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Steve Hamerdinger, Editor

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Signs of Mental Health



DEPARTMENT STREAMLINES INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

In a move to try to simplify accessing interpreter services for consumers and providers, a new statewide contract process will be unveiled for FY07,

Previously, DMH/MR has reimbursed providers for interpretive services, which required interpreters to have contracts with each of the various mental health centers. Additionally, the state facilities also had their own contract process. It was not unusual for an interpreter who wanted to do a large amount of mental health work to have to have 5 or more separate contracts to work in a given service area.

The new process will allow for payment of interpretive services directly from central office, meaning that interpreters will only have to have one contract to work with consumers at any mental health provider agency that is paid through state funds.

Additionally, the new contract will broaden what is accepted for interpretive services. Video Remote interpreting will be covered for the first time, as well text-based processes like CART (Computer Assisted Real-Time) captioning and C-Print.

The contract will be available to any

interpreter who meets Alabama statutory requirements for providing interpretive services. The rates will be keyed to the qualifications of the interpreter who provides the services. Quality control is built in to the contract by making the Office of Deaf Services the contract monitoring entity.



New Contracts process will make it easier for interpreters to work with DMHMR consumers. Pictured: Lee Stoutamire, Region IV Staff Interpreter

Interpreters wishing to take bid on this contract should contact Charlene Crump, Mental Health Interpreter Coordinator, at Charlene.crump@mh.alabama.gov.

For the actual Request for Proposals, please see http://www.mh.alabama.gov/downloads/Contracts/CO60721_DSInterpreterServices.pdf

ATTENDING THE NATIONAL DEAFBLIND TRAINING

A FIRST PERSON ACCOUNT

By Shannon Reese
Region II Coordinator

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend DeafBlind Interpreting Training August 7-11, 2006 at the Helen Keller National Center. This training was designed to give the participants an understanding of environmental, cultural/psychosocial, medical, and communication/interpreting factors of working with DeafBlind. The participants came from all over the United States, and one came from Germany. For one week we all bonded and learned about the critical need for DeafBlind interpreters and Support Service Providers (SSPs). Although DeafBlind interpreters and SSPs are different, there are similarities. Both types of work involve letting the DeafBlind consumers what is going on around them.

As a mental health therapist, I attended because I felt it was

important to understand the frustrations of being DeafBlind. I wanted to understand how to better help them, without causing further distress because I was ignorant about DeafBlindness. There has been little research about the relationship between mental illness and DeafBlindness. Hopefully more research will focus on the DeafBlind, mentally ill, population.

Assistive technology was a fascinating part of the workshop...DeafBlind people can be very independent with the right kind of tools. I had the opportunity to try out equipment such as a Braille Star braille display, a device that scans a sentence and then types that sentence using raised dots...embossing...so that the person can "read" with their fingers. I, of course, could not understand Braille, but when I questioned DeafBlind students about it, they said it could take anywhere from a few months to a year to master this skill.

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Shannon Reese (left) participates in DeafBlind simulation activity at the Helen Keller Center in New York



Region 1: Northern Alabama

Wendy Lozynsky

Mental Health Center of
Madison County
4040 South Memorial Pkwy
Huntsville, AL 35802
(256) 533-1970 (Voice)
(256) 533-1922 (TTY)

Region 2: Central Alabama

Shannon Reese, Coordinator

J-B-S Mental Health Center
956 Montclair Road, Suite 108
Birmingham, AL 35213
205-591-2212 (Voice)
205-591-2216 (TTY)

Region 3: Wiregrass Region

Liz Hill, Coordinator

Montgomery Area
Mental Health Authority
101 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, AL 36109
(334) 279-7830 (Voice)
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Region 4: Mobile

Beth Metlay Coordinator

Mobile Mental Health Center
5750B Southland Drive
Mobile, Alabama 36693
251-450-4353 (Voice)
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JBS GROUP HOMES RECEIVE VIDEO PHONES

By Malissa Cates

In cooperation with Sprint/Nextel and Alabama Relay, the Office of Deaf Services presented JBS Deaf Services with three video phones to be installed in our group homes for deaf/mentally ill adults. This gift will enhance communication between the JBS Deaf Services office and the group homes, aid in crisis intervention, and improve communication between the consumers and their family and friends.

