

The Office of Attorney General Reaches Settlements to Assure Effective Communications for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Communities

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HARRISBURG – The Office of Attorney General announced settlements with two nonprofit companies that are leaders in providing interpretation services in the commonwealth, following complaints of ineffective communication at Pennsylvania hospitals.

The settlements include enforceable assurances from [Deaf-Hearing Communication Centre, Inc. \(DHCC\)](#) and [Center for Hearing and Deaf Services, Inc. \(HDS\)](#) that re-commit the companies to assigning only qualified interpreters who can facilitate effective communication. Both [DHCC](#) and [HDS](#) deny conducting their businesses in a manner that violates any laws.

The Office of Attorney General’s Civil Rights Enforcement Section investigated complaints from two individuals who reported subpar American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation services at hospitals in Philadelphia and Erie, which respectively contracted with DHCC and HDS.

Under the settlement, DHCC also will make a \$5,000 donation to the Pennsylvania Society for the Advancement of the Deaf.

State and federal disability laws require businesses and other public accommodations to take reasonable measures to ensure that communications involving persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are effective.

Interpreters assigned to the hospitals by DHCC and HDS were not registered with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry’s Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, as required by “Act 57,” Pennsylvania’s Sign Language Interpreter and Transliterator State Registration Act. Under the settlements, both DHCC and HDS agreed to prioritize registered interpreters when making assignments.

This matter was handled by the Office of Attorney General’s Civil Rights Enforcement Section.