

New Mexico Commission for Deaf & Hard of Hearing



Quarterly Report FY24 Quarter 2



FY24 Quarter 2 Board Report

Table of Contents

Agenda	3
Minutes 12/14/2023	4
Executive Summary.....	11
Accessibility Improvements at the State Capitol	17
Community Advocacy	19
NMCDHH Activities During Q2 FY24.....	27
Outreach & Telecommunications.....	30
Las Cruces Satellite Office	35
Community Engagement	38
Administration & Finance.....	46
Data & Statistics	47
DVR Report.....	50
RLD Report.....	53



NMCDHH BOARD MEETING

Thursday, March 7, 2024

3:00 PM

The meeting will be held remotely via Zoom and the public can view the meeting livestream on YouTube with interpreters and captioning at this link:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpVQQsdO7ml

FINAL AGENDA

Posted: 2/29/2024

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
- II. Action Items:
 - A. Approval of Agenda
 - B. Approval of Minutes- December 14, 2023
 - C. Adoption of Revised OMA Resolution for 2024
- III. Reports
 - a. Executive Director Report
 - b. Department Reports
 - Community Advocacy
 - Community Engagement
 - Administrative Services
 - c. Report from Nathan Gomme and Sean Sinderholm regarding Communication Facilitator position.
- IV. Adjournment



**STATE OF NEW MEXICO
COMMISSION FOR DEAF & HARD OF HEARING**

*Quarterly Board Meeting
Thursday, December 14, 2023
3:00pm*

*The meeting was held remotely via Zoom and the public could view the meeting
livestream on YouTube with interpreting and captioning at*

www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXvDvcbFRNM

***DRAFT – These minutes will be subject to possible revision and approval by the
commissioners at the next Board meeting on March 7, 2024***

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair John Hooper called the meeting to order at 3:01pm. Trevor Brennan, Community Engagement Specialist, called roll call.

Present: Mr. John Hooper
Dr. Jennifer Herbold
Dr. Meena Mann
Ms. Casey Stone-Romero

Absent:

Quorum was met.

Seven staff members from NMCDHH were present via Zoom: Executive Director Nathan Gomme, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Deborah Romero, Director of Community Advocacy Corina Gutiérrez, Director of Community Engagement Lisa Dignan, Community Engagement Specialist Jessica Eubank, Community Advocacy Specialist Susana Santillan, and Trevor Brennan. Jessica Eubank interpreted the meeting along with Rhonda Hall, ChandraDevi Anania, and Amy Bourque. Partners Interpreting LLC. provided CART transcription. Assistant Attorney General Delilah Tenorio, and Auditor Thad Porch were also present.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Hooper noted that the Agenda needed a motion to amend the agenda to include setting the dates for the calendar year 2024 NMCDHH Board Meetings. Ms. Tenorio and Ms. Herbold discussed with Commissioners the need to amend Agenda Item III: Discussion on Development of Annual Review Process for the Executive Director. The amended Agenda Item was to read Discussion and Approval of the Draft for the Annual Review Process and Goals for the Executive Director. The Amended Agenda will be posted on the Commission Website.

24.1

Commissioner Herbold made a motion to approve the agenda as amended.
Commissioner Mann seconded.
Mr. Brennan took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes	Commissioner Herbold – Yes
Commissioner Mann – Yes	Commissioner Stone-Romero – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 14, 2023 MINUTES

Chair Hooper asked if there were any changes to the minutes from September 14, 2023.

24.2

Commissioner Herbold made a motion to approve the minutes as written.
Commissioner Mann seconded.
Mr. Brennan took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes	Commissioner Herbold – Yes
Commissioner Mann – Yes	Commissioner Stone-Romero – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

IV. DISCUSSION OF RETURN TO IN-PERSON MEETINGS

Assistant Attorney General Tenorio and Executive Director Gomme led the commissioners in a discussion regarding returning to in-person Board meetings. This item was tabled for further discussion at the September 14, 2023 board meeting. Ms. Tenorio shared that most boards and commissions are continuing to meet in a virtual or hybrid format at this time, which is acceptable as long as the format continues to provide access to the public, such as through the Commission’s YouTube live stream, and that all Commissioners can be clearly heard through all media formats without interruption.

Executive Director Gomme shared that the Commission is in a better position to attempt a hybrid meeting with an in-person component, and has done research and communicated with other boards and commissions regarding their experiences. Other boards and commissions confirm that there are technological and accessibility challenges in hosting hybrid in-person meetings, some issues that are not present in virtual only meetings. A virtual component also allows for participation from members of the board when they are sick. Members of the community have reported that they do watch the Commission live stream as it occurs. Challenges also remain with interpreter availability to support in-person meetings on an ongoing basis.

After discussion, Commissioners agreed to continue with virtual meetings, with at least one in-person hybrid meeting per year, perhaps during the annual 4th quarter meeting, to allow for increased community interaction.

24.3

Commissioner Herbold made a motion that the Commission continue to meet virtually on-going, with an in-person hybrid meeting to be held during the Commission FY24 4th Quarter Board Meeting in June 2024.

Commissioner Mann seconded.

Mr. Brennan took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Mann – Yes

Commissioner Stone-Romero – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

V. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT FOR THE ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS AND GOALS FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Assistant Attorney General Tenorio and Commissioners discussed that members of the board and the Executive Director had met and created a draft for the Executive Director Performance Review Procedures, which was then shared with the board and on the live stream. This review process will include goals for the Executive Director, an evaluation committee that will include board commissioners, staff members, and the Director of Human Resources, as well as input from the community via an anonymous survey. During the 4th Quarter meeting, the board will enter a closed executive session to discuss the performance review with the Executive Director, and then return to open session to vote on whether to approve the performance review.

Executive Director Gomme shared his goals for Fiscal Year 2024 which include: discussion and development of a communication facilitator position for the Support Service Provider (SSP) Program to be

added to the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the SSP program with additional service requirements under consideration which includes the second goal of addressing concerns of the Senior Citizen Community which would take a look at options being considered in Arizona following discussions on the Older Americans Act reauthorization plans, and the third goal of increased Commission involvement with the hearing loss community.

24.4

Commissioner Herbold made a motion to approve the annual review process for the Executive Director, and the goals set forth for FY24.

Commissioner Mann seconded.

Mr. Brennan took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Mann – Yes

Commissioner Stone-Romero – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF COMMISSISON MEETING DATES FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2024.

Commissioners held a brief discussion regarding the Board meeting dates for calendar year 2024. After discussion, the following dates were selected: March 7, June 6, September 5, and December 5, 2023.

24.5

Commissioner Stone Romero made a motion approve the meeting dates as discussed.

Commissioner Herbold seconded.

Mr. Brennan took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Mann – Yes

Commissioner Stone-Romero – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

Assistant Attorney General Tenorio left the meeting at 4:01.

VII. REPORTS

a. Auditor's Report

Thad Porch presented the annual auditor's report. There were no material errors. NMCDHH was given an unmodified opinion, which is the best opinion possible.

Chair Hooper thanked Mr. Porch for his report and commended Ms. Romero for another great audit.

b. Executive Director Report

Executive Director Gomme discussed Vancro's performance as the SSP vendor, and the upcoming RFP for the SSP service for a period of at least five years. Vancro has opened an office inside the PAH Hiland Apartment Complex, has been able to increase the pool of available SSPs, and are currently looking to hire more. There has also been an increase in demand for services. The Commission is evaluating the anticipated cost for services and needs for funding in future fiscal years.

During the legislative session, there are no anticipated changes to revenue collection. The captioning bill that Commissioner Hooper and Executive Director Gomme have been working on is on the agenda for the upcoming session. The Legislative Building in Santa Fe (known as the Roundhouse) has added large screens to several meeting rooms. These allow for virtual interpreters to be seen by all members of the room, with captions, and have implemented a looped FM system. This increased access is a result of the work of a coalition of several state agencies including the Commission.

The Commission has filled three of five vacant positions in the agency, and another position will be filled in January. Mr. Brennan has been promoted within the agency, creating a vacancy for the front desk position, which the Commission hopes to hire for in the third quarter.

