



# This Week in Bethesda

**NOVEMBER 18, 2016**

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

*This Week in Bethesda will not be published next week in observance of Thanksgiving. The national office will also be closed on Friday, November 25. We wish all of you a happy holiday!*

## **NAS REPORT**

### **An Update on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NAS) Report *Hearing Health Care for Adults: Priorities for Improving Access and Affordability***

Recommendation #7 of the NAS report is to "Implement a New Food and Drug Administration Device Category for Over-the-Counter (OTC) Wearable Hearing Devices" for adults with mild-to-moderate hearing loss. HLAA supports this recommendation as there are many people with mild and moderate hearing loss who won't seek hearing health care because the system can be confusing and cost prohibitive. People who have more severe-to-profound hearing loss usually need more complex fittings and thus should seek the care of an audiologist. This OTC model would not apply to this group of people.

Why does this recommendation come up now? Due to innovation, hearing technologies are evolving at ever-increasing rates, care is moving into a variety of retail and online settings, and the pricing structures for hearing aids and associated services are being re-examined. OTC hearing devices (notice they are not calling them "hearing aids" right now) will offer people a wide range of options. The hope is that people will be more likely to enter the hearing health care system and be more willing to visit a hearing health care professional sooner rather than later should their hearing loss progress or if they need help with an OTC device. HLAA feels the gold standard of care is seeing an audiologist, but for those who wouldn't seek help in the first place an over-the-counter hearing wearable device might be a good first step. Our society has moved toward patient-centered care, with patients getting more information and making their own decisions about their health care.

On November 17, 2016, Barbara Kelley, HLAA executive director, and Lise Hamlin, director of public policy – along with Brenda Battat, independent consultant, member of the NAS committee and former HLAA executive director, and Frank Lin, M.D., Ph.D., otologist, HLAA board member and member of the NAS committee, met with FDA staff (about 10 people, including Eric Mann, M.D., Ph.D., clinical deputy director, Division of Ophthalmic and Ear, Nose, and Throat Devices), to express the consumer perspective for access and affordability and to show our support for OTC devices. We also want clear labeling on products that includes red-flag warnings about when to see a doctor along with clear expectations, resulting in safer and more effective devices with standards.



The overarching theme of the NAS report is that hearing loss is a primary health concern. The NAS committee gathered information from multiple sources in order to determine the extent to which the U.S. population is affected by hearing loss. The study discusses the impact of hearing loss on individuals, their families and society. HLAA was the only consumer-group sponsor, with several federal agencies also sponsoring. To read the full report or to see a list of the [recommendations](#) go to [nas.edu/hearing](http://nas.edu/hearing).

## NAS Public Meeting on December 7

The NAS will be holding a public dissemination meeting on Wednesday, December 7 to discuss the report. Topics that will be discussed include:

- Improving Access and Affordability
- Expanding Technology Options
- Improving Consumer Information and Public Awareness

The meeting will be held at 9 a.m. (EST) in Room 100 at the Keck Center of the NAS, 500 5th Street NW, Washington, DC 20001. You can attend in person or join remotely via WebEx. For those attending in person the room will be equipped with a hearing loop and CART will be provided. You can [register today](#). Members of the HLAA staff and Board of Trustees will be attending the meeting.

## DEVELOPMENT

### Please Consider HLAA in Your End-of-Year Giving

HLAA, like many nonprofit organizations, holds a year-end appeal. The money raised from the appeal goes toward funding the work you have come to depend on from HLAA. All donations, no matter how small or large, make a difference. We truly appreciate all of you who have supported HLAA over the years with both your time and money. You might have received a letter in the mail about our year-end appeal or [you can read it here and donate online](#). Thank you!

### Attention Combined Federal Campaign Participants

*Celebrate with the Hearing Loss Association of America!* Your support helps us:

- advocate for Medicare coverage for hearing aids
- provide solutions to veterans and others with hearing loss
- fight to end discrimination in the workplace
- safeguard your rights with insurance carriers
- make your voice heard with state and federal regulators

Your support is critical in our service to you. We make your issues and positions known. We are your vocal and visible presence ensuring that your rights and needs are met. **Designate #11376**—Hearing Loss Association of America as your charity of choice this campaign season, which runs until **December 15**.

*Your gift makes a difference in the lives of people with hearing loss every day.*



## HLAA2017 CONVENTION

### Call for Papers Deadline – December 2!

December is just around the corner, which means the Call for Papers deadline is too! If you or someone you know might be interested in presenting a workshop at HLAA2017, complete the [Call for Papers form](#) and submit it to [convention@hearingloss.org](mailto:convention@hearingloss.org) by Friday, December 2. Have an idea for a workshop that doesn't necessarily fit into one of the existing tracks? Go ahead and submit it anyway, as the tracks are not yet finalized. We welcome all proposals!

### Early-Bird Registration is OPEN

As the holiday season quickly approaches, so does the stress of buying presents. Need a gift for someone who has everything? How about a prepaid registration to the HLAA2017 Convention in gorgeous Salt Lake City? Get your holiday shopping out of the way now and register [here](#).

**State and Chapter Leaders:** Please use the form on the [registration page](#), as online registration is not available for your discounted registration.

## CHAPTERS

### 2017 Program Planning

This is the time of year when chapter leaders pull out their calendars and plan programs and meetings for the coming year. Here are a few ideas for you to consider putting on the calendar as you look ahead to planning activities for 2017. You can find all of these ideas and much more information in the [Leader Support](#) section of the HLAA website.

- HLAA organizations involved in community service projects grow because they are reaching out to people with hearing loss. Check out the [Outreach and Community Service](#) page for some great ideas to connect with people with hearing loss in your community.
- Another idea that can really jazz up a chapter's meetings are game nights. You can find ideas for game nights on the [Additional Resources](#) page (scroll down to "Meetings").
- Chapters around the country have also had great results from other social activities such as captioned theater outings, book clubs, or a trip to cinemas that offer captioned showings of current movies. You can find these and other meeting topics and format ideas on the [Chapter Meetings](#) page.

Enjoy!

### Be in the Know – Subscribe to the HLAA Chapter Blog

Keep current with updates and news. After you [subscribe here](#), the news will go directly to your email with no extra login steps necessary.



## IN THE NEWS

### University of Virginia Installs Hearing Loops in Several Rooms

The University of Virginia has installed hearing loops in several rooms of their Rotunda, including the main Dome Room, as part of a \$50 million renovation. Dr. Juliëtte Sterkens, HLAA's national hearing loop advocate, spoke to about 70 students, faculty and hearing professionals this week about the technology. Larry Herbert of the HLAA Central Virginia Chapter helped arrange Juliëtte's visit. [Read more.](#)

### College Junior Helps Reduce the Stigma of Hearing Loss Prevention by Making Earplugs Cool

University of Washington junior Madeline Bennett has combined a passion for entrepreneurship and hearing science to create stylish earplugs to help reduce the stigma around the prevention of noise-induced hearing loss. Based on all the positive feedback of this class project, Madeline decided to turn [Otogear](#) into a real startup. [Read more.](#)

