**Georgia Commission on Hearing Impaired and Deaf Persons**

**Thursday, March 19th**

**1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**Auditory Verbal Center**

**1901 Century Blvd. #20**

**Atlanta, GA 30345**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present: Ms. Mary Reed, Ms. Laura Sarsfield, Dr. Helena Solodar**

**Members Absent: Mr. Chuck Leavell, Mr. Comer Yates**

**Staff Present: Ms. Katherine Cadena**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Solodar at 1:33 p.m.

Members were given a moment to review the minutes from the December 19th meeting. All members agreed with the minutes.

Dr. Solodar welcomed Commission members and guests to the meeting. She stated that the dates of the future meetings will change. It will technically be her last meeting on the Commission. Ms. Sarsfield is officially off the Commission. The next meeting date will move from May 19th to June 16th. It will be located at the Atlanta Speech School. The other meetings will be held September 29th and December 15th. Names will be submitted to the Governor’s Office for Executive Appointments for consideration as some current members are rolling off the Commission due to term expirations.

Dr. Kelly Hermanns from the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Intervention program (UNHSI) discussed program updates. She gave raw data indicating an eight percent improvement from loss to follow- up from 2012 to 2013. Children are still going through the system for 2014 so there’s no definitive data on that as of yet. There are concerns that the urgency of language is not emphasized nationally as a high number of loss to follow up, locally and nationally. Staff is trying to get a breakdown of other factors regarding children who are lost to follow-up including mother education, insurance, etc. Private intervention loss to follow-up from diagnosis to intervention decreased by seven percent. Analysis will be done by category of loss to follow-up to understand who these children are. They met their federal grant guideline to continue being funded. 100 Babies Project has 73 babies that are actively enrolled. If families don’t participate in the Georgia Pines Early Orientation Hearing visit, they may not get information about being enrolled in the 100 Babies Project. Information has been given to audiologists and a video has been made. There are limitations about having families participate because of institutional review boards. Nationally, one-third of people opt-out of home visits regardless of the program. The 100 babies project has a two-pronged goal: To ensure children who are hard of hearing are on trajectory for grade level reading and to identify systematic gaps in the process to achieve grade level reading. Some gaps have been identified. The Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH) has been involved in developing a state self-evaluation of programs. DPH is interested in conducting a self-evaluation of the UNHSI and the Early Hearing Orientation Visit with regard to Georgia Pines. Members discussed if Georgia Pines is a provider and if so, then there may be a potential conflict of interest and evaluation is needed to determine if their involvement is appropriate at the current level. More babies will continue to be enrolled, and enrollment may exceed 100 babies.

Ms. Reed discussed the job seminar for employers, Untapped Talent that was held on Friday, March 6. She said it was the most accommodating event she has ever been to, with plenty of interpreters and a CART services provider who donated her time. Representatives from Home Depot spoke to the attendees. The Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency assisted with the planning of the seminar. Rebecca Sills retired and Rebecca Story is now the contact. Recruiting employers to attend was difficult. In order to have a successful job fair, at least 20-30 employers need to participate. A job fair is scheduled for Friday, April 24th at Georgia Perimeter College. Ms. Reed will reach out to GVRA and the Georgia Department of Labor to assist with coordination and finding potential employers.

Dr. Solodar said there is no update on the Adopt-a-Band initiative. It was discussed at the Georgia Academy of Audiology meeting, but there’s no report from the committee.

Ms. Sarsfield discussed Georgia in the Loop. Juliette Sterkins is coming to have a looping presentation on May 11 from 3-5 PM at DeKalb Medical Center. Audiologists are invited to attend. Continuing education credit will be given for two hours.

On March 6 there was a Georgia Pathway meeting at the Atlanta Speech School.

It was recommended that in the future, all members send monthly updates to other members on Commission projects.

There is a recent interest in establishing a PhD Audiology program and Dr. Solodar will keep the members posted of any information at the next Commission meeting.