Executive Director Gomme has attended 10 community events in FY24, and is already scheduled to attend several more in the third quarter.

c. Department Reports Q & A

Community Advocacy

Ms. Gutiérrez shared that Jason Siergey, Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) Specialist, had resigned from the agency. Sean Sinderholm has been hired as the Technology Coordinator for the agency, and will oversee TEDP. An additional Community Advocacy Specialist will begin working in the Las Cruces office in January 2024.

Ms. Gutiérrez briefly discussed the Commission's involvement with Presbyterian Healthcare and plans to host an event in Santa Fe. More information about this systemic work can be found in the FY24 Q2 Board Report.

Community Engagement

Ms. Dignan discussed the transition of Mr. Brennan into the Community Engagement Specialist position in her department. Ms. Dignan also discussed the ongoing interpreter shortage throughout the state of New Mexico and on a national level which continues to have a significant impact on the ability to fill assignments. Due to this shortage Ms. Eubank has had to interpret many assignments alone that would normally be done as part of a team, and Ms. Dignan has also had to do an increased amount of interpreting work.

Ms. Dignan thanked the members of the Commission staff who had been involved with the hiring process to fill the vacant positions within the agency.

Administrative Services

Ms. Romero shared that the Commission has expended 26% of the annual budget as of December 2023, which is as projected. There continues to be a decline in revenue collection. This fiscal year the Commission did receive additional general funds that helped the Commission to fill its vacant positions. The Administrative Services Department was able to hire Ms. Dinise Rodriguez for the Financial Services Specialist position and Ms. Vairea Rice for the Business Operations Specialist Position. Both Ms. Rodriguez and Ms. Rice have brought wonderful ideas and enthusiasm to their work with the Commission.

Ms. Romero thanked Mr. Brennan for his service to her department and his commitment to the Commission. Mr. Brennan commented that it was an honor to work under Ms. Romero.

d. Report from Susana Santillan, Community Advocacy Specialist

Ms. Santillan discussed her work in southern New Mexico, which includes: advocacy for members of the hearing loss community at a systemic and individual level, assisting community members with TEDP applications, attending community meetings, hosting booths at local events, and serving on local committees that provide services to the community. Ms. Santillan also assists all Spanish language members of the community who contact the Commission across the entire state.

Ms. Gutiérrez and Executive Director Gomme both commended Ms. Santillan on her dedication and work in southern New Mexico and with the Spanish language community.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

24.6

Commissioner Mann made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Herbold seconded.

Mr. Brennan took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Mann – Yes

Commissioner Stone-Romero – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:31pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Trevor M. Brennan

Trevor Brennan

Community Engagement Specialist

Executive Summary

G. Nathan Gomme, Executive Director

Commissioners and Community Members:

I am pleased to present the Fiscal Year 24 second quarter report for the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing. In my report, and throughout the report, you will read about the various events attended and hosted by the Commission as well as our Support Service Provider (SSP) vendor Vancro. You will also read about the individual work being done by the team here at the Commission and learn about some of our new additions to the team. We are excited to be almost completely staffed as we go into the 3rd Quarter, and we anticipate filling a few more positions by the end of the 3rd Quarter. I will also be detailing some of the expectations we are seeing going into the legislative session this year, and some of the continued work being done at the Roundhouse. I will also touch on some of the plans we have regarding communication facilitator services as well as some of the research that we have been able to find across the nation with regards to the service.

First, as I mentioned in my report during the last board meeting, I have been attending many events throughout most of the second quarter. I Attended the New Mexico Association for the Deaf (NMAD) Meeting in Los Lunas, the first PAH Hiland event, a meeting with the Deaf Senior community, a Deaf Cultural Center (DCC) meeting where the plans for the office space for Vancro were discussed, two Town Hall events hosted by Vancro at PAH Hiland, and the first legislative budget hearing, all in October. During the month of November, I attended the Presbyterian Rust Hospital Town Hall where I met with some of the leadership at the Hospital, the PAH Ribbon Cutting Event, a DeafBlind Awareness event at PAH, and made a few trips to the Roundhouse. Finally, in early December I attended a large meeting to discuss accessibility at the Roundhouse and prepared for the start of the Legislative session in January. The meeting at the Roundhouse included several senior members of the Legislative staff team to discuss all of the updates at the Roundhouse that had been implemented to address accessibility issues, and also to go over some of the details about what was still

coming, to continue enhancing access for our community. This meeting also included a representative from the Disability Rights of New Mexico (DRNM) team, Robin Garrison. DRNM later posted a story touting the work done which you can see below.

All of the events at PAH were fantastic chances to talk about the needs of the community and also see some of the wonderful work done to create this facility. Part of our commitment to the community is recognizing from the outside, that a great number of individuals residing at PAH can benefit from the SSP services, and working towards Vancro having a space there to better serve the community. To this end Vancro has been an incredible partner in also seeing the need for, and benefits of being at PAH, and I was happy to be able to mention that to the attendees of the ribbon cutting event during my short time speaking. During the Vancro Town Halls that were attended by both Vancro's team with their new Case Manager, and members of the Commission, we heard directly from the community as to what their needs are moving forward. Hearing from the community was also a significant reason I attended the Senior Meeting as we start to look towards what needs to be added to the upcoming Request for Proposal (RFP) for SSP services with the intent of that RFP lasting for an extended period. I am also proud of the team here at the Commission in their work with the team from Presbyterian Hospital. The events not only have brought members of the community to the table, but Presbyterian has also brought their leadership directly to the table to hear the stories being told. Stories that provide some insight into the barriers, for example at times with Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) and access across the spectrum.

We met with our legislative analysts during the second quarter and explained the need for continued funding despite some of the concerns with the FY23 budget not being fully expended, due to reduced spending by the contractors and some turbulence, after the pandemic subsided with the relay numbers which we all saw. I explained that regardless of what the relay minutes are, we have an expectation to fully fund it due to federal law and unfortunately do not have any real say in the usage of the service. With regards to the other main contract with the SSP services I explained that my expectation was that the entirety of the funds would be used this year by the new vendor. This resulted in two very different proposals for our budget by the executive and legislative analyst. The executive was exactly as we had requested, and we had no clarity issues with our

explanations. On the legislative side we had some questions about some of the numbers that they provided and will be addressing this matter throughout the session. I was able to explain our position during the first budget hearing and also had some short meetings to discuss the prospect of a surcharge bill being brought to the floor. Overall, there is a consensus that the surcharge matter needs to be rectified by the analysts and the hearing committee I met with, but no bill that I saw was presented. I mentioned in the last report that another state agency may be dealing with a similar issue regarding funding, and I was introduced to a representative from the Human Services Division (HSD) who oversees the 988 services, and I will be meeting with him to go over a possible proposal for both of our programs in the next session, since we both are seeing the same surcharge barriers. We anticipate the agency will get the funding requested, but I do not expect the necessary change to our language regarding the surcharge will occur during this legislative session. Chief Financial Officer Ms. Deborah Romero and I will also be arranging a meeting with our legislative analyst to work through some of the questions after the session.

House Bill 89, which represents the second attempt at the closed caption bill, was presented for consideration during this session. As I mentioned, some of the fine points had been changed to hopefully expedite the bill through the session for approval. I mentioned that if there were any updates, we would share them. However there has been no progress on the bill in being heard for the session. I will be working with Mr. Hooper and anyone I need to in the hopes of getting this bill heard. As of the time of writing this report, the bill has not been heard and it will likely not be. I did not see many other bills this year nor did I hear of any being proposed related to our community until I heard about a bill related to Deaf education. My understanding is there were some questions related to the bill and it will likely not proceed through the session.