Once a dedicated DSL line has been installed at each of the group homes and a television purchased specifically for the video phone, they will be considered operational. If a consumer desires to talk with his/her therapist at a time other than the scheduled office visit, the video phone will allow the therapist to conduct a therapy session with the consumer. It will aid in improving communication with the group home by allowing the Home Coordinator and staff to access the Program Director and therapist in real time to problem-solve issues with consumers.

After hours, the video phone can be a vital tool to deescalate a potentially explosive situation by allowing the consumer access to the Home Coordinator, therapist, and/or Program Director. Currently, we are dependent upon face to face response to handle crisis situations. The time delay required for response could be costly in effectively managing the situation.

We have some low-functioning consumers with limited abilities to read and write. However, they have the ability to communicate through

ASL. The video phone allows all of the consumers the ability to communicate with family and friends through ASL and an interpreter if necessary.

The addition of the video phones to the group homes will only enhance the services provided to the deaf consumers and increase their accessibility to services. JBS is most thankful for this generous donation.

NATIONAL DEAFBLIND TRAINING

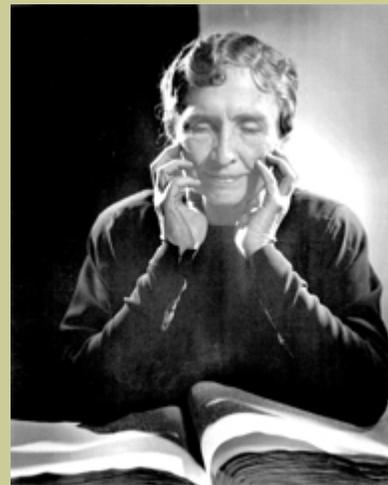
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Then came the toughest part...being a DeafBlind person for a few hours. How, you may wonder, was this possible? The participants used ear plugs and goggles designed to mimic different types of Usher's Syndrome, with the vision field gradually narrowing, depending on the type. Type I Usher's is when a person cannot see at night during infancy or early childhood, and then develops blind spots, usually by the teen years, becoming legally blind during adulthood. Type II is when, during the teen years, people develop night blindness, followed by blind spots in early adulthood, and becoming legally blind in early to mid-adulthood. Type III is night blindness in the teens, then blind spots by early adulthood.

The timing of the progression may vary but night blindness usually precedes daytime loss. All types of Usher's Syndrome are usually accompanied by some form of hearing loss, depending on the type and severity.

I wore goggles with a small hole in front for one eye and a small hole out the side for my other eye. After 30 minutes of trying to see with these goggles, I was ready for a nap! It really was a lot of work trying to focus on the interpreter with this limited sight. The experience increased my awareness of the need for providing more information to the DeafBlind about the environment...such

as people laughing...so the person feels he or she is actually in the room as opposed to sitting "in the dark." I had the opportunity to talk with DeafBlind students, and they used various modes of communication...from tactile to tracking. They all emphasized their love of life, and the importance of texture, which provides them with a sense of what life would look like. As an example, there is a small beach near the center and students go and play in the sand or go swimming. Environment is very important to them and I can now say that I totally understand this! I left with a better understanding of what DeafBlind people endure, and am in awe of their ability to navigate this world. DeafBlind people are human beings, and we need to remember that first...before anything else. I encourage anyone who knows sign language fluently to become involved with DeafBlind interpreting...for it does provide an enriching experience. 



"A person who is severely impaired never knows his hidden sources of strength until he is treated like a normal human being and encouraged to shape his own life."

~Helen Keller

KRISTINE KLOPP IS FIRST INTERN AT ODS



Counseling Intern Kris Klopp

The Office of Deaf Services was proud to make the opportunity available for Kristine Klopp to do her practicum with us for 6 weeks. Kristine is a student at Alabama A&M University, pursuing her degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. She has a strong desire to work in the field of deafness. During her practicum with Wendy Lozynsky Region I Coordinator, she saw how the regional offices operate. Region I covers 14 counties in north Alabama. Not only did she see the work involved in Region I, which included some therapy and consultation, she also got to see within the scope of the statewide program. In her own words:

"I am from Canada, and moved to Huntsville, Alabama in January 2001. I completed my Psychology degree from Lakehead University (Thunder Bay, Ontario) in 1996. I am currently completing my Masters degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, with a specialization in Deafness, from Alabama A & M University (Huntsville, AL).

