



N.C. Division of Services  
for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing

# Effective Communication: Serving Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind Clients

Statewide DSS Directors Conference Call  
April 1, 2014



North Carolina  
Department  
of Health and  
Human Services

# Dear County Director Letter

- SUBJECT: Interpreter Services for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind
- DATE: March 13, 2014
- Co-signed by DSS Director Wayne Black and DSDHH Director Jan Withers
- Your customers are our customers, too



# Hearing Loss: Prevalence and Growth

- In 2010, 16.2% (1,182,610) adults in North Carolina had a hearing loss.
- By 2030, the number of adults in North Carolina with a hearing loss will increase by 41% - to 1,669,518.
- Hearing loss is the 3<sup>rd</sup> most prevalent, but treatable, disabling condition among seniors following arthritis and high blood pressure.

# Why Does It Matter?

- Approximately 40% of deaf adults are unemployed and 90% are underemployed.
- Approximately one third of all deaf adults rely on some form of governmental assistance.

# Why Does It Matter?

- Ramifications of adult-onset hearing loss:
  - Depression, Anxiety, Withdrawal/Isolation, Impaired memory, Paranoia, Reduced coping skills, Diminished earning power
- The average person with adult-onset hearing loss waits 7 to 15 years before seeking services for hearing loss.

# So, How Do We Meet Their Needs?

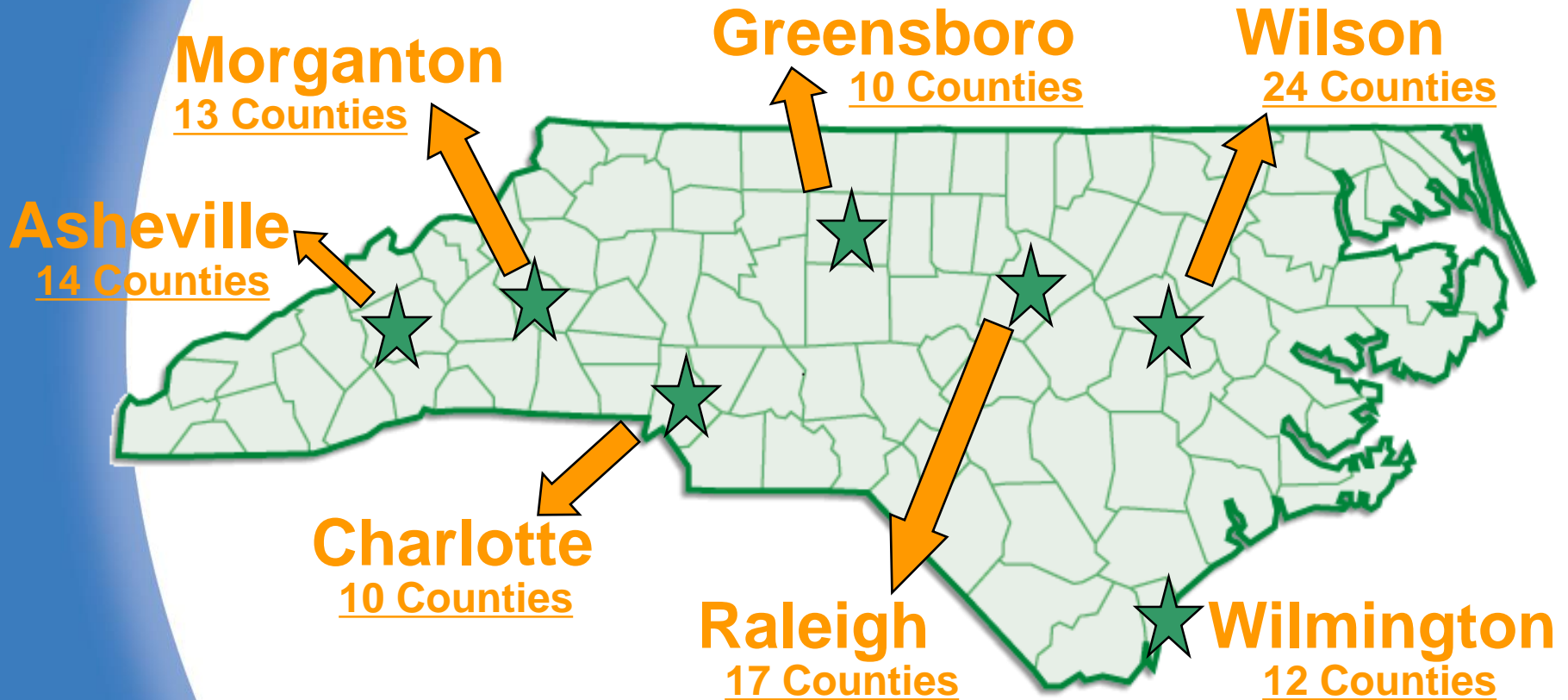
- 73 staff serving all 100 counties
- In addition to Direct Client Services:
  - CAPACITY-BUILDING: Training, Consultation, Technical Assistance
  - For public and private agencies

# Capacity-Building

- A key service provided by DSDHH
- State level (Central Office Staff)
  - Dear County Director Letter
  - Social Services Institute
- Local level (7 Regional Centers)
  - Training to County DSS
  - Consultation on Individual Cases



# DSDHH has 7 Regional Centers



All 100 North Carolina counties are served





# Regional Center Support

- Staff Training
  - Hearing Loss (in general)
  - Cultural Sensitivity
- Consultation
  - Technology / Equipment loans
  - Accommodations Needed for Effective Service Delivery.

# Effectively Serving Deaf DSS Clients

- Our customers are your customers, too.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires state government entities to provide accommodations for equal access.
- Providing accommodations is win-win.



# Sign Language Interpreters

- Interpreters are professionals
  - Specialized education; degrees
  - State and national credentials
  - NC state license
  - Code of Ethics
- Qualified Interpreter
- Approx. 460 licensed sign language interpreters in NC

# Effectively Serving Deaf DSS Clients

- Share the DCDL with your staff
- Share DSDHH resources with your staff
- Key Resources for DSS Staff regarding sign language interpreting services:
  - Carlotta Dixon (DSS Title VI-Civil Rights Coordinator)
  - Jennifer Johnson (DSDHH Communication Access Manager)



Communication, the human  
connection, is the key to  
personal and career success.

– Paul J. Meyer



# DSDHH CONTACTS

- [www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh)
- For Regional Centers:  
<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh/where.htm>
- Jennifer Johnson, Communication Access Manager
  - [Jennifer.B.Johnson@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Jennifer.B.Johnson@dhhs.nc.gov)
  - 919-874-2229
- Stephanie Johnson, Regional Services Manager
  - [Stephanie.Johnson@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Johnson@dhhs.nc.gov)
  - 919-874-2261

