Disability Committee Mission Statement: *USA Swimming encourages people with disabilities to participate in the sport of swimming and facilitates their inclusion in USA Swimming programs through education and collaboration. We seek to involve people with disabilities in existing competitions and programs for all swimmers, rather than provide unique disability-only opportunities.*

*Attendees:* Bob Welch, Haley Beranbaum (Athlete Rep), John Loria, Jim Peterfish, Jon Larson

Kyle Smith, Linder Conger, Mark Rieniets (Chair), Randy Julian (Staff Liaison),

Tharon Drake (Athlete Rep)

*Absent:* Tom Franke, Jon Larson

1. ASCA disability certification course – material updated in conjunctions with Queenie Nichols/ Nathan Manley
   1. Material is 5+ years old and rules have changed.
   2. Material is owned by U.S. Paralympics swimming
   3. Disability Committee to review and forward suggestions to Queenie Nichols/ Nathan Manley at U.S. Paralympics

***Assigned to:* Kyle Smith**

***Deadline:* Draft completed by January 1st, 2016**

1. Recent incident with a blind swimmer being refused permission to use a tether to another swimmer in a USA-S sanctioned open water event was discussed.

**Action item: None**

**New legislation for including swimming with a disability has been passed by the USA Swimming House of Delegates and will be included in the 2017 rule book**

1. Registration for athletes - Option to flag athlete is impaired is not always available using *Hytek* or *Team Unity* to register teams
   1. Jon Larson reported that Team Unify will allow athletes to flag they have a disability, but an option must be changed to permit the option to be seen. Option has been documented

**Action item: Documented procedure needs to be forwarded to the Diversity committee to see if they have any interest in partnering with the Disability committee to document and distribute this documentation to all LSC’s registration chairs and swim clubs.**

***Assigned to:* Bob Welch**

***Deadline:* Draft completed by January 1st, 2016**

1. An education presentation for coaching swimmers with a disability/impairment for the coaches’ regional training sessions was discussed.

**Action item: Develop a power point presentation on “coaching athletes with a disability” to be played on a continuous loop at each of the regional coach’s clinics**

***Assigned to:* Bob Welch, Linda Conger, Jim Peterfish, Tharon Drake**

***Deadline:* Draft completed by March 1st, 2017**

1. There appeared to be a need for a template for standard wording for inclusion of swimmers with a disability for State and Zone meets, along with the suggested level/qualifying times of swimmers participating Meet managers are also asking for guidelines on the appropriate level of inclusion.
2. Discussion was held about developing a qualifying standard for USA-S Sectional meets so that swimmers can be classified and Hytek scoring by class could be used
3. Queenie Nichols reported that U.S. Paralympics are working on developing time standards for swimmers with a disability/impairment for NCAA meets by February 2017

**Action item: Develop a standard template for use by LSC’s for inclusion of swimmers with a Disability/Impairment into Championship meets**

**Develop qualifying standards for swimmers with a disability/ impairment for State Championships and Sectional meets**

***Assigned to:* Tharon Drake, Linda Conger**

***Deadline:* Draft completed by March 1st, 2017**

1. Discussion was held about how to cater for athletes with a disability in meets.
   1. Example was given of children with Autism swimming 25YD of a 50 YD yard race and with younger age groups to keep their comfort levels in the early stages of their swimming career. As a result of this and numerous other examples, it was discussed that a FAQ section should be developed on the USA-S Disability

**Action item: FAQ questioned gathered to be consolidated and expanded in preparation for posting on the USA Swimming Disability web page**

***Assigned to:* Jim Peterfish, Haley Beranbaum**

***Deadline: Draft completed by January 1st, 2017***

1. Discussion was held regarding both the need to reach out to LSC disability chairs, and the fact that 11 LSC’s do not have a disability chair appointed. Suggestions were made on communicating to the Disability chairs
   1. John Loria has developed an excel list of LSC Disability chairs from the USA Swimming Directory and will now add the Zone Disability Chairs to this list.

**Action item: Reach out to LSC’s which do not have a Disability Chair and determine if one can be appointed**

**Assigned to: John Loria**

**Deadline: December 1st, 2016**

**Action item: Minutes of disability committee meetings and conference calls to be emails to General and Disability chairs**

**Assigned to: Randy Julian**

**Deadline: 1 week after minutes distributed to Disability Committee**

1. Utilizing the USA-S twitter account for relevant news/updates on impaired athletes

**Action item: Subcommittee of Tharon and Haley to formulate an information dissemination plan and then link up with Wendy Bartlett to determine the process for submitting information to be tweeted.**

**Assigned to: Randy Julian, Tharon Drake, Haley Beranbaum**

**Deadline: December 1st, 2016**

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Update from Sue Nelson - Children with Challenges course
   1. Course has taken longer than first planned to move out of the pilot stage, but there has been positive feedback from those who have participated so far, and the course is being updated.
2. Risk management statement regarding the Cochlear Implants removed prior to swimming With proper coverage they are now safe

**Action item: Formal request for an update/review will be made to the Risk Management committee to review the wording for the removal of the implants in light of the technological advancements which have been made**

**Assigned to: Mark Rieniets, Randy Julian**

**Deadline: December 1st, 2016**

1. Disabled Athlete of the year award has a prerequisite that they swim in a minimum of 2 USA Swimming sanctioned meets in the prior year. Proposal that this requirement be dropped.
   1. There was no support for this proposal from the committee, requirement will stay. Committee discussion did not that there is already and exception to this rule is the recipient of the rule participates in NCAA/College swimming
2. Coaches clinic for impairment/disability to be co-sponsored by USA Swimming and U.S. Paralympics Swimming in October/November
   1. Clinic will be geared towards how to coach athletes with an impairment from beginner up to high performance. Clinic will be held in Colorado Springs at the Olympic Training center and costs will be jointly covered by USA Swimming and U.S. Paralympics Swimming.
   2. Information and invitations to LSC’s and clubs will be sent out ASAP once the final date and numbers have been determined so that clubs and LSC’s can get it on their calendar.

**Action item: Finalize date and numbers and ensure arrangements are in place with Olympic Training center**

**Assigned to: Randy Julian**

**Deadline: December 1st, 2016**

**Action item: Distribute information and dates for the coach’s clinic to LSC and coaches within USA Swimming**

**Assigned to: Randy Julian, Mark Rieniets**

**Deadline: December 10th, 2016**

1. Face to face meeting of Disability Committee booked at COS at the Training Center the June 2-4, 2017 to coincide with the Jimi Flowers meet
2. Awards nominations and votes – distributed to committee members