

**Governor's Council on Disability**  
**Quarterly Council Meeting Minutes**  
**May 1, 2020**

**Council Members Present/Participating:**

Joan Bergstrom, Chuck Comstock, Betty Davidson, Ronald Hack, Chip Hailey, Rosemary Hendon, Katie Jones, Kim Lackey, Elijah Mayfield, DeAnna Noriega, Susan Orton, Andrew Sartorius, Lesia Shelton, Opeoluwa Sotonwa, James Trout, Robert Wallace, Yvonne Wright

**Department Liaisons:**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Anita Baker        | Vocational Rehabilitation – DESE/VR                       |
| Ali Carey          | Attorney General's Office - AGO                           |
| Edwin Cooper       | Department of Mental Health – DMH/Behavioral Health       |
| Katy Plaster       | Department of Natural Resources – DNR                     |
| Christina Predmore | Department of Revenue – DOR                               |
| Shomari Rozier     | Department of Health & Senior Services – DHSS/DSDS        |
| Sarah Schappe      | Attorney General's Office – AGO                           |
| Mara Woody         | Department of Higher Ed and Workforce Development - DHEWD |

**Staff:** Claudia Browner, Laura Mueth, Rachel Rackers, Jessica Zimmer

**Guests:** ASL interpreter AJ Housewright

Council Chair Yvonne Wright called the meeting to order at 10:02 am. Roll call was taken by Claudia. There was a quorum for the meeting with all 17 of the Council members in attendance. The meeting was held by WebEx.

**Approval of agenda:** Claudia added a letter of support request from the DD Council regarding healthcare services for people with disabilities during the COVID-19 crisis, and another from Ope regarding equal access to healthcare. The Council members unanimously approved the amended agenda for the day.

**Approval of meeting minutes:** The Council members unanimously approved the meeting minutes for February 7, 2020. The approved minutes will be posted on the GCD website.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Council Chair report from Yvonne Wright:**

Yvonne provided an update about her Department working from home and the transition back into the Truman Building over the next month.

**Reports from GCD Team:**

The full team report was sent by email to the Council members prior to the meeting and staff provided highlights from their reports.

**Claudia Browner:**

- Reported that GCD staff has been working remotely since March 20 and will gradually transition back to working from the Truman building. Truman building will reopen on May 4.
- Missouri as Model Employer Initiative is continuing. Claudia serves on the Training Team, which has met to continue the training development for state employees.
- Co-presented with Rachel at MOAIDD conference on self-advocacy, self-determination, Columbia, March 10

May 1, 2020

- Participated in several webinars about: Accessible Voting, Accessible Parking, Healthcare during COVID-19 crisis, Emergency Response, Economic Impact, Accessible and Inclusive Housing, Transition, etc.
- [ADA30 – Celebration set for July 28](#) (Tuesday), 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at capitol – monthly planning meetings are held with collaborating agencies.
- Created [COVID-19 Resources for People with Disabilities](#) web page on the Disability Web Portal
- [Accessible parking PSA](#) in collaboration with OA/ITSD and MSHP – completed and published.
- GCD – FY20: \$5,000 restriction from E&E budget due to COVID-19 for remainder of FY20 budget. To date, we have spent 76% of E&E. FY21 budget pending revisions by the Senate and Governor.

**Rachel Rackers:**

- Provided exhibit booths at Transition Fairs in Waynesville, Farmington, and St. Louis
- Co-presented three breakout sessions with Claudia and had exhibit booth at the Lake Area Transition Event on February 28th
- Co-hosted Central Missouri Youth Connection event in Jefferson City on February 25th
- [Leadership Development Program](#) has been changed to September 10-14<sup>th</sup> and the deadline for applications has been extended to June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Unfortunately, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to cancel this year's [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MOYLF). However, we are going to be offering 4 Regional Leadership Forums (RLF) this fall: September 26 – Jefferson City, October 3 – Kansas City, October 17 – Springfield, November 7 – Cape Girardeau. Our MO-YLF planning committee will be having weekly meetings moving forward, to begin planning for these regional events.

