

Healthy Signs

National Center for Deaf Health Research

March 2012



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Mission of NCDHR:
To promote health and prevent disease in the Deaf and hard of hearing populations through community-based participatory research.

2008 “Deaf Health Survey Results” Report in an ASL Video

An ASL adapted video is featured on a top national public health journal



A video adaptation of a published article, *Community Participatory Research with Deaf Sign Language Users to Identify Health Inequities*, has been produced through the efforts of the NCDHR Education and Training Committee, members of the Deaf community and NCDHR’s staff. A top national public health journal, The American Journal of Public Health (AJPH), has featured this video on their website homepage. Since March 16, when it was posted, the video has been viewed by nearly 300 people through the United States and across the globe. This marks the second time an NCDHR publication in a top academic journal has been accompanied by an ASL video delivering the information contained

in the printed English article.

Lori DeWindt, a Deaf research coordinator with NCDHR and actor in the video, said: “This video is important because it provides the Deaf community with public health information in their first language, allowing them to identify and address the health issues that matter to them.”

This report on the Deaf Health Survey (published by AJPH in written English and ASL video) presents analyses of data collected from deaf adults in Rochester in 2008. The report identifies some Deaf community strengths, such as low smoking rates, as well as some health inequities. NCDHR researchers initially shared these analyses with the Rochester Deaf community in a series of town hall meetings. In these town hall meetings, the Rochester Deaf community selected three health inequities as public health priorities. These three priorities (obesity, suicide risk, and violence) are the focus of subsequent research grants. To learn more about these research studies, click on the links below:

- [Deaf Weight Wise](#)
- [Factors Influencing Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration Affecting Deaf People](#)
- [Deaf Sign Language Users, Suicide and Social Network Characteristics](#)

We are thankful for the support and involvement of the following individuals in this project, in addition to NCDHR staff and committees: Nancy Chin, Lori DeWindt, Patrick Graybill, Jeret Hackbarth, Aaron Kelstone & Kim Kelstone.

To view the video click: [ASL Video](#)

To read the URM news release about the article click: [Article](#)

NCDHR Poster Wins Outstanding Poster Award: Overall Impact



During the CDC 11th Annual Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) Meeting (St. Louis, March 4-6, 2012), an NCDHR poster presentation was selected for the “Outstanding Poster Award” in the category “Overall Impact”. The poster: “Violence and suicide attempts: Results of a survey of adults deaf since birth or early childhood” won the award. This poster reported finding from the 2008 Deaf Health Survey. Authors include Carlene Mowl, MPH, Amanda O’Hearn, PhD, Vincent Samar, PhD, Erika Sutter, MPH, and Steven Barnett, MD on behalf of the National Center for Deaf Health Research.

NCDHR Responds to NIDCD

NIDCD Sends out Request for Information



Where are they now? Kyle Gahagan

“When one door closes, another opens.” Since my departure from NCDHR this past summer, I’ve begun my third year here at RIT as a Biomedical Sciences major. My experiences at NCDHR and as a member of both the Hearing and Deaf community have helped me to begin to understand the complex interactions between life, health, and culture. I’ve learned that access to adequate health care isn’t evenly dispersed among minority communities, particularly the Deaf community. Deaf people are prone to face more barriers in the health care system. Recognizing these problems has led me to minor in ASL/Deaf Cultural Studies so that in the future I am able to bridge these gaps and break down these barriers between the Deaf community and effective health care.

This past October, former intern Ian DeAndrea-Lazarus and I had the privilege of joining NCDHR at the 139th American Public Health Association Conference in Washington, DC. We were part of a team that gave a poster presentation on one of our summer research projects, “Tailoring a Healthy Living Intervention to Deaf Adults: Sociocultural Data from the Target Group”. The experience further encouraged my already found interest in public health because it seemed as if each presentation raised new questions, and kept me on my toes. After watching other public health enthusiasts present their research which covered a broad spectrum of topics, I noticed a common denominator. Each researcher/physician, regardless of their research area, had one goal-to educate others.

