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DSHS to end contract to serve the deaf and hard of hearing through Tacoma-based TACID

OLYMPIA – The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) will not renew a contract with a Tacoma-based non-profit organization that serves approximately 75 deaf, deaf-blind and hard-of-hearing people in Pierce, Thurston, Mason, Kitsap and Grays Harbor counties.

That organization, the Tacoma Area Coalition of Individuals with Disabilities (TACID) also provides information, referral and outreach services to the public on hearing loss issues.

DSHS is negotiating with a new provider to begin services on an emergency basis by mid-July and provide full services by August 1.

Clients seeking more information should attend a meeting scheduled for noon to 2 p.m. July 15 in Building 17 at Tacoma Community College, 6501 S. 19th St., Tacoma,

Eric Raff, director of the DSHS Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH), said the agency would let the \$157,775 annual contract with TACID expire on Friday due to a two-year disagreement over access to client records.

Raff explains the TACID contract requires that the agency make its client records available for inspection so that ODHH can ensure contracted services have been provided. He added TACID has refused to make all client records available for inspection or provide contractually required information.

“Good stewardship of public money requires we ensure our clients are receiving all the services for which TACID is paid,” said Raff.

The DSHS contract calls for TACID to provide advocacy services on behalf of clients seeking reasonable accommodations, such as interpreters and assistive telecommunications devices according to state and federal laws. TACID also is supposed to help DSHS clients obtain access to medical or legal services and to locate help from government agencies, as well as provide referrals for other assistance.

The ODHH action does not affect other contracts TACID may have with other government, non-profit or commercial entities.

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