

## CHAPTER 574—S.F.No. 1141

*An act relating to the handicapped; establishing regional service centers and advisory committees to aid the hearing impaired; establishing a statewide interpreter referral service; providing for a program of training and employment; prescribing duties for the commissioners of public welfare and health; requiring certain state agency meetings to be accessible to physically handicapped persons; requiring certain auxiliary aids for physically handicapped participants at state agency meetings; appropriating money; amending Minnesota Statutes 1978, Section 16.85, Subdivisions 1c and 1d; and Chapter 15, by adding a section.*

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. [256C.21] HEARING IMPAIRED SERVICES ACT; CITATION. Sections 1 to 7 may be cited as the "hearing impaired services act."

Sec. 2. [256C.22] PURPOSE. It is the purpose of the "hearing impaired services act" to establish a statewide network of coordinated services to alleviate the developmental, social, educational and occupational deprivation of hearing impaired persons by establishing regional service centers and strengthening services delivered by state, local and regional agencies.

Sec. 3. [256C.23] DEFINITIONS. Subdivision 1. For the purposes of sections 1 to 7 the terms defined in this section shall have the meanings given them, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

Subd. 2. "Hearing impaired person" means a person who has a loss of hearing in both ears and has difficulty hearing and understanding speech in the ear with better hearing.

Subd. 3. "Regional service center" means a facility designed to provide an entry point for hearing impaired persons of that region in need of human services.

Subd. 4. "Human services" means correctional, educational, occupational, health, mental health, financial and social services.

Subd. 5. "Human services agency" means a state, regional or local agency that provides human services.

Sec. 4. [256C.24] REGIONAL SERVICE CENTERS. Subdivision 1. LOCATION. The commissioner of economic security shall establish up to eight regional service centers for hearing impaired persons. The centers shall be co-located with existing vocational rehabilitation field offices and be distributed regionally to provide access for hearing impaired persons in all parts of the state. The center shall maintain a current registry of those persons having or suspected of having a hearing impairment who live in that region. A special task of the registry is to assure that referrals and follow-up services are completed with respect to persons in the register.

Subd. 2. RESPONSIBILITIES. The regional service center shall:

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(a) Serve as the central entry point for hearing impaired persons in need of human services and make referrals to the services needed;

(b) Employ staff trained to work with hearing impaired persons;

(c) Provide to all hearing impaired persons interpreter services which are necessary to help them obtain human services;

(d) Serve as the regional interpreter referral center for hearing impaired persons and human services agencies;

(e) Loan equipment and resource materials to hearing impaired persons;  
and

(f) Cooperate with the department of public welfare to provide access for hearing impaired persons to services provided by state, county and regional human services agencies.

Subd. 3. ADVISORY COMMITTEE. The commissioner of economic security, in consultation with the commissioner of public welfare shall appoint an advisory committee of eight persons for each regional service center. Members shall include four persons who are hearing impaired persons or who are the parents of a hearing impaired child and four representatives of county and regional human services, including representatives of private service providers. Members shall serve without payment by the state of per diem or expense. The commissioner of economic security shall designate one member as chairperson. The commissioners of economic security and public welfare shall assign staff to serve as ex-officio members of the committee.

Sec. 5. [256C.25] INTERPRETER SERVICES. Subdivision 1. ESTABLISHMENT. The commissioner of economic security shall supervise the development and implementation of a statewide interpreter referral service. The commissioner of economic security shall contract with appropriate organizations to provide this centralized service.

Subd. 2. DUTIES. The central interpreter referral service shall:

(a) Establish and maintain a statewide directory of interpreters who have received appropriate training and certification;

(b) Provide technical assistance to the regional service centers in implementing the interpreter referral service; and

(c) Assess the present and projected supply and demand for interpreting services statewide.

Sec. 6. [256C.26] EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. The commissioner of economic security shall develop and implement a plan to deal with the underemployment of hearing impaired persons. The plan shall provide for training regarding the nature of hearing handicaps for department staff who consult with prospective employers or who provide job placement services.

