

NOVEMBER 6, 2015

This is a weekly report from the HLAA national office in Bethesda, Maryland.

ADVOCACY

HLAA Remains Committed to 100 Percent of all Cell Phones Being Hearing Aid Compatible

HLAA has worked with industry and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on the issue of Hearing Aid Compatible (HAC) phones. When mobile technology moved from analog to digital in the 1990s, it created a huge barrier for people with hearing loss in that suddenly people with hearing loss who could use analog wireless handsets were faced with interference when they held the newer digital phone to their ear. We reported on this in the November 6 issue of *HLAA in Action* (online *HLAA e-News*). [Read the whole story.](#)

The *HLAA e-News* mentioned above is a great source for breaking news as well and news from the national office. [Be sure to sign up for the free newsletter here.](#)

Video Relay Service

On November 3, 2015, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) proposing to temporarily freeze certain video relay service (VRS) rates. The NPRM also seeks comment on the following measures to enhance VRS: (1) impose a stricter speed-of-answer standard; (2) adopt a limited trial of "skills-based routing"; (3) authorize providers to use qualified deaf sign language interpreters; (4) authorize the use of at-home interpreters under certain conditions; and (5) permit the assignment of ten-digit numbers for video phones used by hearing individuals.

Comment due dates will be announced when they are set by publishing the NPRM in the *Federal Register*. [Read the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking here.](#)

For More on HLAA Advocacy

[Read here for more news on what HLAA has been doing for people with hearing loss.](#)

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Hearing Tracker Survey

Based on the recommendations of a recent report by the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST), Hearing Tracker is conducting a survey on whether or not consumers support over-the-counter hearing aids. [Take the survey here.](#) For more information, [read the complete PCAST report.](#)

Survey on Banking for People with Hearing Loss

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.](#)

Comments and Suggestions Welcome on an NIH Research Plan

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is developing a five-year NIH-wide research plan to define the priorities in the area of rehabilitation research that is intended to benefit individuals with temporary or chronic limitations in physical, cognitive, or sensory function that require rehabilitation care. NIH has issued a Request for Information (RFI) inviting public comment on the priorities specified in this plan. [Read more about the RFI and how to submit comments](#)

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

HLAA Board of Trustee Shari Eberts' blog post "[I No Longer Feel Shame about My Hearing Loss](#)" was published by *Good Housekeeping* on October 31, 2015. Read all Shari's posts on her blog [Living with Hearing Loss](#).

HLAA Board of Trustee Katherine Bouton gave a lecture on October 30, 2015, to the faculty and graduate students at the Virginia Merrill Bloedel Hearing Center at the University of Washington in the Seminars in Hearing and Communication Sciences. Her subject was "Living with Hearing Loss: Why We Need a Cure." She mentioned HLAA as one of the ways patients can get support and education about hearing loss.

On Saturday Nov 14, 2015, Katherine will be on a panel at the American Doctors of Audiology convention. The subject is how audiologists gain and retain the trust of patients. One of her suggestions is that they recommend HLAA to patients and join HLAA themselves as a way of showing partnership in the overall effort to better conditions for people with hearing loss. Read Katherine's blog "[Hear Better with Hearing Loss](#)."

[Read about the HLAA Board of Trustees here.](#)

CHAPTERS

Have We Heard from You Lately?

The national staff is on a search mission looking for HLAA Chapters. On November 5 an email went to chapters we have not heard from asking if they were still active.

Why is this important? We get hundreds of calls here at the national office from people looking for help and support locally. We always refer them to our chapters. If we don't have updated information from you, we can't do that with confidence that you still exist and will respond to them. Plus, we want to list you on hearingloss.org so everyone can find you.

Chapters should fill out the [Chapter Update form](#) and email it to chapters@hearingloss.org. If your chapter no longer meets just drop us a note and we will send you a chapter closing form.

If we do not hear back from chapters by **December 1, 2015**, we will remove them from the hearingloss.org ["Find a Chapter" section](#) and mark the chapter or state association as inactive in our database. We are doing our best to ensure that we are able to truly serve people who are looking for peer support at the local level, so we have to know if you exist.

On behalf of the HLAA Board of Trustees, the national staff and members everywhere, thank you to everyone who works hard in HLAA Chapters and State Organizations on behalf of people with hearing loss.

WALK4HEARING

[Jacksonville, Florida](#), will be the site of the last Walk4Hearing of the 2015 season, this Saturday, November 7.

Thank you to all the volunteers, supporters and walkers across the country who have made the HLAA Walk4Hearing a resounding success in 2015. Not only has money been raised for national and local programs, but awareness about hearing loss has been created in 21 cities across the country. The Walk4Hearing has put hearing loss on the map! [Find out more information about the Walk4Hearing.](#)

[Sponsorship opportunities are available now for the 2016 Walk4Hearing.](#)

HLAA WEBINARS

Mark your calendar for the following free and captioned webinars. To join a webinar, go to the [Schedule page](#) and click the Join Webinar button. In case you miss the live event, the webinars will be recorded for [playback on our website](#)

November 10, 2015

Noon – 1 p.m.

**Product Showcase Webinar: *hi HealthInnovations*
*Improving the Access and Affordability of Hearing Health Care***

Presenter:

Audiologist Diane Nens

Diane Nens joined *hi HealthInnovations* in 2012. Her roles include corporate leadership at *hi HealthInnovations* and serving as an audiologist in the Detroit area. She is an advocate for hearing health education and has been featured on numerous television and radio stations nationwide.

November 18, 2015

8 p.m. – 9 p.m.

HLAA Town Hall Meeting

Presenters:

Margaret Wallhagen, Ph.D., HLAA Board of Trustees Chair, and Anna Gilmore Hall, HLAA Executive Director

The *Town Hall Meeting* will be an opportunity for Anna and Meg to share some of the exciting activities occurring at the national level, as well as provide a forum to talk about opportunities and challenges occurring at the state and chapter levels. The *Town Hall Meeting* will provide a forum for discussion with people who join the webinar. Anna and Meg look forward to “talking and listening” with you on Wednesday, November 18th at 8 p.m. EST.

December 16, 2015

8 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Aging America and Hearing Loss: The PCAST Report Explained

Presenter:

Christine K. Cassel, M.D., President and Chief Executive Officer, National Quality Forum
Dr. Cassel is one of 20 scientists chosen by President Obama to serve on the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) and is co-chair and physician leader of a PCAST report to the President on future directions of health information technology.

PCAST specifically looked at how to support older adults with mild to moderate age-

related hearing loss, which affects nearly half of people over the age of 60 and has major health and social implications. The report found multiple factors that limit people's access to hearing technologies—most notably, the high cost of hearing aids, but also the challenges that consumers face in shopping for best value. PCAST recommended a few key federal actions that it believed could improve access and reduce cost, and Dr. Cassel will summarize those recommendations in the webinar. [Read HLAA's response to the PCAST report here.](#)

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.](#)

HLAA CONVENTION 2016/IFHOH CONGRESS

There are Sponsorships for Every Budget!

The HLAA Convention 2016 Sponsorship/Marketing and Exhibit Opportunities prospectus has been posted on the [Convention page](#).

Call for Papers Deadline – December 4, 2015

If you are interested in presenting a workshop, please see the [Call for Papers page](#). For all educational webinars, your proposal needs to be submitted on the [Call for Papers site](#); only proposals for the State/Chapter Development Room are to be submitted using the Call for Papers form.