

NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Social Services

ROY COOPER • Governor
KODY H. KINSLEY • Secretary
SUSAN G. OSBORNE • Assistant Secretary for County Operations

February 8, 2022

Dear County Department of Social Services Directors,

A few months ago, the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) had the pleasure of speaking to all Department of Social Services directors regarding a new service funded through the Division of Health Benefits to improve communication access for Deaf, Deaf/Blind and Hard of Hearing individuals in healthcare settings. Through this service we can now reimburse for communication access services (e.g., Sign language interpreting) in approved settings. Approved settings include most doctor visits, mental and behavior health and adult care services taking place outside of hospital. DSDHH can also coordinate and pay for Support Service Providers (SSPs) for individuals who are DeafBlind needing human guide, visual/environmental and transportation support for their health care appointments.


Included with this mailing is our Medicaid Communication Access brochure (English and Spanish versions). We are asking that you make these brochures available in your office so beneficiaries can pick them up on their own. We are also hoping to target people with hearing loss and directly share this information with them. To help your staff understand who might benefit from this service (in addition to Deaf people that use sign language), we would like to share the following information with you:

- Hearing loss and tinnitus are the number one combat related disabilities for veterans
- Over 30% of adults between the ages 65 and 75 have some type of hearing loss
- Hearing aids and Cochlear implants are not a cure for hearing loss

We also want to support your work with individuals that are Deaf, Deaf/Blind and Hard of Hearing. We encourage you to reach out to the [local DSDHH Regional Center](#) that serves your county to request assistance. Our Regional Centers are available to provide consultation and advocacy upon request. Additionally, we are available for training and education for your DSS staff.

For more information about this service please contact the DSDHH Medicaid Communication Access Coordinator via email dsdhh.medicaid.commaccess@dhhs.nc.gov or phone/VP (984) 884-1093.

Sincerely,


Susan Osborne, Assistant Secretary


Jan Withers, DSDHH Director

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