We had another addition to our team, Mx. Jennifer Dahlgren, who fills our vacant position in the Las Cruces office, and will be working alongside Ms. Susana Santillan. Mx. Dahlgren brings with them a wealth of experience, having worked with us years ago. From my experience with Mx. Dahlgren and what I have been told by their supervisor, Ms. Corina Gutiérrez, they are eager and ready to work on a variety of issues in Southern New Mexico. We are thrilled to fill that position in Las Cruces and fill

a much-needed gap. We are still working to fill the front desk position that became vacant with Mr. Trevor Brennan's move to a different department and position. Mr. Sean Sinderholm who joined us in the second quarter, has already been a welcome addition to the team and began taking over several portions of the equipment distribution program and is working to get his necessary certification for further projects which will begin early in the 3rd quarter. His enthusiasm and experience have been a welcome addition as he has already begun plans for working with the community and has worked to reach out to our community waiting for equipment. We are already on pace to exceed our numbers with the equipment program. Both of these additions over the last few months get us one step closer to the plan of a fully staffed agency.

Vancro has done a wonderful job now that the transition is complete. All of my discussions with the community and staff that moved from COPD-NM to Vancro have been largely positive. As I mentioned, they quickly hired a Case Manager/Program Manager and are already adding an assistant to the team to support the Case Manager/Program Manager. Vancro has also increased the number of SSPs available for services, and the last report I read shows that the number of SSPs has increased significantly from the previous year. Discussions with the community included a desire to see a program to support the development of Care Givers, Vancro has already proposed a plan, which the Commission has approved, that will train Care Givers by the 4th quarter. The training is self-paced with a completion deadline in May. Vancro has already been working to develop training for the community and we have had several meetings with Vice President Cory Brunner and the team at Vancro to discuss ideas including the Communication Facilitator program. Ms. Gutiérrez and Ms. Brunner initially were meeting weekly, however the need for such frequent meetings has lessened, as Vancro has demonstrated an ability to quickly address any concerns. Ms. Gutiérrez, her advocacy staff, and the Vancro team still meet often to address any program concerns as they occur.

The concept of a Communication Facilitator was first presented to me in a meeting with the National Association of State Relay Administrators (NASRA) two years ago. The goal being to allow a person who identifies as DeafBlind to make a person to person (P2P) call via Video Relay Services. While there are several ideas on how to make this

service available, which include braille refresh devices, this often requires the end user who is DeafBlind to utilize braille effectively and in a rapid manner, and also to use a 3rd party system to use traditional relay service call assistants to type what is being said, while at the same time allowing for a video relay call to work with American Sign Language (ASL) from the end user side. The system with a Communication Facilitator, typically identified as a CF, is different in several ways. The CF is a sighted person who may be Deaf who provides visual information to the person who is unable to see the video screen or receive visual ASL. A CF has to be able to communicate effectively by copying the other person who is signing and shown on the videophone screen while also providing visual information this might be through close proximity for the information to be picked up or through tactile sign language. As I had mentioned previously this is in practice in Washington state, Maryland, and Oregon. Outside of not needing braille devices this service could potentially be used for other platforms. There are several questions that need to be addressed such as to what extent a CF can be provided, as some states provide 24/7 services. Additional questions include: To what extent would this be viewed as interpreting, and how to schedule such a service. In Oregon there is an additional consideration for individuals who have mobility disabilities in their arms or hands which affects expressive communication. The service in Oregon began in January of 2023 after discussions which started in 2017 and is tied to the telecommunications services provided by the state. Mr. Sinderholm and I have been going over some of the different aspects of the program and I have also made a request during the Legislative session for additional funding to assist in the development of this program. To begin, we need to develop the standards for such a service, the idea would be a service that we have to consider adding to the suite of services under the SSP program but perhaps in addition to the services they are already providing as to not adversely impact the current funding for the SSP services. That would suggest that the current SSP's would not necessarily provide this service without additional training and pay. There will need to be a review after this has been determined to see if it falls under licensure and what would need to be done. This potential service is a significant step towards improving the DeafBlind community's ability to have natural conversations that many of us take for granted and also takes a necessary step towards equity in the

telecommunication space. Mr. Sinderholm and I hope to discuss this further during the board meeting and hopefully provide some additional context to this goal.

We have made several strides this quarter towards our goals towards a full team, funding, and continuing to serve the community through various areas. We are looking forward to a new Vlog that will be published after the second quarter board meeting, where a mid-year update will be provided to the community. We are also planning an end of the year update for release later in the year. After some feedback this will likely assist in communicating with our community on what has been happening throughout the year and provide some insight into what is to come. As we move forward in the third and fourth quarter, an RFP will be released hopefully by the time the board meeting occurs or just after it happens. I will be attending the upcoming NMAD meeting in Las Cruces to listen to the ideas proposed for priorities at the upcoming NAD conference with Mr. Sinderholm and Mx. Dahlgren, and I look forward to working with the legislature throughout the year to continue discussions in the future on the language change.

Finally, Mr. Brennan and I have begun working on preparing for a hybrid board meeting, that will occur during the fourth quarter. In the third quarter, we will be testing equipment we added to our resources to ensure that we are able to address the various complexities that these meetings involve, to ensure that all technological, communication, and access needs are met. Mr. Brennan and I have been to a number of other hybrid meetings for various committees, boards, and organizations. These experiences have given us insight into the different challenges that can occur during these meetings, and the work that is needed to set them up in an efficient matter. At this time most of the experiences Mr. Brennan and I have experienced lean towards a more spoken language experience, even in the instances of having ASL in the mix. This has resulted in both Mr. Brennan and I having to work out positioning for both the loop system to work effectively and for the audio feed to be accessible enough to hear on the live feed.

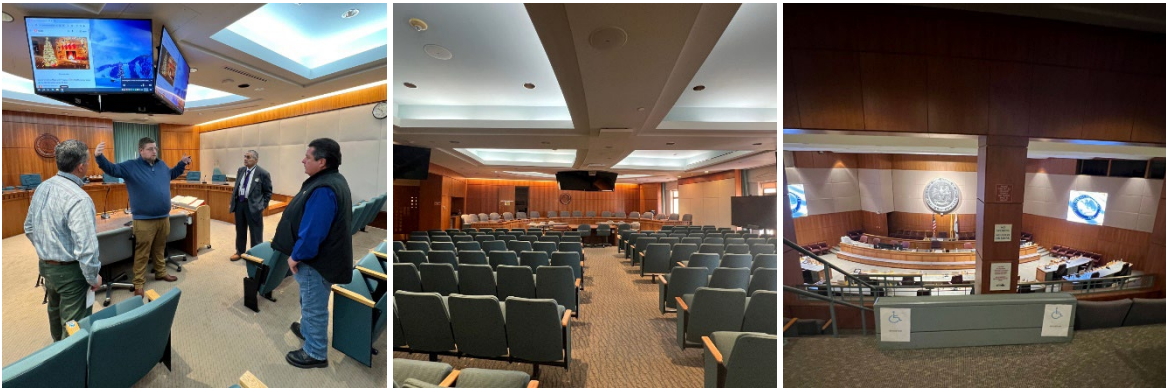
G. Nathan Gomme

Accessibility Improvements at the State Capitol

The following images and text were originally published on the Disability Rights New Mexico webpage in December of 2023.



Left to Right: Steve Trujillo, *Security Supervisor*, Raphael Baca, *Building Superintendent*, Robin Garrison, *Disability Rights New Mexico Advocate*, David Pacheco *Assistant Building Superintendent*, Nathan Gomme, *Director of the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing*.



Large screen monitors provide closed captioning and designated accessible seating.



Improved Audio Systems and Braille Signage.

Community Advocacy

Corina Gutiérrez, Director of Community Advocacy

Individual/System Advocacy & Public Policy

The Department of Community Advocacy continues to work with members of the Hearing Loss community, which includes individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, and Speech Disabled, to address communication barriers that they encounter in their daily lives. These communication barriers prevent access to services on both an individual and systemic level. This second quarter of FY24, we worked with a wide variety of organizations across the state educating both the organizations and individual members of our community regarding effective communication methods, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), working with sign language interpreters, and about other communication and technology issues that impact the Hearing Loss community. We are still remaining mindful of any potential high risk situations with COVID-19 and practice safety protocols when needed.

