

COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED

TESTIMONY FROM STACIE J. MAWSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
2/18/2009

GOOD MORNING SENATOR HARP, Senator Prague, Representative Hamm, Rep. Villano and committee members.

My name is Stacie Mawson, I am the Executive Director of the Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired. Thank you for the opportunity to address you this morning.

This year the Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired celebrates 35 years of service to Connecticut.

The Commission has worked to coordinate, strengthen and implement state policies affecting deaf and hard of hearing individuals. We continue to work and develop relationships with industry, healthcare and educational opportunities through public and private business.

The Commission supports the Governor's proposed budget. We are currently able to maintain the level of support needed to be effective in the services we provide and will be with the proposed budget.

The Commission provides an enormous amount of direct services in the way of counseling and interpreting services with a limited number of resources.

The economic crisis confronting the state is being taken seriously at CDHI. We are working to make our services more cost efficient. Although we do not have direct funding to provide programming we have looked at our expenditures and usages carefully. CDHI has changed cell phone carriers to receive the best price; the phones are needed to remain in contact with our field staffs that often are re-routed to cover emergencies. The agency has stopped the use of a rental car; a calendar is posted to coordinate all trips made with the fleet car. Paper is recycled; both sides of the paper are regularly printed on. If something can be emailed it is sent electronically to save on postage.

The staff is dedicated to the agency's mission. The counselors provide counseling support for issues confronting individuals who live in Connecticut who are deaf or hard of hearing and their family members. The services are delivered in the language which is natural and comfortable for each individual.

The Interpreting service we provide is available statewide to state agencies as well as private businesses. We provide interpreting service for legal, educational, mental health, medical and community appointments.

The Commission has a close connection with the community we serve. We are represented on various board and community groups as well as the community is represented on our Board. We provide in-service training in a variety of settings with First Responders, businesses, hospitals and nursing homes.

Interpreter Registration has provided quality assurance for individuals hiring interpreters statewide. All interpreters qualified to work in the state of CT are posted on our website.