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Sec. 7. [256C.27] DUTIES OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WELFARE. In order to ensure that hearing impaired persons have full access to all local, county and regional human service programs, the commissioner of public welfare shall:

(a) Provide training to the social service or income maintenance staff employed by counties or by organizations with whom counties contract for services to ensure that communication barriers which prevent hearing impaired persons from using services are removed;

(b) Assess the ongoing need and supply of services for hearing impaired persons in all parts of the state and cooperate with public and private service providers to develop these services;

(c) Provide training to state and regional human service agencies regarding program access for hearing impaired persons;

(d) Assist the regional service centers in the development of technical assistance and outreach programs; and

(e) Develop, where possible, innovative approaches to providing services to hearing impaired persons. The commissioner of health shall establish standards for screening for hearing impairments with special emphasis on screening of persons from birth through school age and persons over age 65.

Sec. 8. Minnesota Statutes 1978, Chapter 15, is amended by adding a section to read:

[15.44] AIDS FOR HANDICAPPED AT STATE MEETINGS. After July 1, 1980, a state agency which sponsors, in whole or in part, a meeting or conference for the public or for state employees shall ensure that a physically handicapped participant who gives reasonable advance notice to the agency will receive the auxiliary aids necessary for effective participation. Auxiliary aids may include taped or brailled materials, interpreters or other effective means of making orally delivered material available to participants with hearing impairments, and equipment adaptable for use by participants with manual impairments and other similar services and action; however, nothing in this section shall (1) require a state agency to provide attendants, individually prescribed devices, or other devices or services of a personal nature or (2) apply to a state university, the University of Minnesota or a state community college with respect to classes, seminars or training programs which are offered by them. When sign language interpreters are provided, they shall be provided in a manner so that hearing impaired participants will be able to see their signing clearly. For the purposes of this section, "physically handicapped" has the meaning given in section 16.84, subdivision 8. For the purposes of this section, "agency" means any state officer, employee, board, commission, authority, department or other agency or the executive branch of state government.

Sec. 9. Minnesota Statutes 1978, Section 16.85, Subdivision 1c, is amended to read:

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Subd. 1c. After July 1, ~~1979~~ 1980, meetings or conferences attended by for the public ~~and~~ or for state employees sponsored in whole or in part by a state agency in ~~non-publicly owned buildings~~ shall be held in buildings that either meet the state building code requirements relating to accessibility for the physically handicapped or are eligible to display the state symbol for accessibility persons. The provisions of this subdivision shall not apply to any classes, seminars or training programs offered by a state university, the University of Minnesota or a state community college. Meetings or conferences intended for specific individuals none of whom need the accessibility features for handicapped persons specified in the state building code need not comply with this subdivision unless a handicapped person gives reasonable advance notice of his or her intent to attend the meeting or conference. When sign language interpreters will be provided, meetings or conference sites shall be chosen which allow hearing impaired participants to see their signing clearly.

Sec. 10. Minnesota Statutes 1978, Section 16.85, Subdivision 1d, is amended to read:

Subd. 1d. The commissioner of administration may grant an exemption from the requirements of subdivisions 1b and 1c in advance if a state agency has demonstrated that reasonable efforts were made to secure facilities which complied with the requirements of subdivision 1b and 1c and if the selected facilities are the best available for access for handicapped persons. Exemptions shall be granted using criteria developed by the commissioner in consultation with the council for the handicapped.

For the purposes of this section, "agency" shall have the meaning given to it in section 16.098, subdivision 1, clause (3).

Sec. 11. **APPROPRIATIONS.** Subdivision 1. The sum of \$302,000 is appropriated from the general fund to the agencies and for the purposes indicated in this section, to be available until June 30, 1981. The director of the state planning agency shall monitor the implementation and effectiveness of sections 1 to 7 and report to the legislature by January 1, 1982.

**Subd. 2. ECONOMIC SECURITY.**

<u>For the purposes of sections 4 and 5</u>	<u>\$166,000</u>
<u>Approved Complement</u>	
	<u>1981 - 8</u>

**Subd. 3. PUBLIC WELFARE.**

<u>For the purposes of section 7</u>	<u>\$136,000</u>
<u>Approved Complement</u>	
	<u>1981 - 6</u>

Sec. 12. **EFFECTIVE DATE.** Sections 8 to 10 of this act are effective the day following final enactment.

Approved April 15, 1980