Effective Communication: Serving Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind Clients
Statewide DSS Directors Conference Call
April 1, 2014
Dear County Director Letter

• SUBJECT: Interpreter Services for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind
• DATE: March 13, 2014
• Co-signed by DSS Director Wayne Black and DSDHH Director Jan Withers
• Your customers are our customers, too
Hearing Loss: Prevalence and Growth

• In 2010, 16.2% (1,182,610) adults in North Carolina had a hearing loss.
• By 2030, the number of adults in North Carolina with a hearing loss will increase by 41% - to 1,669,518.
• Hearing loss is the 3rd most prevalent, but treatable, disabling condition among seniors following arthritis and high blood pressure.
Why Does It Matter?

- Approximately 40% of deaf adults are unemployed and 90% are underemployed.

- Approximately one third of all deaf adults rely on some form of governmental assistance.
Why Does It Matter?

• Ramifications of adult-onset hearing loss:
  – Depression, Anxiety, Withdrawal/Isolation, Impaired memory, Paranoia, Reduced coping skills, Diminished earning power

• The average person with adult-onset hearing loss waits 7 to 15 years before seeking services for hearing loss.
So, How Do We Meet Their Needs?

• 73 staff serving all 100 counties

• In addition to Direct Client Services:
  – CAPACITY-BUILDING: Training, Consultation, Technical Assistance
  – For public and private agencies
Capacity-Building

• A key service provided by DSDHH

• State level (Central Office Staff)
  – Dear County Director Letter
  – Social Services Institute

• Local level (7 Regional Centers)
  – Training to County DSS
  – Consultation on Individual Cases
DSDHH has 7 Regional Centers

- **Morganton**: 13 Counties
- **Greensboro**: 10 Counties
- **Wilson**: 24 Counties
- **Asheville**: 14 Counties
- **Charlotte**: 10 Counties
- **Raleigh**: 17 Counties
- **Wilmington**: 12 Counties

All 100 North Carolina counties are served
Regional Center Support

• Staff Training
  – Hearing Loss (in general)
  – Cultural Sensitivity

• Consultation
  – Technology / Equipment loans
  – Accommodations Needed for Effective Service Delivery.
Effectively Serving Deaf DSS Clients

• Our customers are your customers, too.
• Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires state government entities to provide accommodations for equal access.
• Providing accommodations is win-win.
Sign Language Interpreters

• Interpreters are professionals
  – Specialized education; degrees
  – State and national credentials
  – NC state license
  – Code of Ethics

• Qualified Interpreter

• Approx. 460 licensed sign language interpreters in NC
Effectively Serving Deaf DSS Clients

• Share the DCDL with your staff
• Share DSDHH resources with your staff
• Key Resources for DSS Staff regarding sign language interpreting services:
  – Carlotta Dixon (DSS Title VI-Civil Rights Coordinator)
  – Jennifer Johnson (DSDHH Communication Access Manager)
Communication, the human connection, is the key to personal and career success.

– Paul J. Meyer
DSDHH CONTACTS

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