

ACI Alliance and Hearing Loss Association of America Partner to Improve Cochlear Implant Awareness

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While ACI Alliance and Hearing Loss Association of America have memberships that are quite different, our organizational missions are mutually supportive. HLAA is a consumer organization that strives to improve the lives of people with hearing loss through information, education, advocacy and support. ACI Alliance works to improve access to cochlear implantation through research, advocacy and awareness. We work together in several general hearing loss coalitions in the field and we are now partnering on a program to expand awareness about CI candidacy and outcomes for adults.

Although cochlear implants have been shown to provide life-changing benefits and high rates of cost effectiveness, utilization rates in the United States are still stuck at 5% of adults who could benefit. This percentage is unchanged from the past 10 years. Together, ACI Alliance and HLAA are reaching out to adults and others to improve information flow from trusted sources and increase the likelihood that adult candidates will pursue the CI intervention. We are eager to work together on this important initiative.

ACI Alliance is proud to sponsor the upcoming Consumer Research Symposium at the upcoming HLAA 2017 Convention in Salt Lake City. Planned for June 23, 2017, we are expecting more than 1000 consumer attendees at *Hearing Aids and Cochlear Implants: Merging Technologies, Expanding Bene-*

fits. Our presentations will emphasize that hearing aids and cochlear implants are no longer separate, distinct and mutually exclusive technologies that serve disparate populations of people who are defined as either “hard of hearing” or “deaf.” Rather, research suggests that combining the two technologies can be synergistic, providing the listener with natural sound quality as well as clarity and intelligibility. We encourage you to share details with your patients who are considering CI about this consumer friendly learning opportunity. Information and registration can be found here: <http://hearingloss.org/content/convention>

We are also collaborating to provide presentations by CI clinicians at HLAA Chapter meetings to improve information at the local community level. Too often people mistakenly believe that they must be “totally deaf” before they are an appropriate CI candidate. We’ve heard adults note that they “don’t want to lose what hearing they have” or “I’m doing ok with assistive technology and captioning.” These beliefs are further ex-

acerbated by the fact that referrals for CI evaluations for appropriate individuals are often not made by hearing care professionals. We conducted two such chapter events in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. drawing a large group of interested people—candidates, family members, professionals, and advocates.

Finally, we are working together to provide content for the excellent bi-monthly HLAA publication, *Hearing Loss Magazine*, which is both print and digital and is an important source of information for consumers. The January/February 2017 issue will include a fascinating comparison between development and adoption of the Internet and that of cochlear implantation authored by Internet guru Vinton Cerf https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vint_Cerf. Dr. Cerf’s wife Sigrid has bilateral cochlear implants and coincidentally he will be speaking at the upcoming CI2017 Pediatric Symposium in San Francisco.

We are delighted to be working together to advance access to cochlear implantation. There is important synergy in such collaboration. ■



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