

Interpreter Licensure in Minnesota

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OPENING REMARKS BY



**MADC President
John Fechter**

**MRID President
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THANKS TO...



for providing interpreting services!



THANKS TO...



ASLIS

for providing live-streaming services and staff!



THANKS TO...



for giving space for us to use!



MAIN PRESENTER

Howard A. Rosenblum


CEO & Director of Legal Services

National Association of the Deaf

- **Oldest national civil rights org (1880)**
- **Mission: preserve, protect, promote civil, human, and linguistic rights of all deaf and hard of hearing in the USA**



TOWN HALL RULES

- One person at a time to share thoughts
 - Come up to stage please when called
 - Introduce yourself first
 - Stay on topic of interpreter licensure
 - Respect other people's opinions
 - Use facts; do not attack people
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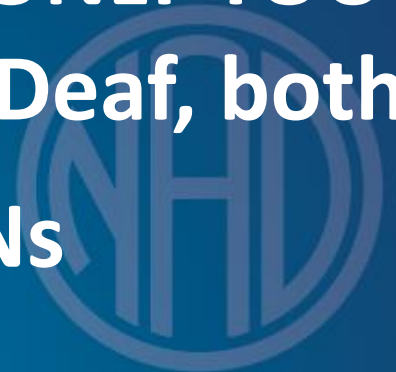
WHY ARE WE HERE?

- Deaf/HOH/DeafBlind/Deaf+ and Interpreters need each other
- We have trust issues now
 - Certification issues
 - Qualification issues
 - Ethics issues
 - Agency issues
- Must work together to resolve

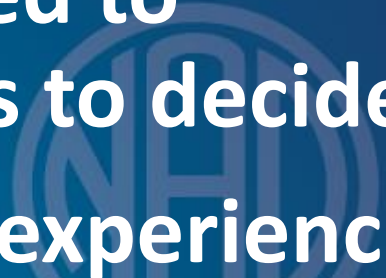


LICENSURE - YES OR NO?

- Licensure is one option, can fix many problems but not all problems
- NAD recommends licensure and will work with states to help if community wants it
- NAD does not decide for you; **ONLY YOU CAN DECIDE** (Interpreters and Deaf, both)
- Need to explore PROs and CONs



RESPONSE


- Any licensure bill usually can only pass when it has support from most of the affected population (deaf and interpreters)
 - Not good to have conflicting bills, need a consensus bill
 - Do we need a licensure bill? Need to examine problems and solutions to decide
 - Can compare with other states' experiences
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ILLINOIS EXPERIENCE

- Many failures with licensure bill attempts
- IAD & IRID & EFE joined to host town halls
- Researched facts – state registry data
- Community collaborated on licensure bill
- Feedback shared with legislators
- Licensure bill passed!

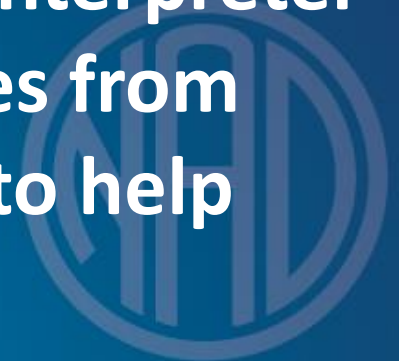


FLAWS IN SOME STATE LAWS

- Many states have great licensure laws but there are always flaws that need to be fixed from time to time
 - Example: one state required all interpreters to be certified to get licensed, including out of town interpreters who come to work at conferences
 - Challenge? Only one licensed interpreter was trained in DeafBlind interpreting and not available for a DeafBlind person attending a conference
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LESSON LEARNED?