Director of Community Advocacy, Ms. Corina Gutiérrez, advocated for a Deaf individual and their spouse, who experienced difficulties obtaining services interpreter services at a healthcare provider. The individual was not provided with communication access via either an in-person interpreter, or Video Remote Interpreting (VRI). The individual and the staff attempted to utilize written notes to each other, but this was not an effective solution to the communication barrier. Ms. Gutiérrez worked with the Director of the Patient Advocacy department to address the communication needs of the individual and their spouse. These joint efforts ensured that the couple received the appropriate communication access, an in-person interpreter was provided until the person was discharged.

Ms. Gutiérrez, Mr. Roger Robb, and Mr. Gomme worked to plan a second Community Needs Assessments event with Ryan Baca, the Care Experience Executive Director and Director of Language Access of Presbyterian Hospital in

Albuquerque. Mr. Robb was a co-presenter with Ms. Baca during the second event, which took place on Saturday, November 4th at Presbyterian Rust Medical Center in Albuquerque. The event saw participation from our Deaf, DeafBlind, Deaf Plus and Hard of Hearing community members, along with some Presbyterian employees. Ms. Gutiérrez facilitated the event, allowing community members to share their stories and experiences regarding communication access at Presbyterian facilities, both positive and negative. These experiences occur across a wide variety of hearing loss levels, and communication methods. Presbyterian employees attentively listened, displayed an understanding that communicating with individuals with hearing loss does not have a “one size fits all” approach, and expressed a commitment to enhancing accessibility across the spectrum of communication access needs. One item of concern, and that Ms. Lisa Dignan has been mentioning frequently in her reports, is the severe shortage of sign language interpreters across the state, to cover the needs of our community with hearing loss, as Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) is not an effective communication method for many individuals. The event was successful, and we are planning to host a third Community Needs Assessments event at the Presbyterian Hospital in Santa Fe during third quarter of this fiscal year.

Ms. Gutiérrez remains actively engaged in monthly/quarterly meetings with the Interagency Transition Alliance (ITA), and the New Mexico DeafBlind Task Force. Her term with the University of New Mexico Hospital (UNMH) Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC). PFAC has concluded, and her last meeting with the committee occurred at the end of October.

As detailed in Mr. Gomme’s report, Ms. Gutiérrez and Mr. Gomme supported Vancro Integrated Interpreting Service (VIIS) in organizing a town hall meeting for Deaf Seniors and Deaf community members who have additional disabilities at the PAH community room on October 28th and 29th. During the event, community members had the opportunity to ask questions and gain a better understanding of Vancro’s initiatives for our community.

Ms. Gutiérrez and Mr. Gomme participated in DeafBlind Awareness Day on November 18th, where representatives from various agencies and organizations delivered brief presentations on the services available to the DeafBlind community.

Here are some of the accomplishments of Community Advocacy Specialists, Ms. Myra Sandoval and Mr. Dennis Stidham:

- Ms. Sandoval assisted a Hard of Hearing individual address their need for an ASL interpreter during an internship opportunity at a local non-profit organization. The organization did not have prior experience with working with individuals with hearing loss, but Ms. Sandoval was impressed by the organization's motivation and willingness to ensure proper communication access for the individual, resulting in a successful outcome.
- Ms. Sandoval collaborated with the Social Security Administration office to ensure consistency in providing an ASL interpreter for a Deaf individual after an initial appointment was scheduled without an interpreter. Working with other government entities on both a local and federal level is an important part of the ongoing advocacy work that the Commission performs.
- Ms. Sandoval worked with a medical insurance company to ensure that they provided an interpreter for a Deaf individual. Ms. Sandoval educated the company on the significance of getting an interpreter for effective communication. They successfully implemented VRI), which provided effective communication access for this individual and allowed them to obtain the services that they needed.
- Mr. Stidham advocated on behalf of a Deaf individual to ensure communication access during a job interview at a fast food place. The manager initially indicated a standard open interview policy without scheduled times. Mr. Stidham explained the need for accommodation and educated them about setting up a specific day and time for the interview. The fast-food place worked with an interpreter referral agency, successfully scheduling an interpreter for the individual's interview, resulting in a positive outcome.
- After the departure of Mr. Siergey, Mr. Stidham was largely in charge of processing Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP)

applications. Processing these applications consumed a large portion of Mr. Stidham's time, which as a result meant less time available for community booths. Mr. Stidham displayed great initiative in learning the ins and outs of the program before the departure of Mr. Siergey, and we are grateful for his work in bridging the gap between Mr. Siergey and Mr. Sinderholm.

- Ms. Sandoval became actively involved with the organization, Inhora, serving as an advisory board member. Inhora's mission is centered around assisting individuals and their families with end of life care. They aim to provide a home environment for these individuals and educate the community about the nature of dying, with a specific focus on those who are disabled, veterans, and the un-housed. In her role on the advisory board, Ms. Sandoval provides resources, tools, guidance, and education to help Inhora understand what appropriate communication access is for members of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing community. This organization is currently in the initial stages of establishing a pilot facility. Their long-term goal is to expand this service statewide, with multiple locations in different cities.

DeafBlind, Deaf Plus, and Deaf Senior Program

During the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2024, Vancro has continued to provide Support Service Provider (SSP) services to NM DeafBlind, Deaf Plus (Deaf/Hard of Hearing with a significant disability) and Deaf Senior community in the New Mexico.

Below are key metrics Vancro is tracking for this contract. One thing that has become apparent in our evaluation of the statistics provided by Vancro is that the office being located at PAH Hiland has allowed Vancro to better meet and work with the new community that is moving here. Another notable achievement is that our available SSP numbers have grown and look to continue to do so. Using these numbers for the second quarter, which are the first numbers shown by Vancro independently, will allow us to measure their success in expanding the program and services.

- Number of Support Service Providers: 20, an increase of 11 from Q1.
- Number of Program Participants: 77 (with 4 new applicants pending). This is an increase of 15 from Q1.
- Number of complaints addressed: 1
- Number of SSP hours: 128.00
- *New*- Number of SSP requests - 436
- Number of a large group SSP trainings offered: 2
- Number of 1:1 SSP trainings: 2

Vancro is in the process of interviewing for an Assistant Program Manager – Case Manager /SSP to support case management needs as the demand for case management continues to grow.

Community Events Vancro attended:

- October 10 – Presentation to UNM Interpreting Profession class about interpreting with DeafBlind consumers
- October 14 – Attended Zia DB picnic social, supported UNM practicum student.
- October 18 – PAH Grand Opening
- October 19 – Presentation at Deaf Seniors meeting
- October 20 – Presentation about SSP Program to CNM ASL students
- October 28 – Town Hall
- October 29 – Town Hall
- November 6 – Welcome event for DeafBlind Consumers from California
- November 8 – DeafBlind Youth Project Collaboration Meeting
- November 9 – Welcome event for DeafBlind Consumers from California
- November 18 – Zia DeafBlind Awareness Day
- November 28 – UNM Interpreting Profession class activity participation aimed at improving ethical skills of new interpreters working with DeafBlind consumers (called “Devil’s Advocate”)
- December 2 – Zia DeafBlind Club Holiday Gathering



Vancro SSP Training

Community Education

A total of 42 presentations were provided by Community Education Specialist, Mr. Robb and other staff members as well as staff at New Mexico Relay.

Lisa Dignan and Roger Robb co-provided the “Working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Clients” as a presentation for the Law Office of the Public Defenders staff. For more information, see the Community Engagement report.

Ms. Jessica Eubank provided 2 trainings/presentations to the NMCDHH Apprentices and Contract Interpreters through Zoom:

- Demand Control Schema Crash Course
- Think Aloud Protocols for Interpreting and Translation

In addition to his presentation with Ms. Dignan, Mr. Robb provided 35 other presentations/trainings during the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2024.

This is the breakdown of the 36 total presentations/trainings Mr. Robb provided:

- Introduction to ASL - 25
- Deaf Culture – 3
- Hearing Loss Sensitivity – General - 2
- Hearing Loss Sensitivity – Medical – 2
- NMCDHH Overview - 2

- Fingerspelling - 1
- Shadow Interpreting – 1

The entities that Mr. Robb provided the presentations/trainings to were:

- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- The Law Office of the Public Defender
- Presbyterian Healthcare System
- Signed Language Interpreting Program – UNM
- TriCore Laboratories
- US Citizenship & Immigration Services

The presentations/trainings continue to be a hybrid of both virtual and in-person sessions.

