

**To: Minnesota DeafBlind Community**  
**From: Paul Deeming, DeafBlind Specialist**  
**Project Consultant, Dept. of Human Services/Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services**  
**Date: November 17, 2003**  
**Re: New DeafBlind Advocacy Project**

Hello! Many of you may have heard that I have a new job! I will still be doing some interpreting, but for the next two years I will also be working for the Dept. of Human Services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, as the statewide deafblind specialist. This is a two-year grant project that focuses on DeafBlind Problem Solving, Advocacy and Training.

There are three main areas of this project: problem solving and advocacy for deafblind adults and children, improving the services system in Minnesota to be more responsive to deafblind people's needs, and working with the Medical Assistance (MA) system to ensure that both the MA and MA waiver needs assessment process and benefit sets take into account the unique needs of deafblind individuals.

**Goal area #1: Problem Solving and Advocacy Services**

I will help deafblind adults and children maintain or improve their independence and community integration.

The main goals are:

- 1) Help deafblind adults and children (and their parents) find information they need about services and programs in Minnesota that can help them maintain or improve their independence and community integration.
- 2) Help deafblind adults and children (and their parents) with problem solving and advocacy (support) to get services that will help them with independence and community integration. I will help you with this and in the process you will learn how to better problem solve and advocate for yourself.

**Goal area #2: Improving the services system in Minnesota for deafblind people**

The main goals are:

- 1) I will work with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) regional consultants to enable them to work more effectively with deafblind Minnesotans.
- 2) I will work with DHHS planning and policy staff to help them better understand the barriers that deafblind people encounter so that state grant dollars can be allocated to best address their needs.
- 3) I will be doing a statewide survey of deafblind people to find more information about your needs and experiences with services in Minnesota.

**Goal Area #3: Better access to MA services for DeafBlind people.**

The main goals of this area are:

- 1) Improve the MA system so DeafBlind people on MA get the services they need.
- 2) County staff who assess deafblind people for MA waivers will receive guidelines and tools to help them more accurately assess the needs of deafblind adults and children.
- 3) Better assessment may mean more services that deafblind people need might be paid under MA waivers.

This a big project but I have limited time. I am only working  $\frac{3}{4}$  time (3-4 days a week). I will try my best to do as much as possible for the deafblind people of Minnesota. There may be some limitations to just how much I can do.

I invite you to contact me if you think I could help you with your goals for independence and community integration. I typically work Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, though sometimes will be out of the office meeting with service providers and consumers. You may email or call me (contact info below) and leave a message if I am not at my desk. I will respond to your message as quickly as possible when I return.

Sincerely,

Paul Deeming, M.S., C.I.  
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*DeafBlind resources:* [www.deafblindinfo.org](http://www.deafblindinfo.org)    *Visit our division website at* [www.dhhsd.org](http://www.dhhsd.org)