

## **ATEL Committee Meeting**

### **Public Utilities Commission**

**June 12, 2014**

**9:00 am**

#### **Attendees:**

**Denise Corson, Roberta Green, James Litvack, Pam Kling, Ellen Smith, Courtenay Petracca, Jeanne Panarace, Laurie Duffy, Melissa Rosenberg, Ken McCarthy and Cart Reporter.**

- 1. Review minutes - minutes were reviewed and accepted.**
- 2. Legislative update - Representative Naughton, along with Representatives Coderre, Jacquard, Walsh, Handy introduced bill H7068 to the Heath, Education and Welfare Committee on 1/14/14, the hearing was held on 2/21/14, but the Committee recommended measure be held for further study on 2/26/14. Denise contacted Representative Naughton's office to check on the bill status and her reply was "Committee typically and usually votes to hold for further study. Next step the Committee will post bill for consideration ie an up or down vote by Committee. If Committee approves bill then it is referred to House Calendar for a vote. If passes House bill is referred to Senate and assigned to a Senate Committee. The Committee sets hearing on bills and consideration of bills. If bill passes, Committee then to Senate calendar. If bill is passed by both Senate & House then it goes to Governor. The Governor has 10 days to either sign the bill or veto it or do nothing which allows bill to become law as well. Hope**

**this helps! It's not over with "held for further study"! The committee was disappointed to learn this considering this is a budget neutral bill. The committee suggested that they should send out another letter in support for the bill to the chair of the House H.E.W. James stated he would send out another letter to the Committee Chair, Repr. McNamara.**

**3. DOH Collaboration/Title 5- Business And Professional, Chapter 5-49 –Hearing Aid Dealers And Fitters- Dave Abell with the CDHH is advocating for hearing loops and T-Coils, and is in the process of setting one up in a church in NK. Denise had a meeting with him last month in which he discussed the following from 5-49-3 d and e:**

**d) The receipt shall contain language that verifies that the client has been informed about the benefits of audio switch technology, including increased access to telephones and assistive listening systems required under the "American with Disabilities Act of 1990", and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The client shall be informed that an audio switch is also referred to as a telecoil, t-coil or t-switch.**

**(e) The receipt shall contain language that informs the client about the Rhode Island adaptive telephone equipment loan program committee established by chapter 39-23 that provides assistive communications devices to residents of this state who have hearing loss and about the Rhode Island commission on the deaf and hard of hearing established by chapter 23-1.8 that provides resources related to hearing loss.**

In this Legislation, it states that clients need to be informed about T-coils and the ATEL Committee, which many Audiologists are not aware that this is legislatively mandated. Laurie mentioned that many people would not want T-coils in their hearing aids because the hearing aids they tend to prefer are too small to fit the T-coil also that currently in RI there are not many loop systems that are available to people with T-coils. However, if there were more loop systems available to HOH people, they might choose to have a hearing aid with a T-coil. Also, many audiologist don't refer individuals to the ATEL program because they are not eligible; however, ATEL also provides services to ineligible clients, through referrals to other organizations, demonstrations and our loaner library at TechACCESS. Denise is going begin a subcommittee with Jeanne Panarace, and Colleen Polselli with the DOH and RICAT, to come up with outreach material to Audiologists and Hearing Aid Dealers to inform them of this Legislation and increase referrals to the ATEL Program. Laurie states that the Audiologists and Hearing Aid Dealers and Fitters Committees do not meet regularly anymore. So this would not be an effective way to outreach through them.

4. OSCIL Collaboration - Denise and Melissa are working on a collaboration to be able to offer both the Freedom Alert and ATEL Telephone, and working with local Fire Departments and the RI Special Needs Emergency Registry to identify potential clients.

5. Open discussion- Jeanne mentioned that the former Director of Goodwill, Paul Pickens passed away. Jeanne also wanted to comment that she wasn't aware on how long it takes for the RI

**Special Needs Emergency Registry to update new information, and is there any way to verify that changes have been made. Jeanne also mentioned issues with the network adaptor and a power strip fitting in the same standard outlet; Denise stated that if she used a flat mount surge protector that should correct the problem. Courtenay mentioned the Hamilton Town Hall Meeting was a big success last month with about 24, mostly professionals, showing up for the information. Courtenay, James Melissa and Denise are planning on doing 3 more at the Warwick Library, on July 21st, September 15th and November 17th with CART services, but no lunch.**

**6. Next quarterly meetings scheduled at 9am- 11am at the PUC: September 11th and December 11th.**