**State of California**

**Health and Human Services Agency**

**Department of Rehabilitation**

**DHHAC meeting notes**

**Friday, 06/13/25**

**DOR Central Office, 721 Capitol Mall, Room 301, Sacramento, CA 95814, with virtual participation via Zoom.**

**In-attendance:**

DHHAC Members (in-person): Hugh Lafler

DHHAC Members (virtual): Callie Frye, Jerry Cardoso, Michelle Bronson Solomon Yigzaw, Ken Datugan, Trina Licht, Tara Groswird

DOR staff (in-person): Kimberly Nguyen, Jennifer Wilbon

DOR staff (virtual): Craig Rubenstein, Tiffany Barlow

ASL captioner(s)/interpreter(s) (virtual): Janet Serpa, Tiffany Jones, Allyssa Tolentino, Lisa Schulman, Melissa Watson

Public Members (virtual): Angelica Martinez, Jeramin Bantogay, Peter Aguilar, Victoria Valdez

**Item 1: Welcome and Introductions**

Callie Frye (DHHAC Chair) reviewed DHHAC rules. Callie welcomed attendees, conducted roll call, and established a quorum.

**Item 2: Introductions of DOR staff and members of the public**

**Item 3: DHHAC Announcement: Member Updates and Vacancies**

Callie Frye, DHHAC Chair

Committee members comments and questions

* Members announced their last meeting dates as their term will be up
* Thanked members for their commitment to the committee

Department comments and questions

* Applications for vacant positions will go out

# **Item 4: Update Regarding March 14, 2025, Meeting Minutes**

# The committee voted and the meeting minutes were approved.

**Motion:** Callie Frye moved a motion to approve the March 14, 2025, meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Trina Licht.

**Vote:** Ken, yes. Hugh, yes. Michelle, yes. Tara, yes. Callie, yes. Solomon, yes. Jerry, yes. The motion passed.

# **Item 5:** **Item 5: DOR DHHS Section Report**

Craig Rubenstein, DOR Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Program Manager. Up-to-date program report provided to ensure the dissemination of current information and news.

Department comments and questions

* Reviewed statistics for successful closures for the department for deaf and hard of hearing students
* From 07/01/24 through current: 5,358 consumers (increase of 120 consumers from last year) 4,109 open and active cases (increase of 55 consumers from last year), 430 successful closures
* 33 RCD’s statewide, 2 vacancies in San Diego, interviewed for those positions, still in the process of hiring
* Discussed programs in the department and how the programs help consumers
* Explained various reasons believed to contribute to the year being successful
* Positions are based on location and based on the need of each office
* DHHAC team is working on updating the public website page

Committee members comments and questions

* Would like to know what strategies the department used to make this a successful year
* Would like to know the record number of cases and successful closures
* Discussed social platforms that appeal to different generations
* Questions regarding expanding direct services
* Offered suggestions for DOR website

# **Item 6: Proposed DHHAC Bylaws**

DHHAC members discussed and voted on a path forward regarding the committees’ Bylaws.

Committee members comments and questions

* Members reviewed the Bylaws
* Members participated in discussions regarding the committees’ Bylaws, Roberts Rules of Order, committee membership, and making amendments to the Bylaws
* Would like a PDF format of the Bylaws posted on the department’s website
* Members provided opinions and suggestions for adding the Bylaws to the department’s website and to make videos more accessible for the deaf and blind community

Public members comments and questions

* Offered opinion and suggestions to topic of discussion and suggested making additions such as an ASL glossary, make a video of the Bylaws which includes signing for the deaf and hard of hearing community.

**Motion:** Trina Licht moved a motion to approve the Bylaws with revisions as they are. The motion was seconded by Hugh Lafler.

**Vote:** Callie, yes. Trina, yes. Jerry, yes. Hugh, yes. Michelle, yes. Ken, yes. Tara, yes. Solomon, yes. The motion passed.

# **Item 7: Presentation on AI and Assistive Technology**

Jerry Cardoso, DHHAC expert in Assistive Technology provided a

brief presentation on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and assistive technology.

Committee members comments and questions

* Discussed the future of AI and captioning services
* Provided history and background of captioning services
* Discussed the benefits of using AI, challenges and ethical considerations, discussed captioning services for the deaf and hard of hearing, and what the future looks like for AI
* AI is powerful and consumes a lot of power
* Members shared concerns they have about AI

# Public members comments and questions

# Shared pros and cons of AI and shared opinion as an RCD using AI

# **Item 8: Deaf Employment Services 2—DES2**

Dr. Caroline Kobek-Pezzarossi, Ph.D. and John Macko provided an overview of the mission, purpose and key priorities of the DES2 and how they support students.

Committee members comments and questions

* Asked about successful outcomes and results
* Asked if Starbucks joined the summit meeting

Public members comments and questions

* Excited about this program, mentioned companies don’t hire deaf and hard of hearing individuals because of liability issues, shared barriers seen as an RCD counselor

Department comments and questions

* Shared experience and opinion, contributed to discussion

**Item 9: Member Orientation**

Callie Frye, DHHAC Chair

Callie outlined the purpose of Member Orientation.

Committee members comments and questions

* Would like to know how long the application process takes when applying for membership for the DHHAC committee
* Discussed/shared ideas to present at orientation

Department comments and questions

* Explained application process
* Unsure if RCD’s can join the orientation, will research this question

Public members comments and questions

* Asked if RCD’s can join the orientation

# **Item 10: Identification of Future Agenda Items**

Discussion with committee members and public participants to identify future meeting agenda items and logistics.

Committee members comments and questions

* Requested presentation from EDD from the deaf coordinators (Dustin Knott and Ryan Gallagher) regarding EDD deaf programs
* Would like to hear about SFP Proposals with EDD
* Would like DOR Director to be invited to next DHHAC meeting to be introduced and provide updates
* Discuss fiduciary impact and limitations
* IDEA

Adjourn (12:00 p.m.)