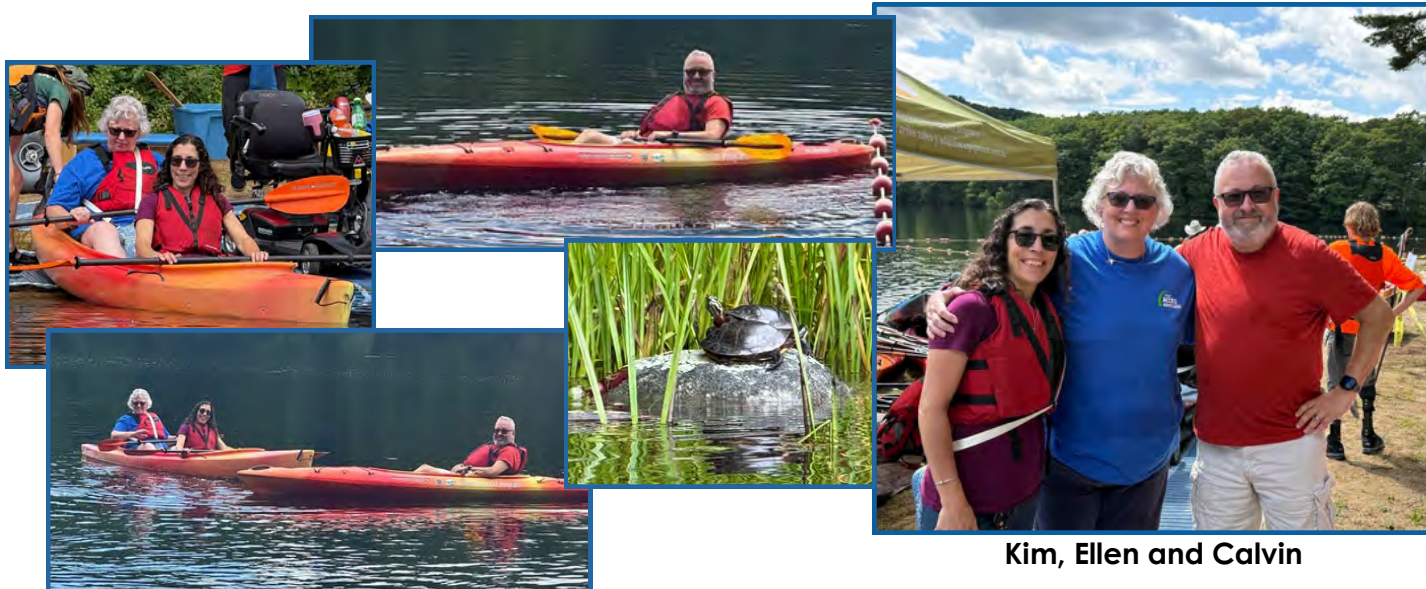


ADA Day at Dunn State Park

Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Council [MASILC] hosted another annual celebration of the ADA at Dunn State Park in Gardner, MA on July 31, 2026. DHILS staff were pleased to participate! Lunch was provided as well as accessible kayaking and hiking. A little rain paused the celebration, but it was otherwise a wonderful, sunny and fun day!



Kim, Ellen and Calvin

MCDHH & DTA Chip Tap Card Rollout

Important news for Massachusetts residents who receive SNAP and cash benefits: over the next several weeks, DTA clients across the state will start getting new Chip/Tap EBT cards in the mail. These cards are going to work like the debit and credit cards many people already use every day, with chip and tap technology built in. This will be more secure and protected.

Learn more about the Chip/Tap EBT Card statewide rollout via the EBT Chip/Tap Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page: <https://bit.ly/4wvkrri>



DPH & MCDHH: Advancing the Next Chapter of Deaf Recovery Services in Massachusetts

Advancing the Next Chapter of Deaf Recovery Services in Massachusetts



The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) are pleased to share an important update about the future of substance use recovery services for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals across the Commonwealth.

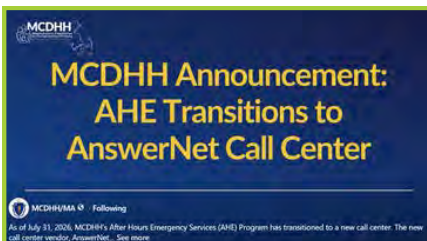
Beginning July 1, 2026, Deaf Recovery services transitioned from direct administration by MCDHH into a broader network of specialized behavioral health providers with expertise in substance use treatment and recovery support.

