



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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