- **Difficult to design a perfect licensure law**
- **Best to draft a very simple licensure bill, put the complex parts in regulations not law**
- **Agency/Commission can change regulations easily, while law is hard to change**
- **Agency/Commission can have an Interpreter Board that includes representatives from interpreting and deaf community to help decide the regulations**




LAW

vs REGULATION

- Establish licensure
- Who can license?
- No practice without
- Power to regulate
- Power to collect fees
- Power to punish
- Establish board
- Parallel other licenses
- Who qualifies for licensure? CEUs?
- How qualify?
- Levels?
- Amount of fees
- Makeup of Board
- Exceptions?
- Incorporate Ethics

BUT NEED LICENSURE??

- **Anyone can call themselves an interpreter (South Africa, Florida, etc)**
 - **No requirement for certification**
 - **No legal mandate for ethics**
 - **De-certification does not stop bad actors**
 - **Service providers have no clue who is qualified**
 - **Good agencies can filter out bad ones, but what about bad agencies and bad freelancers?**
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- A faint, circular logo for the National Association of Deaf Interpreters (NAD) is visible in the background on the right side of the slide. The logo features the letters 'NAD' in a stylized font within a circular border.

IT'S A NUMBERS GAME

- If there are significant numbers of uncertified interpreters, no ethical constraints even with agency vetting
- All professions are licensed and regulated
- Interpreters work with licensed professionals and should have equal responsibility/ethics
- Need to design licensure to address different needs of Metro areas versus rural areas



THE DATA SO FAR...

MRID/MADC SURVEY (as of 9/27/19):

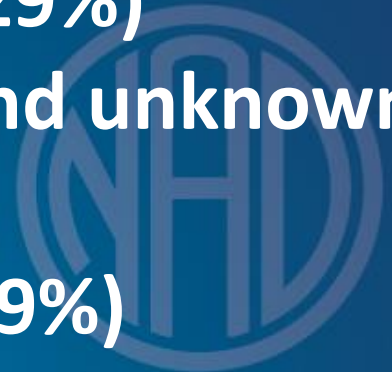
- 450 TOTAL (414 ASL/English; 36 Deaf)
 - 318 Certified ASL/English Interpreters (77%)
 - 96 Non-Certified ASL/English Interpreters (23%)
 - 12 Certified Deaf Interpreters (33%)
 - 24 Non-Certified Deaf Interpreters (66%)



THE DATA SO FAR...

One Agency:

- 447 in Metro
 - 311 Certified (70%)
 - 130 Non-Certified & 6 Lapsed (30%)
- 203 in Greater MN
 - 145 Certified (71%)
 - 53 Non-Certified & 5 Lapsed (29%)
- 792 ALL (including out of state and unknown)
 - 560 Certified (71%)
 - 232 Non-Certified & Lapsed (29%)



THE DATA SO FAR...

Another Agency:

- 409 RID Certified (with 6 Lapsed)
- 5 BEI Certified
- ≥ 50 EIPA
- ≥ 75 Non-Certified (with goal of certification)
- ≤ 50 Non-Certified Deaf (with no cert plans)



THE DATA SO FAR...

RID:

- **533 Certified**
 - 260 NIC (all levels): 226 NIC, 20 Advanced, 14 Master
 - 205 NAD (all): 130 NAD III, 62 NAD IV, 13 NAD V
 - 145 CI + 138 CT (some overlap)
 - 23 CSC
 - 11 SC:L
 - 10 Ed:K-12
 - 9 IC/TC + 4 IC + 1 TC
 - 9 CDI
- **5 Certified Inactive + 1 Certified Retired**
- **63 Associate**



POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

- Interpreters need to earn money
- Certification tests are expensive
- Most certification tests have inherent bias
- Not all forms of interpreting have certification (DeafBlind, tri-lingual, medical, etc)
- Licensure on top of certification = additional \$\$
- License fees need to be reasonable
- However, licensure limits supply and therefore rates can go up to cover the extra cost



FINAL WORDS BEFORE Q&A

- You decide the interpreter licensure issue
- Need consensus on issue and details
- Status quo is not good; need positive change
- Today is first step towards some consensus
- Will not solve all problems today
- Important to have ongoing dialogue



Q & A Discussion