This transition represents more than a change in how these services are administered. It reflects the continued evolution of Deaf Recovery services in Massachusetts. By integrating these services more directly into our specialized behavioral health treatment and recovery networks, we are strengthening them and making them more sustainable, accessible, and equitable for years to come.

Our goal remains unchanged: to provide Deaf and hard of hearing individuals with access to high-quality, culturally responsive, and accessible treatment and recovery services wherever they live in the Commonwealth.

Watch the video here: <https://youtu.be/Lo4AE-q1jRA?si=vA0q0d-FyR6iLeRW>

MCDHH's After Hours Emergency Services (AHE) Program: New Call Center



As of July 31, 2026, MCDHH's *After Hours Emergency Services (AHE) Program* has transitioned to a new call center. The new call center vendor, *AnswerNet*, is up and running and even offers a new feature that connects callers to qualified VRI interpreters via 360Direct using a QR Code.

Learn more via the vlog at <https://www.facebook.com/reel/1760371438716930>.

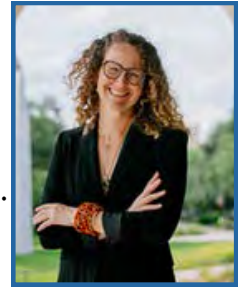
Transcript: <https://bit.ly/4xKILXR>

Questions? Contact Cat Dvar, *Director of Communication Access Services* at cat.b.dvar@mass.gov.

New MCDHH Chief Procurement & Contract Officer

Dina Rae Padden has joined MCDHH as the new Chief Procurement & Contract Officer. Dina started Monday, July 27th, 2026, and will report directly to Sehin Mekuria in the Administration and Finance Department. Please extend a warm welcome to Dina as the newest member of the MCDHH team.

Watch video: youtu.be/XLzf7IYTsa4?si=YLEOMUv34psq05ao



Sorenson Express: On-Demand ASL Interpreting for Businesses

Sorenson Express delivers on-demand interpretation services through video, helping organizations connect Deaf and hearing participants in real time — anytime and anywhere.

<https://sorenson.com/enterprise/sorenson-express/>



Fuel Assistance Program at WCAC

As summer begins to slow down, Worcester Community Action Council (WCAC) is looking ahead to the 2026 – 2027 heating season! The online portal for returning applicants opens October 1st, 2026, and re-certification applications will be available by November 1st, 2026. **Returning applicants will need their account number and PIN to submit through the online portal.** Check out the updated 2026-2027 heating season income guidelines below to see if you qualify.

Please expect delays in processing applications and payments due to the federal cuts in our program causing staffing shortages. Typical annual benefits for fuel assistance are drastically lower this year due to these cuts as well. Heating-related emergencies will be prioritized.

<https://wcac.net/fuel-assistance/>



HEAP INCOME ELIGIBILITY 2025-2026

NUMBER IN HOUSEHOLD	ANNUAL INCOME	INCOME PAST 4 WEEKS
1	\$51,777	\$4,314
2	\$67,709	\$5,642
3	\$83,641	\$6,970
4	\$99,573	\$8,297
5	\$115,504	\$9,625
6	\$131,436	\$10,953

*for additional breakdowns on income eligibility please contact heap@wcac.net

Your Access Advocates (YAA) Summer Outing



Calvin, Ellen, Kim and Joan

Friday, August 21st was YAA's annual summer outing at Douglas State Park. Staff enjoyed a tasty cookout/potluck lunch and then played games led by DHILS.

The Elephant Game



Charades



September 2026 Awareness

9/4 NATIONAL FOOD BANK DAY

- First Friday in September.
- No one should go to bed hungry.
- 42 million men, women, and children struggle to pay for and have enough food.



9/11 NATIONAL PATRIOT DAY

- Honors the memory of the nearly 3,000 innocent victims who died in the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.



9/16 NATIONAL GUACAMOLE DAY

- Avocados are a 'superfood' - rich in vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and healthy fats.
- Guacamole originated with the Aztecs in Mexico.



