

**MAY 12, 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

### **Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017 One Small Step Closer to Reality**

The Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017 – bipartisan legislation that would make certain types of hearing aids available over the counter (see our Call to Action below) – is now a step closer to becoming a reality after it was attached to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) User Fee Reauthorization Act of 2017, which has been termed “must-pass” legislation.

On May 11, the Senate HELP (Health, Education, Labor and Pensions) Committee [approved](#) the Reauthorization Act. It will now be sent to the Senate for a vote at some point in the near future. The Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017 is one of the 20 amendments to the FDA User Fee Bill. Executive Director Barbara Kelley attended the Senate Committee meeting while Lise Hamlin, director of public policy, and Barry Kasinitz, HLAA public policy advisor, met with House of Representatives staff on the bill.

### **It’s a Call to Action – Your Voice Matters!**

HLAA 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.

On March 21, the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017 (S. 670) was introduced in the Senate by U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and a companion bill (H.R. 1652) was introduced in the House by Representatives Joseph Kennedy III (D-Mass., 4th District) and Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn., 7th District). 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 it. 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.





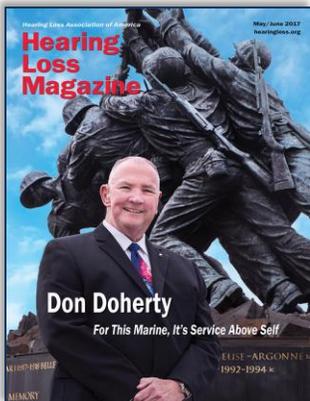
# This Week in Bethesda

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](http://hearingloss.org/content/call-to-action-otc). If ever there was a time to get more involved, now is it!

## HEARING LOSS MAGAZINE



The May/June 2017 issue of [Hearing Loss Magazine](http://hearingloss.org/content/call-to-action-otc) is in the mail! You don't want to miss this issue. The cover features Don Doherty, incoming chairperson of the HLAA Board of Trustees. You can read all about Don's inspirational journey and how this remarkable man has devoted his life to the service of others. And in Dr. Frank Lin's article you'll get a complete breakdown of the importance of over-the-counter hearing aids to people with hearing loss. But that's just a small taste, so keep your eyes out for this jam-packed issue!

## HLAA2017 CONVENTION

### Volunteers Needed!

We are looking for volunteers to serve as workshop monitors, Convention ambassadors, extra muscle, and more! If you are interested in volunteering at [HLAA2017 Convention](http://hearingloss.org/convention), email Niaz Siasi at [nsiasi@hearingloss.org](mailto:nsiasi@hearingloss.org).