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As I See It

By Steve Hamerdinger



Among the news items received recently was a posting on the U.S. Department of Justice website announcing the settlement of a lawsuit against an Oklahoma City psychologist, Dr. Ray Hand. The facts of the case make for interesting reading and a cautionary tale for providers who believe that they are not required to make accommodations for hearing loss solely by dint of having a private practice.

It is a veritable shibboleth that the Americans with Disabilities Act is, to use a Chinese phrase, zhǐ lǎohǔ (paper tiger.) It's nice to be reminded from time to time, that even paper tigers can draw blood.

In early 2004, Lincoln County Associate District Judge, Craig S. Key, appointed Dr. Hand, a psychologist in private practice in Oklahoma City, OK, to do a child custody assessment on a deaf couple and their deaf minor child. Part of the fight was around whether the child would get a cochlear implant or not. The first three meetings were held without an interpreter. Two subsequent meetings with the father were held with an interpreter. Dr. Hand then decided it was necessary to evaluate the child both with and without an interpreter to determine whether an implant would be appropriate.

The terms of the agreement, which were posted on the DOJ website last month, seemed rather pro forma. There was nothing unusual there - except for one important point: A psychologist in private practice was ordered to comply with Title III requirements.

To fully appreciate the impact of this decision, it is important to remember that many doctors, lawyers, and other professionals, including mental health professionals, claim that complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act in their private practice would represent an undue burden. This case called that claim into question. While Dr. Hand did not dispute the facts of the case, and indeed, appeared to be remarkably cooperative, it is groundbreaking that the decision was entered in the first place.

All this is fine and good. Of course, we applaud the settlement, benign as it was. We admire the courage of the plaintiffs in filing the suit and thus opening their private lives to public scrutiny. We respect the integrity of Dr. Hand who, to his credit, did not try to duck through loopholes in the law, but rather said, in effect, "You're right, I should have had interpreters there for each meeting." But as we read between the lines to get beyond the bare facts of the case, we grew less comfortable with the implications of the settlement.

Did Dr. Hand fully understand all the various dynamics the issues in the custody suit raised? Was he trained in the psycho-social implications of deafness? Was he familiar with the awesome psychological pressure on the child when parents fight over whether to have a cochlear implant? Although Dr. Hand has a lengthy list of obviously well-earned accolades from his peers, it would be unusual if he had training or experience in the area of pre-implant evaluation. What qualified him to determine if the child was an appropriate candidate for an implant?

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KLOPP INTERNS AT ODS

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"I was fortunate to be able to work with Wendy Lozynsky, Regional Coordinator for Deaf Services in Region 1. I was able to see a multitude of counseling sessions with various clients that Wendy works with. In addition to the sessions I observed, I was also able to tour many facilities, and meet many individuals that in some form or capacity, work with Deaf individuals on a daily basis. During my 6 weeks with Wendy, I visited over 9 facilities, including the Bailey Deaf Unit of Greil Hospital in Montgomery, North Alabama Regional Hospital in Decatur, all four of the group homes in Birmingham, Bryce State Hospital, Partlow Mental Retardation Center and Taylor Hardin (all in Tuscaloosa). I had no idea all of these places existed!

"Although I am familiar with the counseling process through my current employment (I hold the position of Director of Family Services with Three Springs, Inc.), I did not have experience working with Deaf individuals. To work in this field is my true passion, and I am sincerely grateful for this experience. I would like to extend a special thank you to Wendy and to Steve Hamerdinger for agreeing to my placement with Deaf Services!" ✍



Part of the crowd watches Director Hamerdinger at the HRID banquet

FOCUS ON THE TEAM



Mark Dupre joined JBS Deaf Services on May 1, 2006 as the Home Coordinator of the Deaf-Blind group home. This highly specialized program serves people who are DeafBlind and also have mental illness and mental retardation. It is one of the most unique programs in the country

Prior to joining our staff, Mark worked for 12 ½ years at Glenwood, Inc. where his work focused entirely on children with autism.

A native of Mamou, Louisiana, Mark considers himself 100% Cajun man and is very proud of his heritage! He graduated from Louisiana School for the Deaf and attended Gallaudet University, LSU at Eunice, and University of Southwestern Louisiana. Mark completed the TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication Handicapped Children) course at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1994. Mark brings a wealth of knowledge to our Deaf-Blind group home and we have already seen some positive outcomes related to new ideas he has implemented within that home.