Since then, I’ve been working as a peer tutor at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf tutoring English to deaf students. After working with Dr. Chin, an anthropologist at NCDHR, and close mentor of mine these past two years, I’ve found a strong interest in anthropology and the study of different cultures, particularly the Deaf culture. On top of being a peer tutor, I’m now also a TA for our Cultural Anthropology course here at RIT.

As my third year comes to an end, I look forward to what this summer holds for me. I was recently admitted into Harvard Medical School’s Clinical and Translational Research Program, where this summer I’ll conduct further research and become exposed to clinical experiences that will strengthen my knowledge come time for medical school. NCDHR has opened doors for me that I never would have thought possible looking back three years ago. I look forward to what the future has in store for me after medical school!

The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), one of the 27 Institutes and Centers of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, focuses on basic and clinical research on disorders of hearing, balance, taste, smell, voice, speech and language. Congress created NIDCD in 1988.

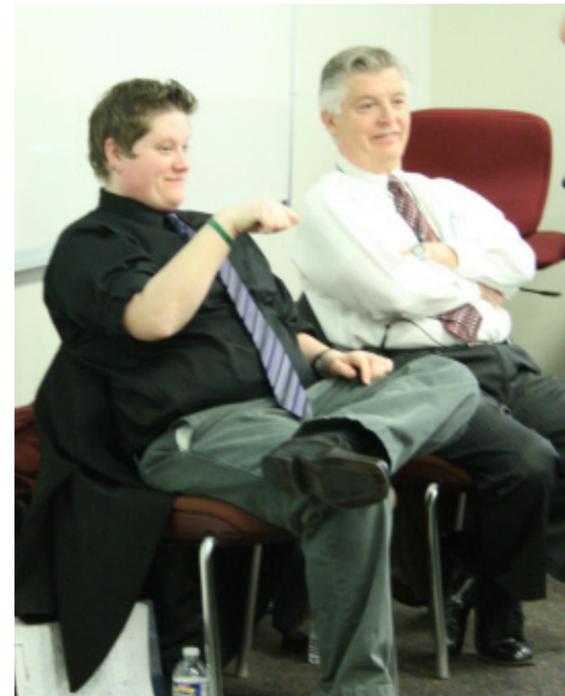
The NIDCD is now considering an expansion of its roles to incorporate Health Services Research (HSR) and Outcomes Research (OR). HSR examines how people get access to healthcare, how much healthcare costs, and what happens to patients because of this care. OR seeks to understand the results of healthcare practices and interventions such as what were the patients’ experiences and whether there were changes in their ability to function (i.e., quality of life).

NIDCD recently sent out requests to all interested researchers, including NCDHR, for feedback and comments on how NIDCD can build their scope of research. NCDHR and its partners put together a comprehensive list of resources and recommendations to help NIDCD enhance their strategic planning to improve the quality of life of all deaf people, including the recognition of their language, American Sign Language, and culture. This endeavor is just one of many examples of how NCDHR is helping governmental agencies better understand the issues faced by the communities that we work with.

3rd Annual Deaf Strong Hospital at St. John Fisher Continuing the education of the local pharmaceutical students

On March 7, NCDHR partnered with St. John Fisher College to hold the 3rd annual Deaf Strong Hospital for 80 first-year pharmaceutical students. Each year, first year students are placed into a role-reversal exercise where they enter a world of an unfamiliar language and culture. These students become patients with different ailments and are asked to navigate a system where communication is the biggest barrier.

The students navigate through an emergency department, pharmacy, psychiatrist's office and doctor's office where the primary language is American Sign Language (ASL). Many of these students have never been exposed to ASL and find the navigation and communication process challenging and confusing. A few students used what little ASL they knew, while others became frustrated, and would resort to writing back and forth. One station had interpreters to facilitate the communication process and to allow the students to realize the benefits of working with interpreters. One student, when discussing her experience trying to communicate in a language different than her own, expressed, "We have a class here for sign language in health care and I want to take it so that I'm able to help them better because it was really frustrating not knowing what was going on and I can't



imagine going through that every day" ([Democrat and Chronicle](#)).

