



November 20, 2015

This is a weekly report from the HLAA national office in Bethesda, Maryland. This report will not be published next Friday, November 27, due to the Thanksgiving holiday when the HLAA offices are closed. Happy Thanksgiving to everyone!

ADVOCACY

FCC REPORT

On November 19, 2015, at their Open Meeting, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to adopt a Report and Order (R&O) and a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on hearing aid compatible (HAC) wireless phones. The R&O expands the scope of the hearing aid compatibility rules to not only cover the traditional cellular networks, but also alternative technologies such as Wi-Fi calling and VoLTE (Voice over LTE).

The NPRM seeks comment on "a landmark consensus plan that would, for the first time establish a consensus path to ensure that all wireless handsets are accessible to and usable by people who use hearing aid devices and cochlear implants," according to the FCC's press release. The consensus agreement was a joint filing by consumer members of HLAA, Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. and the National Association of the Deaf, and industry members of TIA, CTIA and CCA. The consensus agreement provides for an increase in the number of HAC phones in two years to 66 percent of all handsets available, and in five years to 85 percent of all handsets. The consensus agreement also says:

"The Commission should commit to pursue that 100 percent of wireless handsets offered to consumers should be compliant with Sections 20.19(b)(1) and (b)(2) within eight years of the effective date at the time the benchmarks described above are established, subject to a determination by the Commission within seven years of the effective date at the time those benchmarks are established, that reaching the goal is achievable."

All five Commissioners voted in favor of the HAC items, noting how important hearing aid compatibility is for the 48 million people with hearing loss in America.

See <http://www.hearingloss.org/content/historic-changes-coming-access-hearing-aid-compatible-wireless-phones>

The Commission also proposed rules that will promote the wider use and effectiveness of the Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA). WEA is a system that delivers critical warning and information over wireless phones. The proposed rules include:

- Increasing the minimum length of WEA messages from 90 to 360 characters;
- Enabling alerts to contain embedded phone numbers and URLs;
- Creating a new class of WEA alerts – "Emergency Government Information" to



send public safety advisories, such as, “boil water” or local shelter information to communities; and

- Provide alerts to more targeted localities.

HLAA joined the Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI), the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), and the Technology Access Program at Gallaudet University (TAP), in submitting comments to the FCC in response to the October 28, 2015 Electronic Newsroom Technique (ENT) Captioning Progress Report of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB). Our comments based on a survey of 1,300 consumers make it clear to the Commission that ENT remains, in many cases, ineffective and stricken with problems to the point that it fails to provide the level of quality demanded by each of the Commission’s four quality standards – accuracy, synchronicity, completeness, and placement. These shortcomings make continued reliance on ENT in its continued state an untenable approach to ensuring the full and equal access to video programming for people who are deaf or hard of hearing required by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act. We believe ENT should be phased out in favor of high quality real-time captioning.

Academy of Doctors of Audiology Applauds PCAST Report on OTC Hearing Aids

The Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA) applauds the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) for its focus on using technology to remove barriers to care for the millions of Americans with hearing loss. ADA members are audiologists who have spent their professional lives evaluating, managing and treating patients with hearing and balance disorders. ADA is cognizant of the significant health implications of untreated hearing and balance disorders, and ADA wholeheartedly agrees that hearing loss is a public health issue that requires prompt attention.

[Read the entire letter of support here](#)

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Anna Gilmore Hall and Cindy Compton-Conley attended the Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA) Meeting that was held in DC this past weekend. Cindy presented on a panel whose task was to advise the audiology profession on how to survive and thrive in an era of disruption in the hearing health care market. Paraphrasing Cindy's main message: *It is time that the audiology profession move from a hearing aid-centric focus to a patient/need-centered focus where the assessment of each individual's receptive communication needs and lifestyle determines the best hearing enhancement solution.*



DEVELOPMENT

HLAA recently participated in four Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) National Capital Area events. CFC is the world's largest annual workplace charity campaign. Pledges made by federal civilian, postal, and military donors during the campaign season (September 1-December 15) support nonprofit organizations that provide health and human service benefits. The events are a great opportunity to meet present and potential donors in one place, talk about HLAA, and encourage people to donate. We heard many stories from individuals seeking information about helping older family members deal with hearing loss. We had conversations with active military and veterans about their personal hearing loss challenges. If you participate in the campaign, remember to designate HLAA #11376 as your giving choice.

AWARDS

Honor HLAA's finest by submitting an award nomination by **December 4, 2015**. Nominate a chapter, state organization or individual. [All the information and applications are here on the HLAA website.](#)

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Diana Bender was a co-presenter with HLAA Philadelphia Chapter president Carolyn Meyer at a local nonprofit, Visiting Nurses Association Community Services, on November 19. They provided suggestions for improved communication with patients with hearing loss.

WEBINARS

December 16, 8 p.m.-9 p.m., Christine Cassel, M.D., President and CEO of [National Quality Forum](#), will present *Ageing America and Hearing Loss: The PCAST Report Explained*

See the [Schedule page](#) for more information. Webinar times are Eastern Standard Time. All webinars are free, captioned, and recorded. The recordings are posted on the [Webinar Replay page](#) of our website, usually within a week.

HLAA CONVENTION 2016/IFHOH CONGRESS

Call for Papers Deadline – Friday, December 4

Interested in presenting a workshop at HLAA Convention 2016/IFHOH Congress? If you want to present in the State/Chapter Development Room, please complete the [Call for Papers form](#). If you are interested in presenting in one of the educational tracks, please submit your proposal on the [Call for Papers collection site](#). If you are not sure where your proposal fits or have another question, please email [Nancy Macklin](#), HLAA director of events.



**Hearing Loss
Association
of America**

This Week in Bethesda

PERSONNEL

HLAA is pleased to announce that Kendall (Ken) Brown has joined the HLAA staff as the new web technologies manager.