

APRIL 21, 2017

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.

ADVOCACY

HLAA Stands Up for Consumers at FTC Workshop

HLAA represented consumers with hearing loss at a Federal Trade Commission (FTC) [workshop](#) on Tuesday, April 18, titled, "Now Hear This: Competition, Innovation, & Consumer Protection Issues in Hearing Health Care." The FTC brought together researchers, health care providers, industry representatives, consumer representatives, policymakers and others to examine ways in which enhanced competition and innovation might increase the availability and adoption of hearing aids by people who need them but aren't currently using them.

In addition, the workshop looked at how to balance consumer health and safety issues with consumer interest in greater competition and innovation. The FTC also wants to ensure that consumers have access to truthful and non-misleading information about hearing health products and services.

HLAA Executive Director Barbara Kelley and Board of Trustees Member KR Liu were on the panel, "Informing Consumer Choice in Hearing Health Care." Barbara talked about HLAA's position on affordable and accessible health care, including [our support for recent legislation](#) that would require the FDA to create a new category of over-the-counter wearable hearing devices (read more about our Call to Action below). KR talked about her experience as a person with hearing loss who would like to see innovation and competition in the industry.

HLAA had a strong presence at the workshop. In addition to Barbara and KR, Board Members Don Doherty, Richard Einhorn and Meg Wallhagen attended, as did HLAA Director of Public Policy Lise Hamlin and HLAA Professional Advisor on Technology Linda Kozma-Spytek.

Dan Gillman, J.D., Ph.D., from the FTC Office of Policy Planning, said at the end of the day that the topics covered will part of an "ongoing inquiry." The FTC is accepting [public comments](#) until May 18, 2017. More information about the workshop can be found on the [FTC website](#).

You can be sure that HLAA will be there for you – people with hearing loss who need affordable and accessible hearing health care.





This Week in Bethesda

It's a Call to Action – Your Voice Matters!

The Hearing Loss Association of America has embarked on a campaign to support new legislation that, if passed, will change the face of hearing health care in America. And you can be part of it.

The Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017, led by U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), was introduced on March 21. The bipartisan legislation would make certain types of hearing aids available over the counter and remove unnecessary and burdensome requirements that currently create barriers for consumers who could benefit from hearing aids.

HLAA is asking for your help in sending Congress a message that passage of this bill would be life-changing for the millions of Americans who do not seek help for their hearing loss simply because they cannot afford to. We now have the power to influence Congress to change that. Contact your congressmen and let them know you support the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017. We have created a new section of our website dedicated to this issue. There is information there on how to contact your senator or representative, as well as sample letters you can use.

Every individual voice matters. And, as they say, there's strength in numbers. Along with all HLAA members, we are calling on all our chapters and state associations to mobilize and advocate for this groundbreaking legislation. Lise Hamlin, HLAA director of public policy, might reach out to you individually where we need to target specific legislators.

Executive Director Barbara Kelley said, "HLAA is the only one representing consumers on Capitol Hill. Every time we meet with the staff of a senator or representative, they are thankful we came to discuss the issues people with hearing loss have in getting affordable hearing health care. We are taken seriously and they are reaching out to us in addition to us reaching out to them. They have asked that we get our HLAA members in their congressional districts to write letters and take action. Over the next several weeks, Lise Hamlin will be reaching out to individuals and chapters where we need the most help. In the meantime, every voice matters. Please consider contacting your member of Congress. Thank you."

You can find more information – including information on how to contact Congress – at hearingloss.org/content/call-to-action-otc. If ever there was a time to get more involved, now is it!



DEVELOPMENT

You're Invited! Join Our Patient Content Review Panel

HAAA members are being given the opportunity to review video content that is streamed into hearing health care waiting rooms across the country. HAAA has partnered with Clear Digital Media (CDM) to launch the [Patient Content Review Panel](#), which gives HAAA members the opportunity to review CDM's [Hearing News Network](#) video content and provide feedback and ideas. For more information or to sign up for the Patient Content Review Panel, visit info.clearsounds.com/hlaa-crp.

HAAA BOARD OF TRUSTEES IN THE NEWS

Board of Trustees Members to Appear on NPR's Morning Edition

Be sure to tune in to [NPR's Morning Edition](#) on Monday, April 24. HAAA Board Members Richard Einhorn, Frank Lin and KR Liu will be guests on the show to discuss the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017. Please check your [local stations](#) for more information.

HAAA MEMBERS IN ACTION

HAAA Member Wayne Roorda Joins New Jersey Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Wayne Roorda, a member of HAAA, the [HAAA New Jersey State Association](#) and a former member of the HAAA Board of Trustees, has joined the New Jersey Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH) as a hard of hearing specialist. Wayne has been a member of HAAA since 1983. He was also the [recipient](#) of the 2014 Howard E. "Rocky" Stone Humanitarian Award. *Congratulations, Wayne!*

We know many HAAA members represent people with hearing loss through various roles and positions in their communities and states. If you serve on a board or council, such as DDHH, we'd love to [hear from you!](#)

