



Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation Office of Deaf Services

2006 ANNUAL REPORT

The Office of Deaf Services is responsible for developing and implementing programs that meet the linguistic and cultural needs of DMH/MR's consumers who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Services are designed to be affirmative and supporting to consumers who traditionally have not been able to benefit from services offered by the department.

Responsible for:

- Ensuring that Alabamans who are deaf or hard of hearing have access to a full array of linguistically and culturally appropriate services, including various community-based service options.
 - Managing an acute in-patient services unit for people who are deaf. This unit will be designed to treat people with co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse problems. It will be the only unit of its kind in the country. The unit will also serve as a center of excellence for the entire state and unit staff will be available to assist with special needs of consumer with hearing loss wherever they turn up in the system.
 - Overseeing regional coordinators of Deaf Services who are located in Huntsville, Birmingham, Montgomery, and Mobile. Services are delivered through contracts with community mental health centers. Regional coordinators work with local mental health centers to coordinate the delivery of linguistically and culturally appropriate services.
 - Providing consultation and technical assistance to the facilities and providers when requested. Areas of expertise include, deafness and mental health (particularly as it applies to clinical practice), the Americans with Disabilities Act and other disability focused legislation, interpreting and clinical service using interpreters,
 - Collaborating with staff from the Division's sister service Divisions on improving their services to people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
 - Training staff of both the department's facilities and its community providers, on deafness and mental health issues.
 - Monitoring the quality of services provided to consumers who are deaf, including interpreter services.
 - Conducting training for mental health interpreters. The Alabama Mental Health Interpreters Training (ALMHIT) program is an 80 hour course of study (40 hours classroom work, 40 hours supervised practicum) for advanced interpreters who wish to work in mental health settings.
 - Community outreach and education to both the Deaf Community and the general community in Alabama through the use of media, conducting workshops and town hall discussions, participation and sponsorship of Deaf Community events and activities.
-
-

Initiatives for the year:

- Last year, through the hearing status reporting process set up in conjunction with the CDR and the CARES databases, we tracked 112 Deaf consumers and 1,534 hard of hearing consumers in our community programs. We also served, on the average, 60 hard of hearing and 8 Deaf people per month in our state operated facilities.
- Regional Coordinators are front line contacts for deaf people with mental illness and their families. This past year together they:
 - Carried a average of 43 consumers on their caseloads in any give month;
 - Had direct contact with over 1,600 consumers and family members
 - Provided 105 clinical or communication assessments; and
 - Provided more than 5,000 hours of interpretive services for consumers, in addition to direct clinical services provided by staff. This is in spite of having three staff interpreter positions vacant for the entire year.
- Our four three – bed group homes continue to provide excellent care for deaf residents which has reduced use of hospitalization.
- Established a special class of direct care workers for the Bailey Deaf Unit which allowed for the hiring of people who are fluent in American Sign Language. One the by-products of this move is that almost all of the new “Deaf Care Workers” are themselves deaf. This greatly enhances therapeutic interaction.
- The Bailey Deaf Unit is now operating at 12 hours a day, 7 days a week and will open for 24/7 operations as soon as the last three Deaf Care Workers can be hired. This is projected to be in March of 2007. All clinical staff have been hired.
- The *Signs of Mental Health*, our well-received quarterly newsletter reaches hundreds of people around the country.
- Established a literature database containing over 1,000 articles on mental health and deafness. This database has become a resource widely accessed by professionals seeking information.
- Operate several listservs, which provide ongoing sources of information for our primary and secondary consumers. Two major ones are:
 - ALDMH: focused on information for the deaf community related to mental health issues
 - ALMHI: focused on information for interpreters working in mental health. There are three important weekly features, “Did You Know,” “Mental Health Basics,” and “Psychopharmacology.”
- ODS has provided or sponsored more than 175 hours of training in mental health interpreting, representing 57% of all the continuing education credits awarded by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf for mental health interpreting in 2006. The centerpiece is annual 40 – hour mental health Interpreter Institute. More than 130 interpreters have taken this training. Following the training, interpreters wishing to be certified as Qualified Mental Health Interpreters must then participate in a 40-hour supervised practicum. Following successful completion of the practicum, candidates sit for examination, and upon passing, are awarded their QMHI certification. To date 21 interpreters have completed this entire process.
- ODS has been actively involved on a national level including participation in revising RID Standard Practice Papers for Mental Health Interpreting, consulting with Northeastern

University in Boston for the development of a graduate level program for Mental Health Interpreting. ODS has been officially recognized as a sponsor for continuing education under the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf system.

- Conducted training 96 separate training events with 2,921 participants.

Contacting the Office

Office of Deaf Services Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation

RSA Union Building – 4th Floor
P.O. Box 301410
100 North Union Street
Montgomery Alabama 36130

Steve Hamerdinger, Director, Deaf Services

TTY: 334.353.4701
Voice: 334.353.4703
FAX: 334.242.3025
steve.hamerdinger@mh.alabama.gov

Charlene Crump, Mental Health Interpreter Coordinator

TTY: 334.353.4701
Voice: 334.353.4703
FAX: 334.242.3025
Email: Charlene.crump@mh.alabama.gov

Bailey Deaf In-Patient Unit Scott Staubach, Program Director

Greil Psychiatric Hospital
2140 Upper Wetumpka Rd
Montgomery, AL 36107
(334)262-0363 ext. 2656 (V/TTY)
Scott.Staubach@greil.mh.alabama.gov

Region 1

***Wendy Lozynsky, Coordinator
Dawn Marren, Regional Interpreter***
Mental Health Center of Madison County
4040 Memorial Parkway
Huntsville, AL 35806
256-533-1970 (Voice)
256-533-1922 (TTY)
256-705-6331 (FAX)
Wendy.Lozynsky@mh.alabama.gov

Region 3

***Liz Hill, Coordinator
Regional Interpreter, Vacant***
Montgomery Area Mental Health Center
P.O. Box 3223
101 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, Alabama 36109
334-279-7830 (Voice)
334-271-2855 (TTY)
334-277-8862 (Fax)

Liz.Hill@mh.alabama.gov

Region 2

***Shannon Reese, Coordinator
Regional Interpreter - Vacant***
Jefferson-Blount-St. Clair
Mental Health Authority
956 Montclair Road, Suite 108
Birmingham, AL 35213
205-591-2212 (Voice)
205-591-2216 (TTY)
205-591-2214 (FAX)
Shannon.Reese@mh.alabama.gov

Region 4

***Beth Metlay, Coordinator
Lee Stoutamire, Regional Interpreter***
Mobile Mental Health Center
2400 Gordon Smith Drive
Mobile, AL 36617
251-450-4353 (Voice)
251-450-4371 (TTY)
251 450 4323 (Fax)

Beth.Metlay@mh.alabama.gov