**Laura Mueth:**

- Attended ten disability related trainings via webinar and completed several MO Learning/LinkedIn Learning courses.
- At Chip's invitation, spoke on a MO Council of the Blind Legislative Committee Call on February 18 regarding HB 1319.
- Provided three LEP on the Road in Kansas City (EITAS), St. Louis (ADAPT), and Jefferson County. One LEP at the Capitol was held with staff from the SB 40 Board in St. Louis City. The second one with The Independent Living Center in Joplin was cancelled due to COVID-19.
- Participated in ADA30 planning meetings and arranged food/refreshment donation from Missouri Rehab Association.
- Listened to a MO Budget Project/ MHP call which included an update on Medicaid expansion efforts and federal and state COVID information.
- Will provide service animal and emotional support animal session and disability etiquette/awareness presentation at MO Rehabilitation Association Conference this fall.

**Jessica Zimmer:**

- Thanked Joan Bergstrom, Katie Jones, Kim Lackey, Sue Orton and Andrew Sartorius for judging the nominations for the GCD Awards. The [Inclusion Award](#) winner was: Artists First St. Louis, Honorable Mention: BCI Skills, Center St. Peters. The [Youth Leadership Award](#) winner was: Annie Donnell, Honorable Mention: Dylan Farmer, both of St. Louis. The awards presentation was scheduled for March 31 at the Power Up Conference, which was canceled due to COVID-19. The awards presentation will be rescheduled as soon as possible.
- Working on updating an alumni database of all Youth Leadership Forum alumni.

**Report from State Liaisons:**

**Anita Baker (DESE/VR):** In response to COVID-19 pandemic, VR let staff telework since Mid-March, and serving the public remotely by phone or web. VR is ordering PPE for staff to service clients who do not have access to the Internet. Most staff will work from home through May.

**Edwin Cooper (DMH):** The 2020 Real Voices, Real Choices conference has been canceled, but virtual sessions will be offered on August 30. DMH received a \$2 million grant for COVID response. DMH has been working remotely since March and going back into the office gradually. DMH Housing administers 20 housing grants from HUD; they received waivers to allow processing centers to delay recertification visits for housing until after the pandemic is over.

**Christina Predmore (DOR):** Dept. of Revenue, Driver's License Office, and DMV are opening to the public on Monday, May 4 in the Truman building, with new safety protocols in place. People can visit the revenue website to see if local contract offices are open. Most contract offices will be open by appointment only.

**Shomari Rozier (DHSS):** The Health Department's response to COVID-19 has been the main priority. Resource website on COVID-19 can be found at <https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/>

For the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program, monthly home visits and options counseling referrals are being conducted by phone, with approval processes through phone and video chats. Primary functions continued in person: contractors must see house before a person moves in, and verify clients' safe transfer from institution to new home. Hiring new regional coordinator for Kansas City region. DHSS is making sure all front line staff providing Home and Community Based Services have PPE and follow social distancing guidelines. Abuse/neglect hotline investigations are still being conducted in person.

**Mara Woody (DHEWD):** Survey regarding Governor's Emergency Relief Funds revealed disadvantages for population based on socio-economic status or disabilities in regards to online education. Educational institutions have a great need for additional software and technology.

**Sarah Schappe (AGO):** There has been a large increase in Medicaid fraud cases. The hotline is available to report concerns. AGO offices are working from home through May. Clients who do not have internet can come to the office.

**Old Business: None**

**New Business:**

GCD received a request to ask the Council to sign on to a letter of support from the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities asking state government leaders and hospital associations to allow policy modifications of COVID-19 safety policies in order to provide necessary accommodations for people with disabilities in healthcare settings. Examples would include, allowing sign language interpreters, personal care attendants, or guardians in hospital rooms. The request was shared by email with the Council members. All except one of the Council members voted to sign the letter of support via sign on to the provided website link.

