

## **Meeting the Challenges of Hearing Loss by Utilizing Agency Supports - by Ann Liming**

Living on a day to day basis with a hearing loss can present many challenges. Dealing with these challenges can be made easier with the support of people who share the same experiences and by utilizing information and services provided by agencies that serve both deaf and hard of hearing populations. HLA-MI frequently receives requests for information related to issues centering on hearing loss. We welcome these requests and the opportunity to help others to live successful and productive lives. In an effort to provide a full range of information and services we often collaborate with other state and local organizations. We value the work other organizations do for people with hearing loss and the support they give to HLA-MI.

In this article we are featuring two statewide agencies, the Division on Deaf & Hard of Hearing (DODHH) and the Michigan Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MADHH). We will also feature an agency that is located in Detroit and provides services to the tri-county area, the Deaf, Hearing and, Sign Language Center (DHSC). Also featured is Deaf Community Advocacy Network - DEAF C.A.N.! which offers direct client services to individuals and families living in southeastern Michigan.

The DODHH is a part of state government and is mandated by law. MADHH, DEAF C.A.N.! and DHSC are non-profit organizations. Our focus will be on services that are specific to people who are hard of hearing. Since there are hard of hearing people who use sign language and TTYs, those services will be included. More detailed information is available on each agency's website.

### **Division on Deaf & Hard of Hearing (DODHH)**

201 N. Washington Square  
Suite 150  
Lansing, MI 48909  
877-499-6232 T/V (Toll-free)  
517-335-60004 T/V  
517-335-7773 Fax  
Video Relay IP Address: DODHH.NET  
Email: [dodhh@michigan.gov](mailto:dodhh@michigan.gov)  
[www.mcddc-dodhh.org](http://www.mcddc-dodhh.org)

**Mission: The Division on Deaf & Hard of Hearing with the guidance of the Advisory Council shall affirm the indisputable right of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons to secure effective communication.**

A 13 member Governor appointed Advisory Council works to improve and expand services to persons with hearing loss in Michigan. At least seven of the members are required to be deaf or hard of hearing.

#### **Services/Programs:**

. Provides technical assistance and information to individuals, state government agencies and businesses and through Orientation to Hearing Loss seminars.

- . Provides interpreter information & testing program.
- . Maintains a hearing assisted technology (HAT) display for individual or group assistance.
- . Supports the Deafblind Interpreter Training Program and police training programs.
- . Hosts annual Silent Retreats to help people improve sign language skills.
- . Provides information related to laws protecting the communication rights of people with hearing loss.
- . Promotes equal and effective communication for people with hearing loss.

**Publications:**

- . The DODHH Bulletin
- . TTY and Interpreter Directory
- . ADA, visor and police cards.

## **Michigan Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MADHH)**

2929 Covington Court  
 Lansing, MI 48912  
 800-YOUR-EAR T/V (Toll free)  
 517 -487 -0066 V  
 517-487-0202 T  
 517-487-2586 Fax  
 yourear@msu.edu  
<http://www.madhh.org>

**Mission: Michigan Association for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MADHH) is a statewide United Way agency dedicated to improving the quality of life for deaf hard of hearing and speech impaired individuals.**

MADHH is governed by a 21 member volunteer Board of Directors. **Services/Programs:**

- . Affects public policy for legislative action.
- . Supports citizen rights.
- . Promotes communication access.
- . Provides interpreter services.
- . Coordinates the statewide Michigan Coalition for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People.
- . Provides education to Michigan's residents about deafness and hearing conservation.
- . Directs Newborn Hearing Screening in Michigan.
- . Provides a TTY Distribution Program.
- . Administers an equipment loaner program.
- . Collaborates with the Lions of Michigan and local Lions Club to provide a hearing aid distribution program.

**Publications:**

- . The Communique - published quarterly
- . Numerous Brochures & Fact Sheets - see website for complete listing or contact MADHH

### **Deaf, Hearing & Sign Language Center (DHSC)**

19185 Wyoming  
 Detroit, Michigan 48221-3298  
 (313) 341-1353 Voice  
 (313) 861-4669 TTY  
 (313) 341-4091 Fax  
 E-Mail: info@dhsc.net

Website: <http://www.dhsc.org/compinfo.htm>

**Mission: The Deaf, Hearing & Sign Language Center is committed to enhancing the communication opportunities between the deaf, hard of hearing, and the hearing world through audiology and interpreting services, education, and advocacy. In order to accomplish this, the DHSC team of professionals provides the most appropriate services for each individual client in the Tri-County area.**

DHSC is governed by an 18 member volunteer Board of Directors.

