

Statement from the Monroe County Deaf Equity Council on the Death of Gregory Kase

The Monroe County Deaf Equity Council is deeply saddened by the death of Gregory Allen Kase, a Deaf/Hard of Hearing member of our community. We send our sincere condolences to his wife and family. We grieve alongside everyone in our Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing community who is mourning him.

We also know that questions have been raised about the emergency response on August 9 that led to Mr. Kase's death. The full facts are not yet known. The New York State Attorney General's Office and others are reviewing what happened. Out of respect for that review, and for everyone affected, including the family and the responders involved, the Council will not take a position on what happened until those reviews are complete. We will look closely at what these reviews find, especially anything about how Deaf and Hard of Hearing people are recognized and communicated with in an emergency.

Making sure Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing people can communicate clearly in a crisis, from the first call to 911 through the response of police, fire, or EMS, has long been part of this Council's work and remains so regardless of how these reviews conclude. Going forward, our Emergency Preparedness workgroup will work with our County and City partners to look at how Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing residents are identified and communicated with during an emergency, and to push for real improvements.

If you are affected by this loss, support is available:

- Deaf Wellness Center. Mental health counseling in ASL, provided by Deaf and ASL-fluent counselors. Videophone (585) 286-5041. Voice (585) 273-5050.
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (ASL). Free, private, 24/7 support with ASL-fluent counselors. Call 988 directly from a videophone, or click "ASL Now" at 988lifeline.org.
- Crisis Text Line (Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a live volunteer Crisis Counselor)

The Monroe County Deaf Equity Council is a joint advisory group formed by Monroe County and the City of Rochester to improve equity, access, and inclusion for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing residents. (DeafEquity@MonroeCounty.gov)

The DEC Statement in American Sign Language: [Statement in ASL](#)