Claudia reported that the Missouri DD Council and Missouri Protection and Advocacy are drafting a letter to the Missouri Hospital Association and Governor's Office requesting equal access to medical care for individuals with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ope recommended asking the Governor to issue an executive order assuring equal access to healthcare for individuals with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council members discussed this and decided to

form a special committee to address discrimination of people with disabilities in healthcare. Ope was nominated and agreed to serve as chair of this special committee. Yvonne asked Council members to let Claudia know if they want to join this committee. Andrew Sartorius, Katie Jones, Kim Lackey, and Sue Orton volunteered. The committee will meet to discuss the best approach to address equal access to healthcare, accommodations, and the use of PPE and ventilators.

**Committee Reports:**

**Education subcommittee** (Joan reporting) met on March 13 by phone to discuss bills that are education related: HB1540 and HB1568. The committee found no objections or concerns about bills. HB1540 has amendment about funding reimbursement to small schools. Joan contacted Rep. Patricia Pike who explained that the amendment was to help schools in district with less than 500 students that had been adversely affected by small student population to get reimbursement.

**Council member reports:**

**Chuck Comstock** reported that he was able to adapt his 4 wheel drive wheelchair to blade the driveway during the snow, and to mow the grass.

**DeAnna Noriega** attended Disability Rights Legislative Day at the Capitol and met with legislators on behalf of Missouri Council of the Blind. Attended Circle of Friends church group to provide resources for the blind in Columbia.

**Rosemary Hendon** reported she has recovered from surgery and moved to senior living community.

**Katie Jones** has accepted a new position as the Social Mission Director with BCI Skills Center in St. Peters. She reported that about 6,000 individuals with disabilities are employed in sheltered workshops in Missouri. Most of these workshops were declared essential during the pandemic and remained open.

**Kim Lackey** announced that Paraquad had received grant funding to provide food, household items, and PPE to individuals in the St. Louis area. Paraquad will be offering a virtual voter rights training online. Kim is participating in a Facebook group "St. Louis area COVID 19 isolation chamber," offering support and resources around STL, which can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/586216875580824/> Another resource Kim shared is a Medicaid Education Event on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/665399357637334/>

**Elijah Mayfield** and Todd presented the Governor's proclamation on Disability Rights Legislative Day.

**Sue Orton** has been learning new technology through participation in online meetings and webinars.

**Lesia Shelton** has been providing advocacy and education regarding use of technology as an accommodation for deaf/hard of hearing individuals in the application process for employment. She has also been helping people apply for unemployment and social security.

**Ope Sotonwa** represents the Council on Missouri's 911 Board. The board's new executive director Brian Maydwell established new infrastructure for system to help MO with next gen 911. Board drafted and distributed statewide guidance policy for first responders to interact with individuals with disabilities. MCDHH is working with the Governor's Office on daily briefings to assure accessibility for deaf/HH individuals. MCDHH ordered medical grade clear masks for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing to make lip reading

GCD Council Meeting Minutes  
May 1, 2020

and expressions easier. Annual interpreters' conference planned for October may have to be done virtually. Deaf empowerment symposium was cancelled due to COVID. Hearing aid distribution program awarded 25 low income individuals with grants for hearing aids.

**Chip Hailey** attended American Council for the Blind legislative seminar in Washington, DC and met with legislators on Capitol Hill. Subjects were autonomous vehicles, surface transportation and pedestrian safety, and low vision exclusion from Medicare. Attended MO Council of the Blind legislative day at the capitol and visited with legislators on HB 1270 (blind pension), HB1276 (competitive employment for people with disabilities), and SB 595 (personal care attendant services).

**Betty Davidson** attended Metro Bi-State transportation council meeting that discussed transportation challenges during the pandemic. Betty reported that students with significant needs served by the Special School District are experiencing challenges with equal access to education due to lack of technology and resources.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:27 p.m.

The next regular Council meeting will be held **Friday, August 21, 2020** at 10 AM at the **Missouri Coalition for Community Behavioral Healthcare, CFO Room, 221 Metro Drive, Jefferson City**

| <b>Action Items:</b>   | <b>Responsible:</b> |
|--|---------------------|
| Sign on to letter from Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities on behalf of Council  | Claudia Browner     |
| Notify Claudia if interested in serving on Special Committee to address discrimination of people with disabilities in healthcare | Council members     |

Minutes by Jessica Zimmer  
May 4, 2020  
Approved by Council 8/21/2020