Mark is an avid pet lover and enjoys playing with his dog, Tobey, his two parakeets, and 1 betta fish. He also enjoys gardening and quiet evenings at home. And, true to his Cajun heritage, Mark's favorite foods are crawfish and sausage!

How Appropriate!

Recently one of the clinicians working for the Office of Deaf Services was working with a deaf consumer who has many compulsive behaviors. When asked about things he liked, the consumer said, "My favorite cologne is 'Obsession.'"

HAMERDINGER ENCOURAGES HUNTSVILLE'S DEAF COMMUNITY AND INTERPRETERS

ODS Director, Steve Hamerdinger was the keynote of Huntsville Chapter of the Alabama Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf on Friday, August 18. Hamerdinger spoke about the need for perseverance in the face of challenges. "I dream of things that never were and ask why not," he told the audience. Quoting Robert Gallagher by noting that, "change is inevitable – except from a vending machine," he encouraged them to embrace change in order to make a difference in the lives of those around them. The crowd of more than 80 people seemed to enjoy Hamerdinger's unique blend of humor and motivation.

As I See It

Continued from Page 4

Secondly, was the interpreter qualified? In such an emotionally charged situation, an interpreter who is not fully trained, well centered, and intensely aware of her impact on the process could do a great deal of harm. Neutrality is a myth and any one who believes that an interpreter does not interject subtle bias in the process is either naïve or delusional. Did Dr. Hand understand the dynamics involved? How did the child react to this particular line of experimentation?

Finally, wouldn't it have been better if the assigned psychologist could communicate directly? After all, this was the main point of the landmark 1994 *Tugg v Towey* decision in which a Federal court held that interpreters were not equal access. This is not a judgment on either the clinical professional or the interpreter. It's merely recognizing what most reasonable people believe – it is better to get services from a clinician who speaks the consumer's language than it is to go through an interpreter.

Ultimately, the case highlights the glaring weakness of the ADA – it accepts mediocrity as “best practice.” Enshrined in the *Hand* decision is still the underlying notion that any clinician can provide services to a deaf person if only an interpreter is provided. **As I See It**, we still have a long way to go. 

JBS DEAF SERVICES WOVES PEER REVIEWERS

The deaf group homes in Birmingham were subject of a DMH/MR peer review panel drawn from other mental health centers, consumer advocates and the Office of Deaf Services. Malissa Cates and her staff did an outstanding job of showcasing one of the highlights of Alabama's growing array of culturally and

POSITIONS OPEN WITH DEAF SERVICES

OFFICE OF DEAF SERVICES

**INTERPRETER,
Region III (Montgomery)
Region II (Birmingham)**

SALARY RANGE: 73 (\$33,241 - \$50,396)

QUALIFICATIONS: Combination of training and experience equivalent to a two-year degree plus three years of full-time experience interpreting in a variety of different settings. Must be licensed or eligible or licensure by the Alabama Licensure Board of Interpreters and Transliterators. Must be certified or eligible to receive certification as a QMHI (Qualified Mental Health Interpreter) or its equivalent. Certification must be obtained within 24 months of hire.

THE BAILEY DEAF UNIT

The following positions are based at Greil Memorial Psychiatric Hospital, 2140 Upper Wetumpka Road, Montgomery, AL. 36107

**MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST III
(BDU Program Director)**

SALARY RANGE: 78 (\$44,582 to \$67,852)

QUALIFICATIONS: Any combination of experience/training equivalent to graduation from a four-year college or university, supplemented by graduate work to the level of master's degree in counseling, social work, psychology or a similar related field. Considerable experience (48 months) related to the area of deaf services, including administrative or supervisory experience. Other job related education and/or experience may be substituted for all or part of these basic requirements upon approval of the Job Evaluation Committee

DEAF CARE WORKER (New Position)

SALARY RANGE 50 (\$20,277.60 to \$28,682.40)

QUALIFICATIONS: High School Diploma or GED - Entry Level Position. Must have near Advanced level signing skill in American Sign Language (ASL) as measured by a recognized screening process, such as SLPI

Thorough knowledge and understanding of Deaf Culture is required.

linguistically appropriate services for Deaf people with mental illness. The reviewers were all extremely impressed with the quality of life that

MENTAL HEALTH LPN

57 (\$20,625.80 - \$30,604.60)

QUALIFICATIONS: Graduation from a standard high school, supplemented by graduation from a state-approved school of practical nurse education. Current license to practice as a LPN in the State of Alabama. Some experience in a psychiatric setting is preferred.

