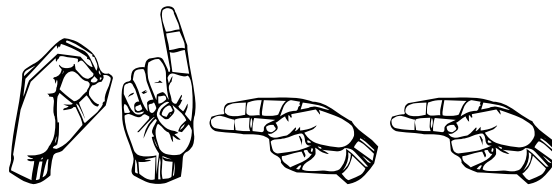




GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE
DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING



2005 Annual Report

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor

Michael S. Steele
Lt. Governor

Yvonne M. Dunkle
Director

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor



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**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE
DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

Dear Governor Ehrlich, President Miller and Speaker Busch:

The Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) is pleased to present its third annual report, which highlights our activities, progress and objectives for the period of January 1, 2005 through December 31, 2005.

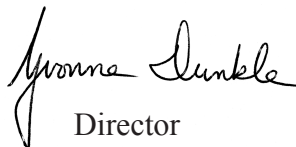
Last year, the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) reviewed its goals and developed a clearer definition of its purposes and responsibilities by organizing its services into three programs: Awareness Training and Technical Assistance, Constituent Services, and Community Outreach and Education. These programs allowed ODHH to focus its efforts and establish clearer strategies toward fulfilling its mission and its vision.

ODHH continued its growth in achieving its legislative mandate by reaching out to 243 constituents through requests for service. In addition to belonging to nine committees, the General Assembly named ODHH to chair a one-year Task Force to Study Visual Smoke and Evacuation Alarms for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Additionally, the Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing welcomed five new members appointed to three-year terms.

In January of 2005, the Assistant Director of ODHH resigned, reducing the two-person staff to one person. The Office spent much of the year looking for a replacement and had not found one by the close of the calendar year. Staff shortages resulted in delaying the development and publication of the 2005 Annual Report. A fully staffed ODHH will better serve deaf and hard of hearing citizens and is essential to continue the provision of outreach and expertise the Office was designed to produce.

The Office looks forward to serving the needs of individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing by maintaining focus on the three programs of ODHH and by continuing dialogue about communication access issues facing deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders.

Sincerely,



Director

About the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Enabling legislation (Chapter 537 of the Acts of the 2001 General Assembly) established the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) in October 2001. In accordance with State Government Article, section 9-2407 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing exists to promote the general welfare of deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the State. ODHH serves as a coordinating agency that reports directly to the Governor's Office.

At its inception, ODHH was charged with 12 responsibilities, which include: (1) providing, advocating and coordinating the adoption of public policies, regulations and programs that will benefit deaf and hard of hearing individuals; (2) improving access to communication and to existing services and programs for deaf and hard of hearing individuals; (3) providing direct services to deaf and hard of hearing individuals as appropriate; (4) increasing public awareness of the needs and issues affecting deaf and hard of hearing individuals; (5) working with State and local agencies to ensure access for deaf and hard of hearing individuals to safety and emergency services, including the acquisition and distribution of visual smoke detectors; (6) developing a referral service for deaf and hard of hearing individuals; (7) serving as an information clearinghouse on the needs and issues affecting deaf and hard of hearing individuals; (8) working to increase access for deaf and hard of hearing individuals to educational, health and social opportunities; (9) working with private organizations, the federal government and other units of State government to promote economic development for deaf and hard of hearing individuals; (10) working to eliminate underemployment and unemployment of deaf and had of hearing individuals; (11) providing a network through which services provided by State and federal programs serving deaf and hard of hearing individuals can be channeled; and (12) promoting compliance with State, local and federal laws and policies protecting and serving deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

Additionally, ODHH must hold at least two public town hall meetings each year to receive public comments on the quality of State services and programs affecting deaf and hard of hearing individuals, ODHH-related functions and operations, and any other issues that affect deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders.

Furthermore, ODHH shall (1) help facilitate the appropriate delivery of State, local and other public services to deaf and hard of hearing individuals; (2) advise other units of State government and the General Assembly on the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals; (3) provide any reasonable resources, subject to appropriations in the State budget, that any unit of State government requests to serve or assist deaf and hard of hearing individuals; and (4) coordinate with other units of the State and the Federal government to the greatest extent possible in order to avoid duplication of effort in providing resources for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Mission

ODHH exists to provide expertise related to deaf and hard of hearing issues to Maryland citizens and to facilitate their ability to access resources and service.

