# Public Health Task Force Meeting Minutes

June 28, 2023, 1:00-2:30 PM

## Welcome & upcoming meeting schedule

* We will begin meeting every other month and have committees meet in the off month.
* Committees will meet in July, and the next task force meeting will be in August.

## Attendance

* Rachell Johnson, Mandy Halloran, Annie Foster, Anna Guryan, Anne Kinsman, Anni Crook, Beth, Brookelynn Raulerson, Diane (Captioner), Catherine Graham, David Rotholz, Ed Glover, Grace Galindo, Harley Davis, Ruth Norris (Interpreter), Kaylee Quintanilla-Caro, Kelly Cordell, Larry Wanger, Marie McVey, Mary Trunk, McKenzie Watson, Mike Leach, Rachel Kaplan, Reba Landry, Russell Morrison, J. Almeda, Spencer Dickey, Terrance Middleton, Valarie Bishop, 803-728-5096

## SC Assistive Technology Program (SCATP) Presentation

* Rachell Johnson, MCD., CCC-SLP, ATP, Program Manager, SC Assistive Technology Program, Center for Disability Resources (CDR)
	+ SCATP is part of CDR and housed within the USC School of Medicine in Columbia.
	+ Rachell has an AT license and has been working in the field of speech and AT for many years. Rachell introduced the other SCATP staff. They have two program coordinators: Alli Upchurch and Tammy Wallace. And Janet Lambert is their Administrative Assistant. They also have a new program assistant and want to grow their staff. They are hoping to add a speech-language pathologist to the team soon.
	+ Rachell covered the history of the Assistive Technology (AT) Act; they are a federally mandated AT program.
	+ Rachell reviewed this online [AT Act FAQ](https://at3center.net/at-act-information/) that includes great definitions of AT.
		- Rachell differentiated between equipment designed to be AT and off-the-shelf items that serve many purposes, including being used as AT. For example, a power wheelchair is designed solely for the use of AT. An iPad is off the shelf, but the software and applications can be used as AT.
		- Rachell reviewed an AT flow chart. In SC, State Financing is the only area in the flow chart that SCATP doesn’t provide; another state agency is responsible for that.
		- No referral is needed for services in SC; you do not need a doctor’s note or order. The program is available for individuals of all ages and disabilities.
		- SCATP does ask for people to make appointments so that the best staff member can assist; they travel a lot throughout the state.
		- Is there a cost? In SC, not at this time. Some states might have programs that they are charging for.
	+ Rachell shared this [link to an Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs video](https://youtu.be/ErKczlJlrkk). It provides a brief overview of the AT Act and federal programs nationwide.
	+ Programs and Services:
		- Device Demos: SCATP can travel to you or meet at the resource center. This service allows them to assist individuals in making informed decisions and avoid having to get demonstrations directly from retailers trying to sell you their products. A picture in the presentation shows a child using a device to assist him in feeding himself independently.
		- Device Loans: SCATP has a lending library. The purpose is for individuals to try something for 2-4 weeks to test it before buying it. They will extend for four weeks if there is no waiting list for an item.
		- Reuse program: they gain equipment through donations, sanitize it with a medical-grade washing machine, and then give it to those needing it. As of right now, they are only taking equipment that is functioning. They cannot accept items that need repair/refurbishment/batteries etc.
		- Acquisition: another form of reuse. SCATP hosts an SC AT Exchange website. They connect individuals who have AT with those who need it. Some will post things for free, others for a cost. You can post a wish list or item that you need. It is free to get on the AT Exchange site.
		- Public Awareness: They maintain their website, and individuals can learn about opportunities through the SCATP listserv. To join the listserv, call 803-935-5263 or email Janet.Lambert@uscmed.sc.edu
		- Annual Assistive Technology Expo –it is in March each year. 887 people attended in 2023.
		- Provide Technical Assistance:
			* Information and Assistance: providing technical assistance to individuals or groups – in person, by phone, or via Zoom.
			* Training: Rachell demonstrated how to access training on the SCATP website and what the device loan page looks like. The only cost of device loans is shipping an item back. SCATP will mail items a lot but will deliver certain items.
			* If you miss a webinar, SCATP does record them. They are posted about 1-2 weeks after the live event.
	+ Special Activities
		- Adapted Toy Project –the cost of making them and adding switches can be several hundred dollars. They hope the next project will be in October or November –contact SCATP if you are interested in making donations for this or volunteering.
		- They have also done adaptive book kits that include several items with the book so that children with various disabilities can enjoy the book. The process includes making them tactile using 3D pens. The kits have five different ways of adapting the books: physical/motor, cognitive, hearing, vision, and communication.
	+ AT and Public Health: Rachell emphasized that everyone can benefit from AT, and we all use it whether we recognize it or not. She also discussed barriers to accessing AT in hospitals.
		- Rachell also sees barriers when patients have one or more disabilities. These patients are often overlooked. Patients will usually not be given AT to utilize a call button. It’s a basic human right to be able to communicate, and it needs to be accommodated in healthcare settings.
		- They are writing a grant for a project to work on this barrier. If awarded funding, they will work to address communication in high-stakes situations like the ICU.
		- Rachell cited this [global report on AT](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240049178) in the presentation.
	+ SCATP is happy to arrange a tour if you want to see updates to the resource center! Rachell shared [a video of the tour](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBVDUS6U6dQ).
	+ Mandy thanked Rachell for the wonderful presentation. Mandy discussed the stigma around using AT and loved that Rachell addressed that we all benefit from AT, and it is so important to see past that. Mandy has navigated these conversations within her own family. Mandy shared a story about an Able SC colleague with a hearing disability who does not have hands. When she entered the hospital with COVID, they wouldn’t let her partner come with her to sign for her, and she didn’t have any way to communicate because she couldn’t read lips due to everyone wearing masks.
	+ Rachell shared that she has low vision and special contacts she can wear for a certain amount of time daily. She uses screen readers, dictation, speech-to-text, and large text on screens. She also uses a large text keyboard that is high contrast.

## Committee Structure – a deeper dive

* + We are still constructing what each committee will do and don’t want to mandate any committee work without meeting.
	+ Mandy, Kimberly, and Larry have outlined the work – Mandy reviewed the PowerPoint slides with additional information.
	+ Ed Glover with AccessAbility expressed interest in the planning committee, eglover@abilitysc.org
	+ Systems Planning Committee: Kimberly will manage this one.
	+ Education and integration: Mandy will oversee this one to start.
	+ Accessibility Committee: Larry will manage this committee to start.
		- Larry introduced himself. Through committee work, he is hoping in a broader sense to further accessibility for healthcare – to get past physical and attitudinal barriers in all healthcare settings, particularly emergency settings.
	+ Committees will meet at the same time that the task force would typically meet –look for more info to be sent out from your committee lead.
* Barrier-Free Vaccine Clinic: The toolkit we developed can be replicated and is on our website. We will partner with other providers next year and bring everything necessary to provide the accommodations instead of hosting. We will also teach other community members to make their clinics accessible. We were 1 of 3 non-profits chosen to feature our vaccine equity work in this [Center for Disease Control Foundation, Partnership for Vaccine Equity video, 2023](https://youtu.be/FMvneC17wuo).
* Adjournment: 2:15 PM