

**MARCH 17, 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.

## HLAA IN THE NEWS

### **Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids Are a Hot Topic!**

HLAA Executive Director Barbara Kelley was interviewed recently for an article in *Politico*, a news organization that reports on nonpartisan political and policy issues. The article, "Hearing Aids: The FDA's Latest Mission for Digital Health," focuses on the possibility that the FDA will create a new class of over-the-counter hearing aids. HLAA is in full support of this measure. Barbara was interviewed along with a representative from the Hearing Industries Association, an organization that represents hearing aid manufacturers and that opposes the idea of over-the-counter hearing aids.

In December 2016, Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) introduced the [Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2016](#), which would require the Food and Drug Administration to create this new class of hearing aids. It is anticipated that the bill will be reintroduced to Congress very soon.

People are contacting HLAA at an unprecedented rate to comment about this, so stay tuned as this hotly-debated issue develops!

(Note: the full article is available on [politico.com](http://politico.com), a subscription-based news service.)

## OUTREACH

HLAA Executive Director Barbara Kelley and Publications Editor Dave Hutcheson attended the annual meeting of the Hearing Industries Association (HIA) on March 16. HIA is a national trade association that represents hearing aid and device manufacturers.

There were several discussions and presentations focused on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NAS) [report](#), especially the recommendation to create a new category of over-the-counter hearing devices. Dan Blazer, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H, chair of the NAS study committee, was one of the presenters. HLAA was mentioned several times throughout the day, mainly in conjunction with our efforts to raise public awareness of hearing loss.

Along with most of the device manufacturers, several other hearing loss-related groups were in attendance, including the Academy of Doctors of Audiology, American Cochlear Implant Alliance, Hearing Health Foundation, National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Veterans Administration (VA).





# This Week in Bethesda

## **HLAA Board of Trustee Member KR Liu Speaks at SXSW**

[KR Liu](#), a member of the HLAA Board of Trustees, continues actively advocating on behalf of people with hearing loss. On March 13, KR attended the South by Southwest Conference & Festivals, better known as [SXSW](#), to present on a panel titled [Unlocking Technology for People with Disabilities](#). She was joined by Jenny Lay-Flurrie from Microsoft (who you might remember as a keynote speaker at the HLAA 2016 Convention), Steve Ewell from the Consumer Technology Association (CTA) Foundation, and Cathy Bodine from the University of Colorado.

## **HLAA2017 CONVENTION**

### **Early-Bird Registration Deadline is Fast Approaching!**

The early-bird deadline to register for HLAA2017 Convention is almost upon us. The discounted rates are in effect only until March 31. Don't forget to [register](#) today!

## **PERSONNEL**

### **Welcome Diana Russell, HLAA's New Database/Membership Coordinator!**

HLAA is pleased to announce that Diana Russell joined the HLAA team as the new Database/Membership coordinator on March 16. In her role, Diana will be overseeing the daily operation of our membership database. She comes with a wealth of experience, having spent 13 years at Jewish Women International, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, where she served as contributions manager. Diana lives in Silver Spring, Maryland and has a 22-year-old son who attends Montgomery College in Rockville, Maryland. Welcome to HLAA Diana – we are thrilled to have you aboard!