Proficiency or willingness to learn American Sign Language to achieve an “Intermediate” level of signing skills as measured by a recognized screen process, such as SCPI within three years

For more information on any of these positions, or for application, please contact:

Steve Hamerdinger
Director Office of Deaf Services
Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
100 North Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36130
Steve.Hamerdinger@mh.alabama.gov
(334) 353-4701 (TTY)
(334)353-4703 (Voice)

GROUP HOMES

Group homes in Birmingham and Mobile are always accepting applications for direct care staff. For more information about the Birmingham positions, contact:

Malissa Cates, Program Director
Jefferson-Blount-St. Clair Mental Health Authority
956 Montclair Road, Suite 108
Birmingham, AL 35213
205-591-2212 (Voice)
205-591-2216 (TTY)
mcates@jbsmha.com

BEHAVIORAL SPECIALIST FOR DEAF HOME (Mobile)

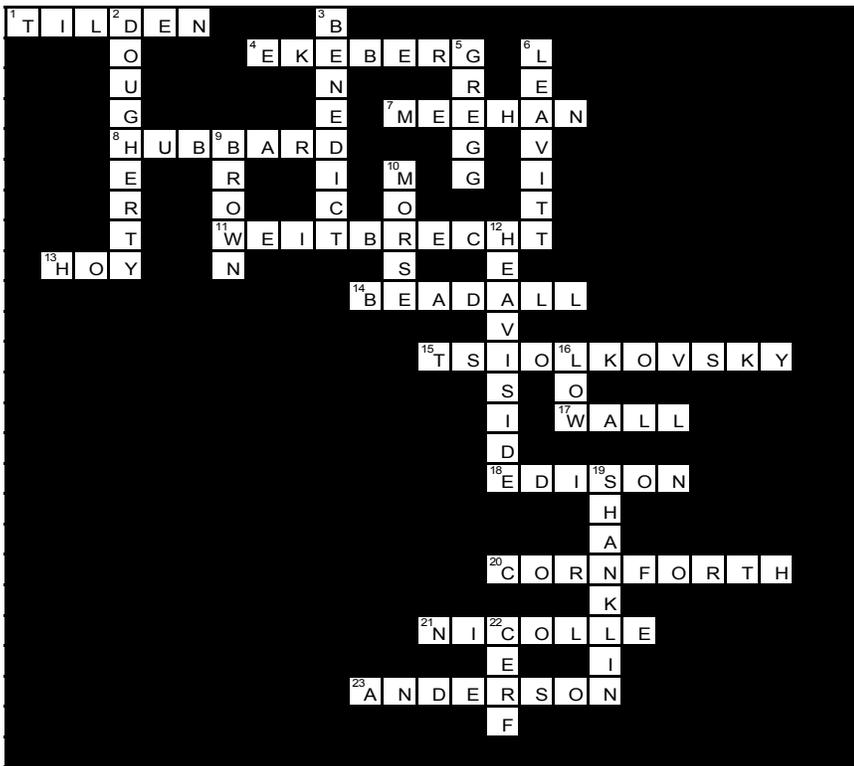
QUALIFICATIONS: Bachelor's degree in mental health discipline. Must be deaf or proficient in American Sign Language and have a thorough understanding of deaf culture. Must have and maintain a valid Alabama driver's license. Must have knowledge of adult psychiatric service provision.

For information about the Mobile positions, contact:

Beth Metlay, Coordinator
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

the residents enjoyed. It is hoped that similar programs will be set up in other parts of the state. Well earned congratulations to JBS. 

Answers to Last Month's Puzzle!



NOTES AND NOTABLES

Liz Hill and Shannon Reese were in attendance at the National Association of the Deaf Conference in Palm Desert, California in July. Liz presented on statewide services for deaf children.

Lee Soutamire, Region IV Staff interpreter successfully passed his examination for Qualified Mental Health Interpreter.

Frances Smallwood, an interpreter in private practice in Huntsville also passed her QMHI test having completed all the practicum requirements.

