to cover the cost of hearing aids for each ear for individuals under the age of 18 with a limit of \$1,400 per hearing aid.

SUCCESS!!!! Here is the current status of this bill from Amy Sneirson, MCD. June 22, 2007. Smile.

Hi all,

We all have done it - the Legislature passed LD 1514, a law requiring insurers in Maine to provide health insurance benefits to cover hearing aids to Maine's children! The bill was signed into law on June 28, 2007.

Here are the details. The law will go into effect as of January 1, 2008. As of then, under any policy issued or renewed after that date, insurers in Maine must provide children with a \$1,400 per ear benefit once every three years.

In order to get the bill passed, we had to restructure how the bill would go into effect to phase it in over three years. In the first year (starting January 1, 2008), children aged zero to five will be eligible for the benefit. The second year (starting January 1, 2009), children aged six to thirteen will be eligible for the benefit. The third year (starting January 1, 2010), children aged fourteen to eighteen will be eligible for the benefit. Huge thanks to you all for your passionate - and sustained effort over several years - advocacy on this issue. This new law would never have passed without your advocacy, testimony and work.

We also all need to send huge thanks to the lawmakers who supported us and moved the cause forward. If they had not taken up the charge and pushed it forward this effort would have died a quiet death long ago.

Numerous legislators stood up for us and made this measure a reality, like Senator Nancy Sullivan (npsullivan@awi.net), the powerful and committed sponsor of the bill, who was instrumental in getting the bill passed.

Her co-chair on the Insurance and Financial Services Committee, John Brautigam (jblaw@maine.rr.com), was another sponsor of the bill and led strong support for the bill throughout the process.

When the fight came down to money, several respected legislators on the Appropriations Committee really held in there and took care of Maine's kids who need hearing aids, so please send your thanks to Appropriations Committee co-chairs Senator Peggy Rotundo (mrotundo@bates.edu) and Representative Jeremy Fischer (RepJeremy.Fischer@legislature.maine.gov), and Appropriations member Representative Emily Cain (CainOrono@hotmail.com). Please e-mail these folks to thank them.

We particularly want to recognize and thank *Representative David Webster from Freeport*, who led the way for us and made this happen in countless meetings and late-night discussions. Without his leadership, passionate advocacy about this civil rights issue, and continued attention to details that made the law possible to pass, Maine's children would still be facing the prospect of going to school without being able to hear. Please e-mail him your thanks at RepDavid.Webster@legislature.maine.gov.

We also want to thank Senators Lois Snowe-Mello of Androscoggin County (Replois@megalink.net), Debra Plowman of Penobscot (debraplowman@cs.com), Jon Courtney of York (joncourtney@metrocast.net), and Paula Benoit of Sagadahoc (jbenoit@suscom-maine.net) who also voted in favor of adopting the new hearing aid insurance law. Please e-mail those folks and let them know we appreciate the fact that they supported us when it was not easy to do so.

Amy Sneirson, Esq., Civil Rights Manager

LD 1901: Resolve, to Analyze the Feasibility of Establishing an Education Bill of Rights for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children:

This bill was introduced through the work of Larry Taub, Superintendent of the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Governor Baxter School for the Deaf. The resolve is to study the feasibility of establishing basic rights for Deaf and hard-of-hearing children in Maine's education system. The Department of Education and the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and hard of hearing will report back to the Legislature in January 2008.

**Welcome Amy Sneirson,
New Civil Rights Program Manager
for the Maine Center on Deafness**



Amy Sneirson, Civil Rights Director, MCD

Amy Sneirson is the new Manager of the Civil Rights Program at the Maine Center on Deafness. She has been a practicing attorney for more than a decade. Her experience includes time at Maine's Office of the Attorney General; a lengthy tenure with the law firm of Murray, Plumb and Murray, where she specialized in civil rights claims under the ADA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and federal and state special education laws; and private practice and Attorney General's office service in Missouri.

Please come visit the Maine Center on Deafness and meet Amy.

**Maine Center on Deafness (MCD)
Emergency Notification Services & Equipment**

Maine Center on Deafness has two-way pagers by T-Mobile. Contact MCD for more information about availability.

Equipment can be purchased directly at full cost, or individuals can apply for the "Cost-Share" or "Lending Program" from MCD. The cost of the equipment is dependent on the individual's annual income. E-mail EAlert@MCDMaine.org for more information.

**\$10 Off Your Monthly Wireless
Communication Bill!!***

You may qualify for a \$10 discount on your wireless cell phone, two-way pager, or pre-paid service. If your family's income is less than 135% of the poverty level, you may receive \$10 of your monthly service fee or a \$10 reimbursement for pre-paid service. Contact Alyssa Gagnon at (207)797-7656 or through e-mail as: EAlert@mcdmaine.org for more information.

*Must be deaf or hard of hearing, Maine resident, and receive Emergency Notification Messages (ENS) messages from MEMA.

More information regarding the Telecommunication Equipment Program (TEP) will be in the next issue of Maine-Lines.

For more information contact:

Maine Center on Deafness

68 Bishop Street, Suite 3

Portland, ME 04103

Voice/TTY: 207 797-7656

Voice/TTY: (outside Portland area): 1-800-639-3884

Fax: 207 797-9791

E-mail: info@mcdmaine.org

Did you know?

- ❖ **Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA-Maine)** ALDA-Maine invites new members. ALDA-Maine provides needed information about hearing loss and promotes different activities depending on local needs. CART services will be provided (real time captions for the meeting discussions). If you cannot make it to the meetings, please e-mail your interest; your participation by e-mail is welcomed. Contact Lauren Storck at alda-maine@caregiving-online.com. Web site: www.alda-maine.mysite.com
- ❖ **Maine Center on Deafness (MCD)**
NEW OFFICE HOURS:
July and August Hours:
Monday – Thursday
8 AM to 6 PM
Friday
8 AM to 12 PM

Summer Walk In Civil Rights Hours:
July 17 & 24
10 AM to 12 PM

August 7 & 21
10 AM to 12 PM
- ❖ **ASL NEWS** meetings take place in Bangor, Lewiston, Augusta, and Portland. These meetings allow the Deaf community to come together and discuss issues in ASL. Discussion topics change every month. (Note: This information available from the MCD web site www.mcdmaine.org)

Maine Department of Labor
Division of Deafness
150 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0150

Return Service Requested

Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

Jill Duson, Director

Division of Deafness

The Division of Deafness 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.

John Shattuck, Director

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1-888-755-0023 (TTY)

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Alice Crandall Johnson

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623-7965 (FAX)

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