Tom Sena provided 2 presentations on CaptTel and Relay for Business to 50 individuals.

Executive Director Gomme did one presentation in the second quarter, at the request of the leadership at the PAH Hiland Ribbon cutting event, discussing the Commissions work with the DCC and various representatives in the development and fruition of the project. During this he also announced to the public that Vancro had agreed to open their office at PAH.

Systemic Advocacy

This is a summary of the Systemic Advocacy cases that Mr. Robb focused on for the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2024:

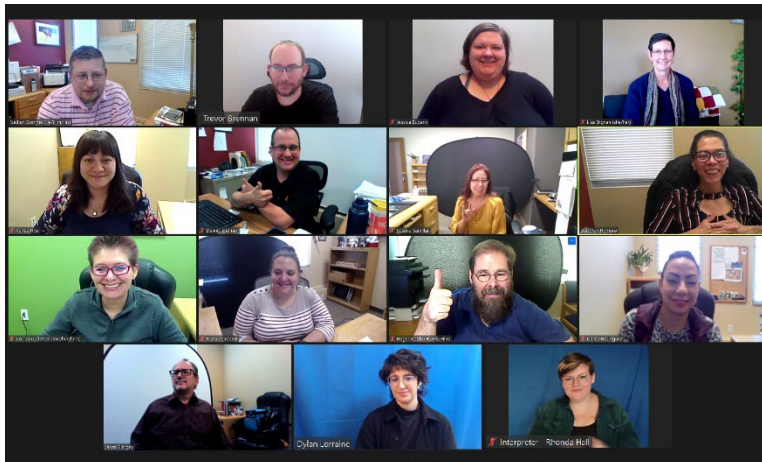
- Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC) – Mr. Robb continues to participate in their monthly meetings (in person and through Zoom).
- Presbyterian Healthcare System (PHS) – The Town Hall event occurred on November 4, 2023, at the Rust Medical Center in which several people from the community showed up and they were able to express/explain their positive/negative experiences so that some staff who were there were able to take notes to improve the services provided by PHS.

- United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) – Mr. Robb and Ms. Gutiérrez were able to meet with the USCIS team in New Mexico to discuss communication barriers, and possible solutions. Through this collaboration, Mr. Robb were able to provide the Hearing Loss Sensitivity training to the USCIS staff in person in the Albuquerque office, which was streamed online for other staff from other offices.

NMCDHH Activities During Q2 FY24



Ms. Dignan and Mr. Robb, co-provided the "Working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Clients" as a presentation for the Law Office of the Public Defenders staff. Staff interpreter Jessica Eubank and NMCDHH Apprentice Interpreter Alicia Trujillo interpreted the presentation.



NMCDHH Staff held a virtual staff meeting on 11/16/2024. During this meeting we welcomed Ms. Vairea Rice and Ms. Dinise Rodriguez to the organization, and said goodbye to Mr. Jason Siergey.



Pictures from the Presbyterian Community Listening Session on November 4, 2023.





Mr. Stidham and Ms. Santillan attended 22 booths during the second quarter.



Outreach & Telecommunications

Telecommunications Equipment Distribution (TED) Program

The Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) lends telecommunication devices at no cost to qualifying New Mexico residents who need assistance in communicating via telephone. Equipment includes amplified telephones, iPads, speech assistive devices, notification systems, loud ringers, and assistive listening with neckloops.

Equipment:

Mr. Jason Siergey resigned from NMCDHH during the second quarter. After his departure, Executive Director Gomme, Ms. Gutiérrez, Mr. Stidham, Mr. Brennan, and Ms. Sandoval all worked together to streamline the TEDP system to provide for an effective transition for the new Technology Coordinator, Mr. Sean Sinderholm, who will begin work with the agency in December 2023. Once the system was streamlined, Mr. Stidham and Mr. Brennan’s workloads continued to be heavily impacted, during the time between Mr. Siergey’s departure, and the onboarding of Mr. Sinderholm as they worked together to process and track incoming applications. Mr. Stidham went above and beyond in working with members of our community to address their equipment needs. Prior to Mr. Sinderholm beginning the transition of taking over TEDP, Ms. Gutiérrez and Mr. Gomme did one last review of the work. Mr. Sinderholm then began reviewing and addressing any issues or errors, often checking with Mr. Stidham and Brennan to ensure the transition was completed. We look forward to Mr. Sinderholm reporting in this section in the latter part of the year.

In the second quarter, TEDP distributed a total of 295 pieces of equipment. The equipment distributed is outlined in two tables below.

Phone	Total items distributed
Clarity Alto	0
Clarity Alto Plus	0
Clarity D714	0

Clarity JV35	0
Clarity XLC2+	0
Clarity XLC8	15
Clarity XLC8 with GLT	0
GLT	0
ClearSounds A1600BT	0
ClearSounds CSC600ER	0
Panasonic KX-TGM430B	0
Panasonic KX-TGM450S	0
Geemarc Ampli550	0
Geemarc AmpliPower60+	0
CapTel 840	0
iPad	
Deaf Package	16
Hard of Hearing Package	24
Deaf-Blind Package	0
Speech Package	0
iPad mini	
Deaf Package	0
Hard of Hearing Package	24
Deaf-Blind Package	0
Speech Package	0
iPhone	
Deaf Package	0
Hard of Hearing Package	0
DeafBlind Package	0
Speech Package	0
Total Phone/iPad Equipment Distributed Count:	79

Accessories	Total items distributed
Amplicom NL100 Neckloop	0
Bellman Mino with neckloop	0
Bellman High Powered Neckloop (no device)	0
BeHear SMARTO	77
Clarity SR100 Super Phone Ringer	0
Clarity HA40 In-line Telephone Amplifier	0
ClearSounds ANS3000 Answering Machine	5
ClearSounds CS-CR200 Phone Ringer	0
ClearSounds CS-WIL95 Amplifier	0
Geemarc LH10PK Neckloop	0
Geemarc V2T-10	0
GLT with V2T-10	16
Provox® SolaTone® Plus	0
Provox® TruTone® EMOTE®	0
Provox® TruTone® Plus	0
ROMET® R700 Electronic Larynx	0
Krown RA 05 Amplified Ringer with Strobe	0
Serene Innovations CentralAlert CA360QK	24
Serene Innovations CentralAlert CA380	16
Serene Innovations RF-200 Alerting System	0
Serene Innovations SA-40 Cell Phone Amplifier	0
Serene Innovations UA-45 Universal Phone Amplifier	0
Silent Call Medallion Kit	12
SonicAlert HA360MKBR-II	65
Surge Protector (Phones and accessories)	1

Total Accessories Equipment Distributed Count:	216
Total Overall Equipment Distributed Count:	295

Outreach

During the second quarter of FY24, Mr. Stidham and Mr. Sena from Relay New Mexico hosted one booth for two days at the Head-to-Toe Conference in Albuquerque. Mr. Stidham also provided four booths in Albuquerque, and Rio Rancho. The total number of individuals who visited our booths was 878.

Q2 Events	Location	Date	Visitors
City of Albuquerque Employee	Albuquerque	10/12/2023	308
V. Sue Cleveland High School	Rio Rancho	10/26/2023	164
Deaf Culture Center Open House	Albuquerque	11/11/2023	117
Head to Toe Conference	Albuquerque	11/14/2023	201
Head to Toe Conference	Albuquerque	11/15/2023	17
Roadrunner Foodbank	Albuquerque	12/12/2023	71
		Total:	878

Relay New Mexico (RNM)

Mr. Sena attended and hosted booths in 4 additional locations and attended several locations for field visits in Albuquerque, Sandia Park, and Rio Rancho. In all, he worked with 50 individuals across the state and provided 2 presentations on CaptTel and Relay for Business. He met with 360 unique attendees at events without Mr. Stidham. Mr.