Vision

ODHH believes that all MD citizens who are deaf or hard of hearing should have equal and full access to resources, services and opportunities for participation in all aspects of community life through the provision of appropriate accommodations.

ODHH Staff

Yvonne M. Dunkle, *Director*
Patricia D. Bowman, *Assistant Director**

* The Assistant Director resigned in January 2005. The position remained vacant through the remainder of the calendar year.

ODHH served on the following Committees and Task Forces:

- Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MACDHH)
- Maryland Department of Disability's Emergency Preparedness and Response for Individuals with Disabilities or Unique Needs Advisory Committee
- Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee and Work Group on Emergency Notification Systems
- Baltimore County Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee
- Maryland's Interagency Disability Board
- Special Education Statewide Advisory Committee (SESAC)
- Maryland State Steering Committee for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students (MSSCDHHS)
- Maryland Coalition for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MDCDHH)

Awareness Training and Technical Assistance

The Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing provides awareness training, technical assistance, and consulting services to all levels of Maryland government. Awareness training aims to educate Maryland government about the diverse communication styles of deaf and hard of hearing individuals by providing information about their specific needs. ODHH identifies the actions needed to improve accessibility and to ensure effectiveness and compliance of existing services and programs for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Technical assistance can include communication accessibility assessments and the review of policies, procedures and practices in comparison with effective services for deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

Under this program, ODHH had 54 contacts with government agencies and private entities for education, technical assistance, training and information sharing of issues and concerns affecting deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

Meetings and Correspondence

Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) – ODHH met with Secretary Cox and Deputy Secretary McComb to discuss MDOD's State Plan and to develop a strategy through which ODHH could participate in MDOD's State Plan.

ODHH also met with JoAnne Knapp, MDOD's Emergency Preparedness Director, to discuss ODHH's role in MDOD's future emergency preparedness projects.

The Office coordinated and paid for interpreters at the Extreme and Adaptive Sports Expo sponsored by MDOD and the City of Baltimore Recreation and Parks.

Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) – ODHH reviewed and commented on several MVA policies that affect individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing taking MVA tests. MVA requested that ODHH review a newly revised policy on interpreters for the deaf and hard of hearing. The Office submitted suggested revisions to the MVA policy on sign language interpreters in order to broaden the policy to include communication accessibility needs of customers who are deaf, hard of hearing and with speech disabilities. These suggestions included the use of qualified interpreters, Communication Aided Real-time Translation (CART), note takers, assistive listening devices and other methods that allow for effective communication between MVA personnel and customers who are deaf, hard of hearing or with speech disabilities.

ODHH also collaborated with MVA staff on the driving school instructor certification course and instructor requirements. MVA agreed to waive the hearing test for the deaf and hard of hearing applicants on the required physical exam. The Office addressed the issue of having the MVA-sponsored courses to become a certified

instructor in remote locations like Allegheny and Frederick counties, instead of having them in a central location, such as Howard or Anne Arundel County, for wider accessibility.

ODHH Director met with representatives from MDOT and MVA to address access issues faced by deaf and hard of hearing students taking mandatory driver's education classes.

Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) – ODHH attended MDOT's Secretary Conference on Accessible Transportation.

Maryland Correctional Institution-Jessup (MCI-J) – ODHH staff met with Warden John Rowley at MCI-J to address communication access and safety issues for deaf and hard of hearing inmates residing at MCI-J.

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) – Director Yvonne Dunkle met with MSDE's Special Education State Advisory Committee (SESAC) to openly discuss concerns about the inactive Maryland Quality Assurance System (MQAS) program and the lack of guidance in hiring qualified educational interpreters in the local school systems. Director Dunkle also addressed concerns about the lack of annual evaluations for educational interpreters' performances.

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) – ODHH began dialogue with DHMH's contact, an administrative staff-person for Board of Examiners of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers and Speech and Language Pathologists to address issues regarding SB 576/HB 1043 – Hearing Aids-Cancellation. As a result of the contact, DHMH and ODHH agreed to work together to address any concerns about the proposed legislation and also agreed that DHMH would use ODHH for expertise and advice in order to address any issues of concern needing the Board's attention.

