

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

The November 2012 MC issue carried two very good articles about educating the public as to what is needed by people with differing communication needs. Traci Burton's article about the DDHH's presentation with the Burlington County Municipal Court Administrators' Association regarding serving Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened persons in Municipal Courts (p.3) was very encouraging. The information dispensed to this association is very valuable, and will enable both them and us to effectively communicate in a courtroom or other environment. Making arrangements in advance with the court services' administrator is critical for a successful legal encounter. I suggest that such presentations in the future be covered by the local newspapers so as to inform the public. "Forewarned is forearmed."

The other excellent article by Catie Purrazzella, DDHH Service Coordinator about self-advocacy (p. 4) contains very important tips and pointers when we are in a medical environment such as hospitals and emergency rooms, as well as medical offices. The only tip I'd add to her list is that I think it's important for us to wear a medical ID bracelet which carries information that a person is Deaf needing ASL, or deaf w/hearing aid or cochlear implant. This will alert emergency staff that this patient who may be unconscious from injury or comatose from illness or medications will not hear or respond to spoken questions. EMT's always look for a medical alert bracelet or neck chain for information pertaining to medical conditions, or need for medications, or in the case of cochlear implant, a warning for "no MRI". I'm profoundly deaf without my hearing equipment, and if I'm injured or ill, may not be able to respond to anyone who is speaking to me. I'm also a heart patient, and my ID bracelet makes note of cardiac medications I am taking. Do not assume that all of us will visit a medical environment fully mobile, alert and conscious enough to verbally inform the staff that we have a significant hearing loss. They can't see our deafness, but they can read an ID bracelet in case we can't tell them. Once again: "Forewarned is forearmed."

Carol Granaldi