Another student remarked about interpreters. ". . . I even felt uncomfortable when there was an interpreter there for you relaying the message back. ." When discussing what it was like to be in an environment where they didn't understand, the student commented, "I was sitting there wondering if I was the only one who wasn't understanding. It's hard to embrace everything when you don't know exactly what they're saying." ([Democrat and Chronicle](#))

While this is familiar to many Deaf people, the role-reversal has proven, over the years, to be a very influential and positive



experience for the students at both St. John Fisher and the University of Rochester. Eric DeRollo, a student from St. John Fisher that participated in this year's Deaf Strong Hospital explained:

diversity is. While students are exposed to diversity in the classroom, and some have been exposed to ASL in the past, actually placing the students in a situation where they are the minority provides that realistic educational experience of diversity and difference. Dr. Jennifer Matthews, Assistant Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences at St. John Fisher, expressed her perspective on Deaf Strong Hospital:



It turns the tables on the students so they can experience what it's like to be a patient in the health care system who doesn't speak the primary language of their provider, which is often the case with deaf patients. We can't teach empathy in the classroom, but putting them through this exercise indirectly forces them to learn about what it means to be empathetic and it forces that interaction. (St. John Fisher)

NCDHR's main purpose is to promote health and prevent disease in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities through Community Based Participatory Research, in doing so the center also provides educational opportunities, such as Deaf Strong Hospital, for students, healthcare professionals, and policy makers. The next Deaf Strong Hospital will be held at the University of Rochester's School of Medicine and Dentistry on September 7 for the incoming medical students.

Although challenging in many aspects, the exercise was a valuable experience that gave me a new perspective on the importance of interpersonal communication. It forced me to reflect on some of the things I may tend to take for granted, and gave me insight into a part of the community I was relatively unfamiliar with beforehand. When you're forced into a situation that seems foreign or uncomfortable, you learn more about yourself and some of the changes you may need to make to better prepare yourself. (Article from St. John Fisher, (St. John Fisher)



References for this article:
[Democrat and Chronicle http://www.democratandchronicle.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2012-303070045](http://www.democratandchronicle.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2012-303070045)

[St. John Fisher article http://www.sjfc.edu/news/pr-detail.dot?id=b63130d2-eb46-4e96-b632-e79c6e92f96a](http://www.sjfc.edu/news/pr-detail.dot?id=b63130d2-eb46-4e96-b632-e79c6e92f96a)

Recruitment Events

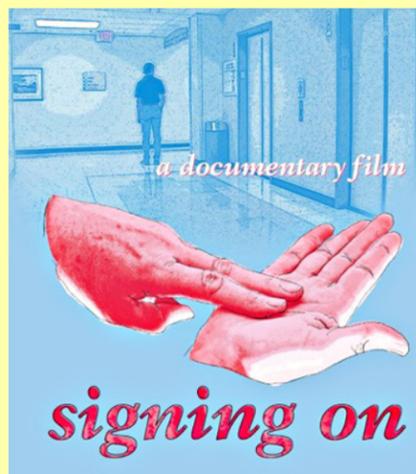
Film Screenings of *Signing On* and *The Artist*

On Tuesday, March 6, NCDHR hosted a movie night showing the documentary "Signing On". The event was held at one of NCDHR's collaborative partner locations, the Rochester School for the Deaf. The event was well attended, approximately eighty people came.

Signing On is a documentary focusing on a group of Deaf breast cancer survivors, called the Pink Deafies, in the Twin Cities region of Minnesota. These survivors struggled with various issues related to the health care system. It is a heart warming movie which follows five Deaf women through their journey to recovery.

After the movie, Dr. Michael McKee was available to answer questions from the audience. NCDHR wants to thank Joan Dixon, a survivor of breast cancer, who talked about her own experiences with breast cancer.