9/20 - 9/26 INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF THE DEAF

- Last full week of September.
- Celebrates the accomplishments of people who are deaf and promotes their rights.

SEPTEMBER: NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

- Everyone is affected by suicide, *not just the victim*.
- On average, one person dies by suicide every 16.2 minutes.
- Two-thirds of the people who die by suicide suffer from depression.





Seeking Deaf Adults for a Research Study about Sex Education

This study explores the recalled sex education experiences of disabled people who grew up with the A.D.A. and I.D.E.A. in the United States.

We want to ensure the educational experiences of Deaf people are included to improve education for all students impacted by ableism.

You will be asked to fill out an anonymous online survey. The survey takes 10-20 minutes to complete.

To participate:

- You must be 18 years old or older.
- You must be born after 1989.
- You must be able to read and write English. You can do this on your own or with the help of an assistant.
- Have one or more forms of disability. This can include deafness.
- You must have been disabled before you turned 19.
- You must have learned sex education while you lived in the United States.
- You must have been homeschooled for less than half of your K-12 education.

Pick a way to find the survey:



<http://tiny.cc/DisabledSexEduSurvey>



Contact the principal investigator:

Arya Boris, M.E.d. (student) at aboris@widener.edu

The faculty advisor is Dr. P. Lannutti, Center for Human Sexuality Studies, Widener University

The Widener University Institutional Review Board has approved this study. I.R.B. Protocol #925

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED!

TOPIC

Understanding Experiences With Communication Barriers
Faced by d/Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Patients in Primary
Healthcare Settings



SHARE YOUR... REQUIREMENTS TO PARTICIPATE

- Thoughts
- Experiences
- Ideas
- Identify as d/Deaf or hard of hearing
- Be 18 years or older
- Have used non-audiology healthcare services in the past 12–24 months
- Includes: physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner
- Reside in the United States



SCAN THE QR CODE!



WHAT YOU WILL DO?

Scan the QR code to complete a 15–20 minute online survey sharing your experiences and perspectives on communication challenges encountered during primary healthcare appointments.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!

Stacey R. Lim, AuD, PhD, CCC-A
Lim3s@cmich.edu
Ridley N. Kemeny, B.S.
Berth1kn@cmich.edu

The Central Michigan University Institutional
Review Board has approved this study

CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

PARTICIPATE NOW!



**DEAF PEOPLE OF COLOR
— CONNECTING —**



BUSINESS VIDEOPHONE NUMBER



STRICTLY FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES



**THIS
VIDEOPHONE IS
STRICTLY FOR:**



WORK



RESOURCES



PARTNERSHIPS



**EVENTS &
BUSINESS MATTERS**

OUR BUSINESS VIDEOPHONE NUMBER

702 • 425 • 6904





This videophone is strictly for business purposes.
Messages that are not related to DPOCC services, resources,
partnerships, events, or other business matters will not be
responded to.
THANK YOU FOR RESPECTING OUR TIME.



**Thank you for helping us keep this line available for
the Deaf community who truly need resources and support.**
We appreciate your understanding! 



Worcester Parent Guide to Community Resources

[CLICK HERE FOR ENGLISH GUIDE](#)



Missed a Newsletter?
Past issues are on our website!

[CLICK HERE](#)

Updated Therapists for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Directory

[CLICK HERE](#)



Questions? Contact your Skills Trainer

Joan Philip	DHILS Director	508-762-1165 (VP)
Priscilla Langone	DHILS Administrative Assistant	508-556-1600 (VP)
Ellen Perkins	DHILS Asst. Manager/Hard of Hearing Skills Trainer	508-502-7576 (Voice); 508-762-1354 (VP)
Rosemary Moreira	Senior Deaf Skills Trainer (Full-time)	508-762-1166 (VP)
Denise Paro	Deaf Skills Trainer (Part-time)	508-762-1021 (VP)
Calvin Calandra	Deaf Skills Trainer (Part-time)	508-762-1350 (VP)
Vacant	Deaf Skills Trainer (Part-time)	
Kim White	Staff Interpreter	508-755-1042 (Voice); 508-283-1036 (VP)

**Contact
Us**

Videophone: 508-762-1164

TTY: 508-755-1003

www.youraccessadvocates.org



YAA: www.facebook.com/YourAccessAdvocates

DHILS Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/yaa.dhils/>