Sena continues to plan additional events in various parts of the state.

Q2 Events	Location	Date	Visitors
Unity for Heroes Veterans &Community Resource Fair	Albuquerque	10/21/202 3	70
New Mexico Speech & Hearing Association Convention	Albuquerque	10/27- 28/2023	180
Bear Cayon Senior Center	Albuquerque	11/29/202 3	70
Bosque Farms Senior Center	Bosque Farms	11/30/202 3	40
		Total:	360

Las Cruces Satellite Office

Susana Santillan, Las Cruces Community Advocacy Specialist

Individual Advocacy and Service Coordination

Ms. Santillan assists our community members with hearing loss in Southern New Mexico by providing individual advocacy and service coordination to remove communication barriers.

Susana Santillan's Accomplishments

- Ms. Santillan advocated for a Deaf individual to receive an ASL interpreter for services, and classes at a local community college. Ms. Santillan worked together with the Student Accessibility Services Office to register the student to obtain the appropriate accommodation.
- Continues to collaborate with local employers to share their available job openings with her constituents who are seeking employment.
- Provided the NMCDHH Brochure, Presentation Request Form, Fact Sheets: How to Find a Signed Language Interpreter, and ASL Classes in New Mexico to the following agencies as requested:
 - LC3 Behavioral Health Collaborative
 - New Mexico Workforce Connection - SW Region
 - Southcentral School-to-Work Transition Team
 - Families & Youth Innovations (FYI)
 - Southcentral School-to-Work Transition Team
 - New Mexico Workforce Connection - SW Region
 - Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC) /Office of Emergency Management
 - Truman Health Services Roswell clinic
 - West School-to-Work Transition Team
 - Mobile Integrated Healthcare Las Cruces Fire Department
 - New Mexico State University
- Mrs. Santillan continues to serve on the following committees to provide guidance and resources regarding reasonable accommodations for the deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing New Mexico community:
 - Behavioral Health Local Collaborative 3 Member
 - Behavioral Health Local Collaborative Policy & Advocacy State Committee
 - City of Las Cruces Americans with Disabilities Act Advisory Council

- NM Workforce Connection Disabilities Committee
- NM Workforce Connection Monitoring/Performance Committee

Community Collaboration

This second quarter Ms. Santillan built several new relationships with local community partners to promote our agency's visibility in the community. While continuing several ongoing collaborations:

Mrs. Santillan promoted our visibility by Community Collaboration involvement with the following entities and many ongoing:

- Dona Ana Community College
- Families & Youth Innovations (FYI)
- LC3 Behavioral Health Collaborative
- Livingston Hearing Aid Center Ruidoso, NM
- Mobile Integrated Healthcare Las Cruces Fire Department
- New Mexico State University
- New Mexico Workforce Connection - SW Region
- PRIDE Industries
- Southcentral School-to-Work Transition Team
- Truman Health Services Roswell clinic
- West School-to-Work Transition Team

Ms. Santillan removed 624 communication barriers for our consumers in various settings this second quarter.

Booths and Presentations:

During this 2nd quarter, Ms. Santillan set up sixteen (16) booths and did not provide any presentations.

Booths

Q2 Events	Location	Date	Participants
Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church	Tortugas	11/13/23	39
Vado - Del Cerro Multipurpose Center	Mesquite	11/14/23	24
The Philanthropy/Community Resources Fair	Las Cruces	11/15/23	32
Calvary Baptist Church	Las Cruces	11/29/23	20
Salvation Army	Las Cruces	11/30/23	16
United University Methodist Church	Las Cruces	12/1/23	24
Immaculate Conception Catholic Church	Berino, NM	12/5/23	40
Casa De Peregrinos	Las Cruces	12/6/23	15
De La O Visitors Center	Doña Ana	12/7/23	20
Silver City Senior Center	Silver City	12/11/23	21
Radium Springs Community Center	Radium Springs	12/14/23	23
Our Lady of All Nations Catholic Church	Rincon	12/15/23	23
Organ Community Center	Organ	12/18/23	22
The Casa Del Rio Apartments Complex	T or C	12/20/23	16
San Isidro Catholic Church	Garfield	12/21/23	17
VA Clinic Resource Booth	Las Cruces	12/22/23	19
		Total	371

Community Engagement

Lisa Dignan, M.Ed., CI and CT, Director of Community Engagement

Director of Community Engagement Highlights

Ms. Dignan was involved in a broad range of tasks and projects in the second quarter of FY24.

- The Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board (SLIPB) continues to work with an interim Board Administrator, Pauline Varela. I continue to work closely with Ms. Varela and her outstanding team to keep things moving forward and to answer all of their questions.
- The new NM-PLUS online system for licensure applications and renewals is going well. When issues are discovered, I work with SLIPB staff to resolve them. There have been a few challenges, but we're getting through them with good communication and collaboration.
- We continue to identify and correct information missing from the License Verification database, but these issues are quickly resolved when communicated to the SLIPB staff.
- In the second quarter I fielded well over 100 questions about licensure from interpreters, hiring entities, and the SLIPB staff. Most frequently asked questions are about qualifications for different license types and the application process, so I continue to update our Fact Sheets on these topics. They prove to be very helpful. My goal is to answer these questions within a couple of hours of receiving them and at least during the same business day since most are time sensitive.
- We consciously decided to not run a Spring 2024 session of New Mexico Mentoring (NMM) and instead to focus on creating alternative mentoring experiences that fit learning styles different from the NMM model. The vision is to run alternate opportunities in the spring sessions and the traditional NMM model in fall sessions.
- I worked extensively throughout the quarter with the State Purchasing Department on the Invitation to Bid (ITB) to establish a new Statewide Price Agreement (SPA) for signed language interpreting services. The ITB was released in October and the new SPA will be released in January.
- An invitation to provide a presentation to the Law Office of the Public Defender (LOPD) was welcomed and I enjoyed collaborating with Roger Robb to revise and deliver a presentation about working with clients who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing that we've used several times. As always, LOPD staff were an attentive audience

and asked lots of excellent questions that will help them better serve their clients with hearing loss.

- The ongoing interpreter shortage has resulted in me being called into service to interpret for NMCDHH staff occasionally.
- I continue to serve on the New Mexico Council for Purchasing from Persons with Disabilities and attend their meetings monthly via Zoom.
- Webinars provided by the ADA National Network, The Solutions Group, the State Personnel Office, Zoom, and others have been beneficial to my work.
- I provided guidance to several entities on issues related to communication access including:
 - San Juan College
 - New Mexico Department of Health
 - Workforce Connections
 - Maxcare, Inc.
 - The Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board Administrator and Staff
 - Museum of International Folk Art
 - Counseling providers
 - Interpreter referral agencies and staffing agencies
 - Several other individuals and private businesses

Community Engagement Activities

- Mr. Brennan is slowly transitioning into his new role as the Community Engagement Specialist as he has been able to give up some of his duties related to his previous Administrative Operations Specialist position. We have worked closely to train Mr. Brennan in his new role and he is picking everything up very quickly. I am incredibly grateful to have him in our department.
- Mr. Brennan and the rest of the Commission staff are incredibly grateful to have the addition of Vairea Rice and Dinise Rodriguez to the Administrative Services Department, who have brought new energy and fresh perspective to the agency. Ms. Rice and Ms. Rodriguez were able to quickly learn and take over many of the duties that Mr. Brennan had been handling for an extended time period after the departure of other Administrative Services staff.
- Mr. Brennan also received several phone calls with questions regarding interpreter licensure. Through his own work with the Licensure Board, Mr. Brennan is able to answer some questions, and also refers individuals to the correct entities such as Ms. Dignan or SLIPB Staff as appropriate. As previously mentioned, since licensure questions are often time sensitive, Mr. Brennan and Ms. Dignan attempt to answer

questions from interpreters and from SLIPB staff within one-two hours of receiving them.