Also passing her comprehensive exam for QMHI is **Cindy Camp** of Jacksonville. We congratulate all the candidates on their achievement.

Beth Metlay, Region IV Coordinator was a featured speaker at the annual SoberCamp for deaf addicts in recovery in Rochester, New York. She has been a presenter at this program for several years.

It's not all work for **Charlene Crump**, who recently returned from a special cruise to Alaska for working interpreters. In between excursions to watch whales and photograph flora and fauna there were in-depth workshops on interpreting.

CURRENT QUALIFIED MENTAL HEALTH INTERPRETERS

Becoming a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter in Alabama requires a rigorous course of study, practice and examination that takes most people nearly a year to complete. More than 80 people have started the process and several are nearing completion. To date the following people have earned their QMHI certificate:

- Charlene Crump
- Sue Scott
- Nancy Hayes
- Brian McKenny
- Dee Johnston
- Debra Walker
- Angel Dahlgren
- Lisa Gould
- Diane Alumbaugh
- Jill Farmer
- Dawn Marren
- Wendy Darling
- Pat Smartt
- Lee Stoutamire
- Frances Smallwood
- Cindy Camp

IMPORTANT ENHANCEMENTS TO BAILEY DEAF UNIT ANNOUNCED

Programming at the Bailey Deaf Unit now covers the full day, Acting Program Director, Steve Hamerdinger announced. Previously, patients assigned to Bailey had separate morning programming. This change was strongly advocated by the patients themselves and enthusiastically embraced by hospital officials.

In another important change, Hamerdinger announced that a new position, Deaf Care Worker, has been established. This position replaces the Mental Health Worker. Among the important requirements is ASL fluency at the Advanced level or higher on the Sign Language Proficiency Interview. There is no merit position test for this position. Applicants who previously applied for the MHW position but failed the merit test are encouraged to reapply.

Recruitment for permanent program director continues.

MENTAL HEALTH Interpreter Institute



SEPTEMBER 12-17, 2006

A 40 - hour course designed to provide a sound basis for interpreters to work effectively in mental health settings as part of a professional team. The course includes: Medical and mental health systems and culture, Sources of communication breakdown associated with mental illness and treatment, Interpreters' roles, tools, and resources, Severe language dysfluency and Visual Gestural Communication, Psychiatric emergencies, Support groups and Community Mental Health Services, and Demand-Control Theory applied to mental health interpreting.

PRESENTERS INCLUDE:

Bob Pollard, Robyn Dean, Roger Williams,
Steve Hamerdinger, Charlene Crump, Brian McKenny, et. al.

COST OF TRAINING:

In-State: \$50 Out of State: \$100

Interpreter Institute Alumni—Contact us for special rates.

Cost is for the full training and includes the text

Mental Health Interpreting: A Mentored Curriculum by Bob Pollard.

A minimum of 4.0 CES will be offered for the training.

OFFICE OF DEAF SERVICES

Because deafness or hearing loss pose their own challenges in coping with risk factors and accessing and receiving treatment services, the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation has established an Office of Deaf Services to break down the barriers that inhibit the department in its mission to enable Alabamians to live in recovery.

Workshop Applications may be downloaded at

<http://www.mh.state.al.us/admin/downloads/DeafServices/MHIOT%20Brochure.pdf>

Online Article Discussions

Monthly discussion of research articles relating to Deafness and/or interpreting and Mental Health.

Pre-registration required.

Continuing Education Credit Offered
<http://jsu.blackboard.com>

List Servs

www.yahogroups.com

To keep you informed of important news and events in mental health and deafness we operate:

ALMHI

Mental Health Interpreters

ALDMH

Deaf and Mental Health Issues

TERPINFO

General Interpreter Information
Alabama

Mental Health Interpreter Positions in Alabama

Salary Range: \$33,241 - \$50,395

The Office of Deaf Services has several mental health interpreter positions available. A combination of training and experience equivalent to a two-year degree plus three years of full-time experience interpreting in a variety of different settings. Must be licensed or eligible for license by the Alabama Licensure Board of Interpreters and Translators. Must be certified or eligible to receive certification as a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter or its equivalent. Qualified MH Interpreter Certification must be obtained within 24 months of hiring date.

<http://www.mh.state.al.us/admin/downloads/ApplicationForEmploymentExemptClassification.pdf>



Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation

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Office of Deaf Services