

EDITOR'S PREFACE

It is fitting to include in the report of the proceedings of the Fourth Biennial Conference of the Professional Rehabilitation Workers with the Adult Deaf mention of the significant events in the area of vocational rehabilitation of deaf people that have occurred since the last conference was held in October 1970.

The reorganization of the Rehabilitation Services Administration which was announced in the *Federal Register* of June 9, 1971, included the establishment of an Office for Deafness and Communicative Disorders, providing for the first time divisional status to the agency leadership concerned with the development of programs and policies relating to deafness and communicative disorders.

Increased consumer interest in the improvement and expansion of services available to them, which was long needed, has been one of the critical factors leading to the establishment of the Office.

Herewith is presented in full context the statement of organization and functions of the Office for Deafness and Communicative Disorders.

“Provides for the full development of projects, programs, and services for individuals who suffer from deafness and communicative disorders. Reviews project grant applications as assigned to the Office for Deafness and Communicative Disorders, in accordance with agency guidelines, appropriate evaluative criteria, and central-regional office responsibilities. Assumes leadership for achievement of agency missions as assigned by the Commissioner on the basis of the office's special expertise. Provides leadership and consultation to regional offices, State agencies, and other grantees in the development and expansion of rehabilitation programs and services for those persons suffering from deafness and communicative disorders. Maintains liaison and consultation with national organizations of and for the deaf and with the deaf community nationwide to serve as a focal point and to provide increased leadership and advocacy for the Nation's deaf and those suffering from communicative disorders. In collaboration with the

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Division of Special Populations and other appropriate agency staff, develops and implements program strategies and approaches to reach those persons suffering from deafness and communicative disorders who are on public assistance as well as such persons who are resident in target poverty communities (e.g., migratory agricultural workers). Within assigned area of responsibility, collaborates with the Office of Planning and Policy Development and other appropriate agency staff in the development of guidelines, manual issuances, and other directives for existing programs serving those suffering from deafness and communicative disorders and for those programs mandated by legislative amendment, such as vocational education and juvenile delinquency. Develops appropriate methods to facilitate client participation in the formulation of program objectives within the agency and at the State agency and other grantee level."

The PRWAD realized a cherished dream in February 1972 in the opening of a home office at Halex House in Silver Spring, Maryland. A research utilization grant awarded to PRWAD through the Social and Rehabilitation Service for the preparation and publication of *Deafness Annual*, the first issue of which appeared in 1968 as a monograph of the *Journal of Rehabilitation of the Deaf*, made possible the hiring of full-time professional staff to manage and promote the interests of the organization.

Enhancement in membership, in services rendered and in professional outreach are already being realized and will be furthered in the plans underway for the establishment of State and local chapters of PRWAD.

The joint sponsorship of Gallaudet College and the Rehabilitation Services Administration of a historic planning conference in June 1972 for a National Conference on Deafness in the Seventies brought together representatives of HEW agencies and public and private organizations concerned with deafness to discuss specific actions needed in developing and extending more and better opportunities to deaf people. Dr. Edward Newman, Commissioner, RSA, at a meeting he held with deaf community leadership in May 1971, authored the concept of the National Conference which will take place early in 1973. His words of encouragement at the PRWAD conference evinced still more his deep concern and interest in advancing the rehabilitation of deaf people.

The retirement of Albert G. Seal in June 1972 following 32 years of dedicated service to deaf and hard of hearing people at the Louisiana Division of Vocational Rehabilitation leaves the professional and consumer deaf community significantly poorer. A pioneer and visionary in a field which had great need of both, his many contributions will be felt for years to come.

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