- Mr. Brennan spent a considerable amount of time working with the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) this quarter to prepare IT equipment for new employees and to address IT needs for the Commission. Each new staff member at the Commission requires an entire suite of dedicated equipment, that must be prepared in advance. This also requires coordination with Ms. Dignan, and the State Personnel Office (SPO). Mr. Gomme and Mr. Brennan met with the team from DoIT to develop a plan for Mr. Brennan to have elevated rights to address minor IT issues as they occur at the agency. Included in the plan was a monthly check-in that DoIT will be providing in coordination with our Staff Interpreter, Ms. Eubank and Mr. Brennan. By adding these elevated rights, and monthly times, the Commission is more efficiently able to address IT security needs as they occur, and also resolve communication barriers that have frequently occurred when working with DoIT in the past. Addressing these items requires many hours of work from both Mr. Gomme and Mr. Brennan on a monthly basis. Without a dedicated IT team, this should reduce the redundancies that our Mr. Gomme has to address as the CIO, and provide a more structured system for all IT needs in the office.
- Mr. Brennan also received several phone calls with questions regarding interpreter licensure. Through his own work with the Licensure Board, Mr. Brennan is able to answer some questions, and also refers individuals to the correct entities such as Ms. Dignan or SLIPB Staff as appropriate.
- We have several new ideas for additional Community Engagement activities that will increase the visibility of the agency in the community and among other state agencies.
- Our social media contacts grow each quarter. Currently we have 2432 connections across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, which is an increase of 40 over the last quarter, and we have 106 subscribers to our YouTube channel. We have 325 subscribers to the bi-weekly email newsletter, an increase of 6 from last quarter. Information shared includes meetings and events, open captioned movies in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces, webinars, job postings, and other information of interest to our constituents.
- Sharing booth events in advance continues. The events are listed on the NMCDHH website calendar (www.cdhh.nm.gov/events) and shared on social media and in the bi-weekly email newsletter. We appreciate all staff who go to booths for their assistance compiling the details for upcoming booths and providing photos to share on social media and in agency reports.

- We continue to respond to questions submitted via the “Ask the Expert” form on the website or directly to the NMCDHH.Info@cdhh.nm.gov email address which is monitored by Mr. Brennan and Ms. Dignan. Contacts in the second quarter included questions about hearing aids, interpreter licensure, affordable internet services, and assistive technology.
- Mr. Brennan assists many community members over the phone and via email. During the second quarter he addressed 222 communication barriers via phone or email. The most common request was for advocacy assistance. The remaining questions in order of frequency were information regarding how to find an interpreter, who pays for interpreting services, financial assistance for hearing aids, and requests for information about the TEDP program.
- Mr. Brennan was able to assist the SPO with addressing a request for ADA accommodations for one of their board meetings. Mr. Brennan connected the SPO with the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program (NMTAP), who were able to provide adaptive equipment for the meeting.
- Mr. Brennan attended a webinar hosted by the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) in collaboration with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regarding Over the Counter (OTC) Hearing Aids. This webinar is the first in a series that will be held in 2024 providing more information about OTC hearing aids. This information will help Mr. Brennan with the many phone calls he receives regarding financial assistance for hearing aids, and if OTC hearing aids are an appropriate fit for an individual. This is a complicated question, best answered after discussion with an audiologist or appropriate medical practitioner.
- More NMCDHH Fact Sheets were updated and uploaded to the website. This is an ongoing project with collaboration between several staff members.
- Ms. Dignan shared information with the interpreting community via her email distribution list, which continues to grow. Entities around New Mexico regularly request that information be shared. Messages regarding professional development opportunities, job postings, certification testing changes, licensure board and professional organization meetings, and other information relevant to interpreters were shared with an average of one email per week to well over 200 subscribers.
- Except for the website and our email accounts, all the platforms on which we engage the community are used at no cost to the agency.

Communication Development Specialist Highlights

Ms. Eubank continued to provide information about the field of interpreting on a local and national level, as well as enhancing her skills as an interpreter and interpreter mentor in the second quarter of FY 24. Her work includes the following:

- Ms. Eubank continued her service on the national board of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf as Region IV Representative. This position has allowed Ms. Eubank the opportunity to network with interpreters across several states and be involved in conversations and work to uplift the field of interpreting on a local and national level.
- Ms. Eubank is currently enrolled in a distance learning program in ASL and English Interpreting Pedagogy through the University of North Florida. This program focuses on developing the skills and techniques necessary to teach principles of interpreting to novice interpreters. This program has required a significant amount of time and effort, but Ms. Eubank has learned several new approaches to mentoring work that she is excited to use in enhancing our Apprentice Interpreter Program. More information on the work done toward this aim will be described in that section of the report.
- Ms. Eubank has continued her work in assisting our interpreting community in understanding the ongoing transition of the interpreter certification exams through the Center for Assessment of Sign Language Interpretation (CASLI). Ms. Eubank met with several interpreters who are preparing to take the Hearing Interpreter Performance Exam (HIPE) to discuss the testing procedures and ways to prepare for the exam.
- Ms. Eubank contributed to the revision and updates of several fact sheets on the NMCDHH website. These included RID Digital Credentials FAQs, Sharing Your Credly Digital Credentials, Registering for the EIPA Tests, and CASLI Exam FAQs.
- NMCDHH provided a total of 121.5 hours of interpreting services in the 2nd quarter.
- NMCDHH has continued to feel the effects of the severe shortage of interpreters in New Mexico. Ms. Eubank is working collaboratively with our staff members to find creative solutions to address the shortage in a sustainable way that will not impede the services provided to our consumers. Ms. Eubank continues to work alone on assignments that would best be served by a team of interpreters due to the lack of interpreter availability. This quarter saw 11 hours of interpreting service that Ms. Eubank worked alone when a team would have been assigned if available.
- Referral agencies were used twice this quarter.

- There was one unfilled interpreting request this quarter.

The Apprentice Interpreter Program

NMCDHH is thrilled with the continued progress of our two Apprentice Interpreters. Both provided excellent interpreting services to our agency and demonstrated continued commitment to their professional development. Program highlights for this quarter are as follows:

- Based on the training received through the Interpreting Pedagogy program, Ms. Eubank used this quarter to implement a new training series with apprentices that target specific interpreting skills. These skills include working collaboratively with a team, establishing independent contracts, providing feedback and strategies for debriefing, strategies for increasing conceptual accuracy in interpretation, and strategies for sight translation. Former apprentices who have successfully completed the Apprentice Interpreter Program were also invited to attend these meetings.
- Ms. Eubank has been working with experienced interpreters of our community to provide professional development opportunities to the apprentices that cover a wider range of the field of interpreting than Ms. Eubank alone can provide. This quarter apprentices were able to meet with the staff interpreters of Presbyterian Hospital to discuss best practices in medical interpreting settings. They also had guest training in Think Aloud Protocols led by a local interpreter mentor.
- Ms. Eubank met with Vancro's Vice President of Interpreting Services to discuss collaboration opportunities to increase the number of observation and professional development opportunities available to our apprentices. These opportunities will be available in the 3rd quarter and will allow our apprentices a broader level of exposure to linguistic and interpreting skills that we are looking forward to exploring.
- Apprentices engaged in 38.5 hours of observation, interpreting, and professional development work in the second quarter.

Human Resources

The second quarter kept Ms. Dignan busy with another flurry of HR activities:

- Our new Business Operations Specialist, Vairea Rice, was onboarded in October. Vairea is originally from Las Vegas, New Mexico and has been Hard of Hearing

since age 3. Ms. Rice brings a wealth of experience from the private sector to her position.