Training Sessions

Baltimore-Washington International Airport – ODHH recruited three deaf and hard of hearing individuals to participate in an important exercise designed to educate the emergency personnel at BWI about how to deal with individuals with disabilities. The Office also advocated for BWI to provide a sign language interpreter for the instructions prior to the actual exercise so deaf and hard of hearing participants would know their roles and could fully participate in the exercise. Since BWI did not have funding for interpreters, ODHH covered the cost for interpreters.

Motor Vehicle Administration – Assistant Director Patsy Bowman teamed up with HASA to provide two training sessions at locations in Frederick and Annapolis for MVA personnel from around the state. The sensitivity and awareness training sessions taught the MVA front-line staff how to interact with deaf and hard of hearing customers seeking driver's licenses and to help them understand the differences between applicants with a hearing loss and those without a hearing loss, particularly related to the on-site testing and licensing process.

North Arundel Hospital – ODHH, along with two pastors, an advocate and two deaf individuals, attended a meeting with the CEO and staff at North Arundel Hospital to address the hospital's policy for using video remote interpreting (VRI) technology and to discuss giving deaf and hard of hearing patients the option to have a sign language interpreter present at the hospital.

Technical Assistance

The office attended meetings with, provided sensitivity and awareness training for, and provided technical assistance to numerous state agencies, including:

- Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD)
- Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)

- MDOT’s Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA)
- Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
- Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)
- Anne Arundel County Fire Department
- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH)
- Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS)
- Baltimore County Fire Department
- Maryland Department of Budget and Management (DBM)
- Maryland Correctional Institute – Jessup (MCI-J)

Constituent Services

The Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing serves as an information clearinghouse and referral service for the deaf and hard of hearing community to governmental departments and agencies, as well as public and private entities that provide services in Maryland.

ODHH provides advocacy work and acts as a liaison between the deaf and hard of hearing community and the General Assembly, Governor, and governmental departments and agencies in Maryland. ODHH also establishes a network through which services provided by state and federal programs can be channeled.

Highlights

ODHH received 243 requests from constituents during the 2005 calendar year. Of the 243 requests, the Office answered 189 requests in less than one business day as outlined in ODHH performance goals. ODHH received a total of 14 letters, five of which were to the Governor's Office, and responded to 11 within ODHH performance measures.

This table reflects the statistics for the calendar year of 2005.

Total Number of Requests	Number of Individual Constituents	Number of Governmental Agency Requests	Percentage responded to in under one business day
243	189	54	78%

Total Number of Letters Received	Letters to ODHH	Letters to the Governor’s Office	Percentage responded to within performance measures
14	9	5	79%

The total number of contacts received in 2005 was 257.

Community Outreach and Education

ODHH facilitates community outreach and education through various activities, events and meetings to promote awareness of ODHH as a state resource on issues affecting deaf and hard of hearing individuals, as well as to strengthen communication between ODHH and stakeholder communities. Outreach and education include presentations, the provision of workshops, and exhibits across Maryland.

In 2005, ODHH developed an outreach plan that consisted of setting up exhibit booths and giving presentations at various events to promote ODHH and its programs and services in the community. ODHH also used these opportunities to give away new promotional items with the ODHH logo and website address to improve the office's visibility in the community and to promote the ODHH website.

Highlights

- ODHH set up an exhibit booth at a Kids of Deaf Adults (KODA) holiday party in Columbia, Maryland.
- The Office, with help from members of the Advisory Council, managed an ODHH exhibit at the Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) two-day conference. The ODHH Director also gave a presentation about the Office and its updates.
- ODHH staffed an all-day exhibit booth during the homecoming events at the Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick.
- ODHH set up an exhibit booth at Maryland School for the Deaf's Transition Fair in Frederick. The fair was geared toward high school students and their parents interested in learning about future planning for after graduation, such as going to college or seeking employment, as well as learning about the services available to citizens of Maryland. The Office also gave a presentation about ODHH to all of MSD's high school students and their parents.
- ODHH staffed an exhibit booth at the DeafNation Expo at the Montgomery County Agriculture Fair in Gaithersburg, MD. The event drew over 3,400 attendees.
- Yvonne M. Dunkle, ODHH Director, gave the keynote speech along with Barbara Jean Wood, Executive Director of Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at the National Training Conference entitled "Think. Act. Lead." hosted by Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Government (DHHIG).
- ODHH Director attended the Deaf Women United (DWU) Conference. In exchange for sponsorship, ODHH brochures and other information were included in every participant's registration packet.
- ODHH Director attended the Self-Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH) Convention, where she networked and met with key leaders from the hard of hearing community in Maryland to promote ODHH programs and services available for hard of hearing Marylanders.
- The Office gave an overview presentation about ODHH to parishioners at Magothy United Methodist Church of the Deaf in Pasadena, Maryland.
- ODHH Director attended the Accessible Emergency Notification and Communication: State of the Science Conference at Gallaudet University.

The Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (the Council) was authorized in October 2001 (Chapter 537, Acts of 2001). The Council advises ODHH on carrying out its duties, reviews statewide activities for deaf and hard of hearing individuals, and reviews reports and publications affecting individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. The Council also fosters coordination and support of programs for deaf and hard of hearing individuals, in addition to studying methods to ensure individuals with hearing loss can use available facilities and services. In addition to holding quarterly meetings, the Council holds open forums to facilitate direct communication between ODHH and deaf and hard of hearing individuals, private and public organizations, and the general public. These meetings focus on programs and services for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. The Council assists local governing bodies in implementing provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and other relevant state and federal laws.

Of the Council's sixteen members, eight are public members from the community and eight serve as ex-officio members. The Governor, with Senate advice and consent, appoints public members to three-year terms (Code State Government Article, sections 9-2404 through 9-2406). A member may not serve consecutively more than two terms. At the end of a term, a member continues to serve until a successor is appointed. Any member who

fails to attend at least fifty-percent of the regularly scheduled meetings during any twelve-month period shall be considered to have resigned.

During the 2005 calendar year, five new Council members were appointed: William E. Johnson, Jr. (DHR), Alexis A. Allenback (DLLR), Mary Pat Bromwell, Joshua Friedman, and George N. Kosovich.

2005 Members

State Government – Ex-officio

Alexis A. Allenback, DLLR
Vanessa K. Antrum, DHMH
Paul K. Farrell, MSDE
Pamela Jenkins-Dobson, HRC
William E. Johnson, Jr., DHR
Julie R. Moyer, MDOT
James E. Tucker, MSD
Linda Meinders Webb, DHCD

Public Members

Mary Pat Bromwell
Benjamin J. Dubin
Lindsay Dunn
Diane Edge
Ethelette Wright Ennis
Joshua Friedman
J. Howard Leonard
George N. Kosovich

Meetings

The council meets four times a year, rotating in different regions of the state. Copies of minutes can be obtained upon request by contacting ODHH. In 2005, Advisory Council meetings were held as follows:

Date

March 8
June 2
September 8
December 1

Location

Maryland School for the Deaf, Columbia
DeafNet, Hagerstown
Chevy Chase Regional Services Center, Bethesda
Greenbelt Library, Greenbelt

During the year, the Advisory Council addressed many issues and action items affecting the deaf and hard of hearing communities and ODHH, including:

- Interpreter requirements to sign HIPPA forms when interpreting in medical settings.
- Lack of staffing and funding for ODHH.
- Concern about a proposed bill for TAM (Maryland Relay) to be transferred to MDOD.
- Support for ODHH to remain an autonomous office and not be moved under MDOD.
- MVA revising its policy on interpreter requests.
- Lack of representation of hard of hearing individuals on the Task Force to Study Visual Smoke and Evacuation Alarms for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- A legislative bill forming a study group to look at the services in the higher education institutions for students with a documented disability. ODHH was not listed in the statute to serve on the study group.
- Another legislative bill advocating for blind individual's access to technology in higher education institutions, but does not incorporate technology for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- The creation of sub-committees to assess deaf and hard of hearing services. Sub-committees could include members of the Council as well as other individuals knowledgeable about different issues.
- Interview candidates for the vacant ODHH Assistant Director position.
- Building a better relationship between MDOD and ODHH. Work on mainstreaming views on issues regarding deaf and hard of hearing services between the two offices.
- Follow-up on the failed legislation, American Sign Language (ASL) For Credit, from the previous year's legislative session.
- Involving ODHH in MDOT's Human Services Transportation Coordinating Committee.

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