**Services/Programs:**

- . Provides comprehensive audiology services including hearing aid checks.
- . Provides sign language interpreting services.
- . conducts hearing screenings and follow-up counseling.
- .. Offers community education presentations and in-service training. Has a demonstration center for Assistive listening/signaling devices - DHSC is a licensed distributor of Hearing Aids and Assistive Listening Devices.
- . Provides informational series and support groups for individuals with hearing loss, their families and/or caregivers.
- . Offers classes in basic sign language skills

**Publications:**

- . DHSC News

DEAF C.A.N.! may be the only local service deaf/hard of hearing service provider in the country with a Hard of Hearing Specialist staff position.

**DEAF Community Advocacy Network - DEAF C.A.N.!**

2111 Orchard Lake Road #101

Sylvan Lake, MI 48320

(248) 332-3323 TTY

(248) 332-3331 Voice

(248) 332-7334 Fax

deafcan@prodigy

<http://deafcan.org>

**Mission: To provide services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities by identifying and responding to unmet needs. Deaf Community Advocacy Network will respond by facilitating access by Deaf and Hard of Hearing people through existing programs, and by developing necessary services that are not currently available in the community. The agency will also provide education about hearing impairments to the community.**

**Services/Programs:**

- . Information and referral, sensitivity training, advocacy and information on assistive listening devices for people who are Hard of Hearing.
- . Direct services - completing forms, preparing budgets and obtaining low-income housing.
- . Interpreter referral for courtrooms, schools, on-the-job, training seminars, doctors' offices and hospitals.
- . Information and referral to accessible programs- summer camps for Deaf children, Sign Language classes, Deaf Club events and other activities.

- . Deaf youth leadership training program.
- . Sign language classes.
- . Sensitivity training for law enforcement officers
- . Pathways to parenting provides opportunities for Deaf parents with hearing children to support, teach, and learn from each other in a group setting.
- . AIDS program for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals with HN or AIDS.

As its name implies, Deaf Community Advocacy Network has a very strong advocacy focus. On its web site you will find information related to the following topics

- . Communication accessibility.
- . Informed consent.
- . Deaf and Hard of Hearing peoples' rights in various settings.
- . Laws related to equal access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.
- . Information on how to file a complaint for discrimination.
- . Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students
- . Post secondary (college) education for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students.
- . How to communicate with a Deaf employee.
- . Ten steps to being an effective advocate.
- . Using interpreters in medical settings.
- . Forms that address informed consent request for accommodations and request for interpreters.

Are you looking for information regarding your legal rights? If you have access to the Internet we encourage you to spend time visiting the DEAF C.A.N.! web site. A link found on the site will take you to the National Association of the Deaf Law Center where you will find information about the legal rights of people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. You will find information regarding visual announcements of Emergency Information by television broadcasters, as well as information regarding housing, education, health care and job discrimination. The American with Disabilities Acts as it applies to state and local government and businesses is also covered.

In 2000 DEAF C.A.N.! played a vital role in a statewide initiative to improve communication between law enforcement officers and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communities. A major outcome of the project was a videotape to train officers how to communicate with someone who has a hearing loss. Visor cards for indicating to officers that the driver cannot hear were also developed. Highlights of this program can also be found on the DEAF C.A.N.! website.

Need information about a specific law? If you are looking for a specific law that affects you, the DEAF C.A.N.! web site is a good place to begin. Clicking on "Laws Related to Equal Access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People," you will find the following:

#### Federal Laws

American with Disabilities Act - ADA  
 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - IDEA

#### State Laws

PA 204 - Deaf Persons Interpreter Act  
 PA 220 - Person with Disabilities Civil Rights Act  
 PA 110, 111, 112 - Hearing Dog Legislation  
 Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education - MARSE  
 A Guide to Disability Rights Laws

Prepared by the U.S. Department of Justice Americans with Disabilities Act  
 Telecommunications Act Fair Housing Act

Air Carrier Access Act  
Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act  
National Voter Registration Act  
Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act  
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act  
Rehabilitation Act  
Architectural Barriers Act