



**DECEMBER 18, 2015**

This is a weekly report from the HLAA national office in Bethesda, Maryland. Please also sign up for the [HLAA e-News](#) where even more news is published.

**The HLAA office will be closed from December 24, 2015 through January 3, 2016. Our next *This Week in Bethesda* will be published on January 8, 2016.**

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

## **ADVOCACY**

### **FCC Passed New Hearing Aid Compatibility Rules**

The new Hearing Aid Compatibility (HAC) rules are meant to drive innovation for wireless voice technologies by requiring all future voice communications technologies to be HAC compliant, making developers consider this early in the design processes. Additionally, the HAC rules now cover traditional wireless service (i.e., cellular) and IP-based communications services like Wi-Fi Calling and Voice-over-LTE. Further, all wireless handsets are now required to be accessible by people using hearing aids and cochlear implants. This is meant to give people who use hearing assistance technologies the same range of device choices observed by consumers without hearing loss.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION [FCC News](#)**

#### **FCC Aims to Improve Wireless Emergency Alerts**

In efforts to strengthen emergency communications, the FCC released a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) In the Matter of Improving Wireless Emergency Alerts and Community Initiated Alerting* [PS Docket No. 15-91]. Some of the main issues the NPRM is seeking stakeholder input on include:

- Increasing the maximum WEA characters length from 90 characters to 360 characters;
- Adding a fourth message type, "Emergency Governmental Information" which would allow for alerting authorities to send out information concerning shelter locations, boil water advisories and other pertinent life and property saving information that comes in the wake of an initial emergency message;
- The technical feasibility of the provision of multilingual WEA messages; and
- Revising the rules to require the geotargeting of WEA messages to be more precise.

Once the NPRM is published in the Federal Register, stakeholders (e.g., the public, mobile phone manufacturers and service providers, organizations representing the interests of people with disabilities, academics, emergency managers, etc.) will have 30 days to submit comments and 60 days to submit reply comments. HLAA will be responding.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** [NPRM on Improving WEA](#)

## HLAA CHAPTER AND STATE AWARDS

The Awards Committee is still seeking nominations for HLAA Chapter and State Awards. Below are the awards given to chapters. Recipients will be honored at the HLAA Convention 2016 at the Awards Breakfast & Ceremony sponsored by CapTel. Find the descriptions and nomination forms [here](#).

**Don't delay, nominate today!**

**Nominations will be accepted until Wednesday, December 23.**

- Nancy Wessner Outstanding State Chapter Coordinator
- Outstanding HLAA Chapter on a Mission
- Outstanding Young Adult
- Parent Involvement
- Phoenix
- Social Media
- State Association or State Office
- Up and Coming Chapter

## DEVELOPMENT

Remember for those last minute gifts, HLAA online [partner sites](#) offer another way to contribute to HLAA. Thank you for your thoughtfulness throughout the year.

## **PUBLIC AWARENESS**

### **HLAA Passes 9,000 Facebook Likes This Week**

Facebook and Twitter are two excellent ways to increase the visibility of HLAA, Walk4Hearing and our Chapters! Please encourage your friends and colleagues to “like” the HLAA and Walk4Hearing pages. <https://www.facebook.com/HearingLossAssociation>  
[Twitter.com/hlaa](https://twitter.com/hlaa)

### **HLAA to Exhibit at NBC4 Health & Fitness Expo**

Come visit us at **Booth 1640** at the NBC4 Health & Fitness Expo, January 9 and 10 at the Washington Convention Center. See more at the [official website](#).

### **Survey on Banking for People with Hearing Loss – You can still participate!**

The [World Institute on Disability](#) (WID) and the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) are conducting a brief 10- to 15-minute survey about access to and use of banking and financial institutions for people with hearing loss.

Results from this survey will be used to inform the financial and banking industry as to best practices to make information and services more accessible to people with hearing loss. No individual identifying data or characteristics will be provided to any outside agency, organization or business. All responses will be combined and no individual responses will be made available. After the completion of the study, all contact information will be destroyed.

[Take the survey here.](#)