- Our new Financial Services Specialist, Dinise Rodriguez, was also onboarded in October. Dinise is from Albuquerque's South Valley and has over 25 years of experience working for the state and specifically in finance.
- The Administrative Operations Specialist position that covers the Front Desk was posted in October and interviews conducted in November. Unfortunately, none of the finalists were a good fit for the position so the posting was cancelled and the position will be re-posted in January.
- Interviews for the new Technology Coordinator position were conducted in November. The selected candidate, Mr. Sean Sinderholm, accepted the position and was onboarded in December.
- The second Community Advocacy Specialist position in Las Cruces was posted in October and interviews conducted in November. The selected candidate, Mx. Jennifer Dahlgren, accepted the position and will start in January.
- The resignation and exit process for Mr. Jason Siergey was completed in November.
- Interim evaluations for all staff were due in December and I worked with managers to meet deadlines.
- We were delighted that the Employee Benefit Bureau provided interpreters for Open Enrollment webinars this year without being asked. This speaks to the success of our past advocacy for access.
- A revised Governor's Code of Conduct was released. I distributed it to the staff and completed the process of gathering Acknowledgements from each of them.
- Further updates were made to the Employee Handbook and distributed to the staff.
- The agency Organizational Chart was updated to reflect current positions and employees.
- I worked with staff in December to encourage them to use Personal Leave Days and Annual Leave that would be lost if not used by the end of the year.
- The weekly "Employee Handbook Minute" emails to agency staff continue to provide reminders about HR Policies and Procedures to share updates. These are helpful for both new staff members.
- I continue to attend State Personnel Board Meetings and webinars offered by SPO, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), Department of Finance Administration (DFA) Payroll Bureau, and the Employee Benefit Bureau (EBB).

NMCDHH Library

- Library patrons may not enter the library to browse the collection, but individuals who contact us requesting to borrow materials may pick them up by appointment.
- The online library can be accessed at <https://NMCDHH.librarika.com>, where people can view all of our library materials, reserve items, and review their loan history.
- Currently 115 people have registered for access to the database, an increase of 1.

Library Usage - FY 2024					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Patrons	1	2			3
Items Loaned	2	3			5

Administration & Finance

Deborah Romero, Director of Administrative Services

FY24 – First Quarter Board Report						
Category		2024 Budget	Expenditures	Encumbered	Remaining Budget	% Expended
200	PERSONNEL SERVICES	1,613,400.00	534,578.85		1,078,821.15	33.13%
300	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	1,229,300.00	338,035.43	730,512.70	160,751.87	27.50%
400	OTHER	282,100.00	123,588.53	87,932.90	70,578.57	43.81%
500	OTHER FINANCING USES	116,500.00		116,500.00	0.00	0.00%
Total		3,241,300.00	996,202.81	934,945.60	1,310,151.59	30.73%

FY24 Collected Revenue December 31, 2023		
Month	General Fund Allotment	TRS Revenue
Subtotal	\$813,102.00	\$566,533.77

Data & Statistics

As required by Legislative Performance Measures

Fiscal Year 2024

Legislative Performance Measure	Target	Year to Date	YTD % of Goal Met
Number of workshops & training sessions conducted	135	63	47%
Number of outreach events coordinated	122	55	45%
Average number of relay minutes per month	10,000	4802.57	48%
Number of accessible technology distributions	1,070	855	80%
Number of communication barriers addressed	20,000	9696	48%
Number of interpreters in CDHH sponsored professional development	200	46	23%

Fiscal Year 2023

Legislative Performance Measure	Target	Year to Date	YTD % of Goal Met
Number of workshops & training sessions conducted	135	135	100%
Number of outreach events coordinated	122	161	132%
Average number of relay minutes per month	10,000	4,849.42	48%
Number of accessible technology distributions	1,070	1,342	125%
Number of communication barriers addressed	20,000	22,022	110%
Number of interpreters in CDHH sponsored professional development	200	212	106%

Community Members by Region



	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	Year to Date
Region 1	31	11			42
Region 2	19	9			28
Region 3	89	32			121
Region 4	13	3			16
Region 5	50	24			74
Total Members by Quarter	202	79			281

Individuals by Self-Identified Disability

	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	Year to Date
Deaf	85	20			105
Hard of Hearing	56	31			87
DeafBlind	7	3			10
Speech Disabled	1	0			1
Hearing	53	25			78
Total Individuals by Quarter	202	79			281



To: Nathan Gomme, Executive Director
New Mexico Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

From: Casey Stone-Romero, Director
New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Date: January 18, 2024

Re: MOU Goals and Performance Report for Second Quarter SFY2024 (**October 1-December 31, 2023**)

NMDVR Liaisons

New Mexico Association for the Deaf – Currently vacant.

NM Chapter – Hearing Loss Association of America – Christine Fuller
Supported Employment and Deaf & Hard of Hearing Coordinator.

NMDVR Service Provision:

Order of Selection (OOS): NMDVR is currently under active OOS. All categories are open, and all who are eligible are being served.

Information and Referral (I&R): I&R is a list of entities within the community where the applicant may be able to receive assistance.

Counseling and Guidance – Counseling and Guidance is available to all DVR-eligible individuals receiving services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Other Hearing Impediments- This category within the DVR AWARE database includes individuals who have hearing impediments such as Tinnitus and Meniere's.

Performance Measures – All statistics are for this quarter only.

Sign Language Interpreting: Sixteen individuals have received sign language Interpreter services. A total of **\$2,513.52** has been authorized and expended for this service.

Hearing Aids or other hearing devices: Fifty-two individuals received hearing aids or other devices. A total of **\$187,411.60** has been authorized and expended for this service.

Closed Successfully Rehabilitated (employed):

No individual who is Deaf-Blind has been closed and successfully rehabilitated.

Twelve individuals who are Deaf have been successfully rehabilitated.

Seventeen individuals who are Hard of Hearing have successfully rehabilitated.

Two individuals who have Other Hearing Impediments have been closed and successfully rehabilitated.

Employment Information

The average number of hours worked for individuals who are Deaf/Deaf-Blind/Hard of Hearing or have Other Hearing Impediments is **31.96** hours per week. The average wage is **\$17.93** per hour.

Caseload Activity

Of the **two hundred-sixteen** individuals who are Deaf/Deaf-Blind and on a DVR caseload, **forty-eight** have been opened or opened and closed.

Of the **four hundred twenty-six** individuals who are Hard of Hearing or have Other Hearing Impediments on a DVR caseload, **one-hundred** individuals have been opened or opened and closed.

Ineligible for VR Services

No individuals who are Deaf/Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, or Other Hearing Impediments have been determined as ineligible for VR services.

Transition Services

One Hundred fifty-two individuals who are Deaf/Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, or Other Hearing Impediments have been identified as receiving Pre-ETS or Transition services.

How the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is providing services:

- All DVR offices are open, and staff work full-time in the office.
- Individuals with disabilities can complete an online referral form electronically via our web page at www.dvr.state.nm.us or in person.
- All who complete an online or in-person referral will be contacted by staff to schedule an initial interview.

Respectfully Submitted:

Casey Stone-Romero

Casey Stone-Romero-Director
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation



Collaborating Agency Quarterly Report

Agency Name: Signed Language Interpreting Practice Board, RLD

Report By: Pauline Varela, Interim Board Administrator

Expiration Date: June 30, 2024

Quarter Reported:

1st (July-Sept) ___ 2nd (Oct-Dec) X 3rd (Jan-Mar) ___ 4th (Apr-June) ___

Memorandum of Understanding:

New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing will:

- A. Transfer \$25,000 as appropriated in the General Appropriation Act of 2023 to the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board for purposes of carrying out the provisions of the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Act at NMSA 1978, Section 61-34-1 to 17.

Regulation and Licensing Department will:

- A. Deposit the transfer of \$25,000 with Signed Language Interpreting Practices Fund and use the funds only for purposes of carrying out the provisions of the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Act per NMSA 1978, Section 61-34-13.
- B. Provide quarterly reports to the NMCDHH Director of Community Engagement including:
 - a. Number of licenses issued
 - b. Dates of Signed Language Interpreting Practices Act Board Meetings
 - c. Number of complaints
 - d. Number of license denials, suspensions, and revocations
- C. Provide budget reports for the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Fund upon request with appropriate advance notice.

Performance Report

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Licenses Issued	15	10 Community, 2 Educational, 3 Provisional
Complaints	4	
License denials, suspensions, and revocations	0	

Dates of Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board Meetings:

Last meeting: July 17, 2023

Next meeting: February 5, 2024

Agendas and draft minutes are available at the Board website:

www.rld.nm.gov/boards-and-commissions/individual-boards-and-commissions/signed-language-interpreting-practices/slip-board-information/slip-board-meetings