



NC Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The DeafBlind Community is Thriving!

June is DeafBlind Awareness Month

**Theme: The Pursuit of Change Leads to Great
Capacity for Innovation**

June 2023

DeafBlind Tidbits

- “DeafBlind” is used to describe people with various degrees and types of BOTH losses, hearing and vision.
- People can become DeafBlind at any age. Causes can include illness, injury and/or genetics.
- DeafBlind people can and do lead productive lives, especially when they have access and can make informed choices.
- DeafBlind individuals use a variety of communication methods, depending on the age of onset, the degree and type of hearing and vision loss and the communication environment they are in.
- According to the 2019 statistics from the Helen Keller National Center, approximately 84,000 people in North Carolina are DeafBlind.

Innovative and Thriving, how?

- **Development of a new language, Protactile, based on a unique DeafBlind culture and the use of touch to convey descriptions, orientation and emotions.**
- **Establishment of Co-navigation, the act of doing and experiencing places, things and activities together, as a new approach to visual and environmental access.**

Communication Tips

- Always identify yourself before speaking
- Tap their upper arm to get their attention
- Recognize each DeafBlind person is unique and ask for their preferred way of communicating.
- Provide a qualified sign language interpreter upon request.
- Adjust lighting or seating arrangements upon request.
- Inform of changes in environment such as furniture placement, closures, obstacles, and possible hazards.
- Ensure written materials are available in accessible formats.
- Include text descriptions and audio/visual transcripts for photos and videos.
- Stay informed about events, training opportunities and resources by contacting your local DSDHH Regional Center to subscribe to their newsletter and monthly event calendars.
[NC DSDHH regional center](#)

Support Services in NC

- DHHS Driver/Support Service Provider (SSP) Vendor List (DSSPVL)
 - For DHHS DeafBlind Employees and Consumers
 - Driver/SSPs are paid to provide visual and environmental access for DeafBlind individuals.
- Medicaid Communication Access and SSP Service
 - www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh/medicaid

Medicaid Communication Access Services



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Division of Health Benefits (NC Medicaid)

DeafBlind Services in NC

- DSDHH [NC DSDHH regional center](#)
 - 2 DeafBlind Services Specialists
 - Peer support and Self-Advocacy Training
 - National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP/iCC) www.iCanConnect.org
- Division of Services for the Blind (DSB)
 - Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Services <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/dsb>
- NC Deaf-Blind Project
<https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/disability-resources/deaf-blind>
 - Support for children, families and schools
 - ECU Teacher Support Program
 - Exceptional Children Assistance Center (ECAC)

Contact us

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