After this event, NCDHR received support to have a second showing of the film. Please let NCDHR know if you wish to host an event, NCDHR will be happy to be there and show the film again. Be on the lookout, as NCDHR plans for more showings of this film!



Thanks to the [Little Theater](#), on March 11, NCDHR hosted a screening of *The Artist*, winner of 5 academy awards, including Best Picture. *The Artist*, written and directed by Michel Hazanavicius, is a Drama/Romance/Comedy about a man named George Valentine, a famous silent film actor. As times begin to change, he dreads the coming of "talkies", movies with sound. He meets a woman, Peppy Miller, and a relationship unfolds between the two. As his career fades and he becomes more self destructive, her career blossoms and shines. For more information and to see a trailer of this movie, [click here](#).

At the beginning of the event, Tom Coughlan and Tiffany Panko, in Oscar-style attire, introduced NCDHR's three research projects. Thanks to Stacy Lawrence, chair of the Deaf Rochester Film Festival, for volunteering to lead a very nice discussion of the Silent Film Era. She engaged the audience to reflect on the significance of the movie and how it reflected their own experiences growing up.



National Presentations on Deaf Health Research

Dr. Mike McKee and Tamala David

Last March 13-16, Dr. Michael McKee, DHCC member and Researcher with the Department of Family Medicine and NCDHR, and Tamala David PhD, Preventive Cardiology Fellow with the Department of Community and Preventive Medicine, both attended the Annual American Heart Association/American Stroke Association conference in San Diego, CA, to present Deaf Health related topics.

Dr. McKee had a poster presentation that focused on a study evaluating whether higher education and income is cardiovascular protective (in other words, does college education and a good income prevent heart diseases?). Tamala David had two presentations (one was a poster and the other was an oral presentation) on a similar topic, "Potential Barriers to Cardiovascular Disease Risk Assessment Among Deaf Young Adults".

The conference was well attended by students, clinicians, and researchers from the medical, nursing, public health, and other related fields. The presenters received positive feedback by attendees of the conference, many of whom expressed interest in these topics and support for the research being done by NCDHR.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES with NCDHR

Did you know?? There are 3 research opportunities at NCDHR!

DEAF HEALTHCARE SURVEY

- Are you 18 or older and Deaf?
- Want to give feedback about your healthcare experiences?

Take the DEAF HEALTHCARE SURVEY!

- ✓ **ASL / sign language survey** about the healthcare experiences of Deaf people
- ✓ Available on a **touch-screen computer**, takes 40-60 minutes
- ✓ Different from the 2008 NCDHR Deaf Health Survey



If you are **aged 40-70, Deaf, and live in the greater Rochester area**, there are 2 other research projects you may also qualify for:



HEALTH LITERACY & CARDIOVASCULAR RISK

- What cardiovascular risk factors do you have?
- We want to learn more about the impact that health knowledge and literacy has on your risk factors!

What you will do:

- ✓ Several short surveys and interviews in one appointment (60-90 min)

DEAF WEIGHT WISE

- Would you like to exercise more?
- Learn about healthy cooking and eating?
- Lose weight and become more fit?

Join Deaf Weight Wise (DWW) now!

What you will do:

- ✓ **Participate in a 16-week group program**, conducted in **ASL**
- ✓ **Learn** about healthy living, healthy food / cooking, and fun ways to be active
- ✓ **Visit** the NCDHR offices 5 times over 2 years to take ASL health surveys and have physical measurements taken (height, weight, blood pressure, blood sample)



For more information about ANY of these programs:
 Email: NCDHR@urmc.rochester.edu
 Videophone: 585-286-2776
www.urmc.edu/ncdhr

NCDHR 

National Center for Deaf Health Research
Rochester Prevention Research Center



Working for a Healthy Deaf Community

PRC

Prevention Research Centers

NCCC

National Community Committee



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This newsletter was supported by Cooperative Agreement Number U48-DP-001910 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The findings and conclusions in this newsletter are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the CDC.