

# HEARSAY

**The Official Newsletter of Hearing Loss Association of PA**

**Volume 9, Issue 1  
March 2010**

## **HLAA Annual Convention, June 17 – 20, 2010 in Milwaukee, WI**

Don't forget to save the date and plan to join us at the 2010 HLAA Annual Convention. There will be lots of information on hearing loss, coping skills and technology, as well as a chance to meet old friends and make new ones. HLAA is offering a discount for first-time attendees, so if you've never been to a convention, here's your chance. Veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom are welcome to attend at no charge. And we will again be awarding scholarships to young adults (either a young adult aged 18 – 35 with hearing loss or the parent of a child with hearing loss) to attend

the convention. The research symposium will bring you the latest information on a topic of interest to many: *Hearing Aid Research and Development: What It Means for the Consumer*.

Located on Lake Michigan, Milwaukee offers a multitude of attractions: from the Milwaukee Brewers team to the many museums, mansions, breweries, and gardens, there is something for every age and interest to experience.

For more information go to:

<http://www.hearingloss.org/convention>.

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## **FCC Proposes Tougher Restrictions on "Robocalls"**

New Rules Would Conform FCC and FTC  
Telemarketing Practices

*From a Press Release by the Federal Communications Commission, 1/20/10ss*

**NVRC Note:** *This action is especially good news for the many people with hearing loss who dread calls from strangers they have difficulty understanding. We've heard from many, many people who were upset that they'd struggled to figure out who is calling only to learn it was wasted time and effort on a "robocall".*

The FCC has proposed revisions to its rules under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) to further empower residential telephone subscribers to avoid unwanted telephone solicitations. The proposals would require sellers and telemarketers to obtain written consent from recipients before making prerecorded telemarketing calls, commonly referred to as "robocalls," even when the caller has an established business relationship with the consumer.

Additionally, the FCC proposes to make it easier to opt out of receiving robocalls. Key revisions proposed by the FCC today include:

Requiring sellers and telemarketers to obtain subscriber's express written consent (including electronic methods of consent) to receive prerecorded telemarketing calls, even when there exists an established business relationship between the caller and the consumer; requiring that prerecorded telemarketing calls include an automated, interactive mechanism by which a consumer may "opt out" of receiving future prerecorded messages from a seller or telemarketer; and, exempting certain federally regulated healthcare-related calls from the general prohibition on prerecorded telemarketing calls to residential telephone lines. (These calls are currently not specifically exempted from the prerecorded message rules.)

The proposed rule changes would not affect categories of prerecorded message calls that

are not currently covered by its TCPA rules, such as calls by or on behalf of tax-exempt non-profit organizations; calls made by politicians or political campaigns; and commercial calls that do not contain unsolicited advertisements, for example, calls that deliver purely "informational" messages notifying recipients of a flight cancellation. The proposed rule revisions would also not affect messages sent to consumers to alert them to emergency situations.

*Distributed 2010 by Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons (NVRC), 3951 Pender Drive, Suite 130, Fairfax, VA 22030; www.nvrc.org. 703-352-9055 V, 703-352-9056 TTY, 703-352-9058 Fax. Items in this newsletter are provided for information purposes only; NVRC does not endorse products or services.*

## **FDA's New Website on Hearing Aids**

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently launched a new Web site that will benefit current and potential users of hearing aids. FDA regulates hearing aids, which it defines as sound-amplifying devices designed to aid people who have impaired hearing.

"People who already use a hearing aid know that selecting the right one is not a simple process," says Eric Mann, M.D., Ph.D., deputy director of FDA's Division of Ophthalmic, Neurological, and Ear, Nose, and Throat Devices. "There are many issues to consider. Also, current users of hearing aids want to know about the latest types and technology, and how to properly maintain the ones they already have."

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Mann says the new Web site will cover the different types and styles of hearing aids, how to obtain one, and steps to remember and consider before purchasing a hearing aid. It has information on hearing aid safety, using cell phones while wearing a hearing aid, and on other products and procedures available to people who want to improve their hearing. It also stresses the difference between hearing aids, which FDA regulates as medical devices in order to assure their safety and effectiveness, and personal sound amplification products, which are not subject to this type of regulation.

Mann says the new Web site is not intended to provide medical advice. "If you have questions about your hearing, the best source of information is your hearing health care professional," he says.

The site includes sections general information on hearing aids, types of hearing loss, types and styles of hearing aids, how to get a hearing aid, benefits and safety of hearing aids, hearing aids and cell phones, other products and procedures that people can use to improve hearing.

Here's the link:

<http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/HomeHealthandConsumer/>

### **PADDC FOCUS GROUP GETS BRIEFING ABOUT HOH NEEDS**

Hearing loss is often present as a component of developmental disabilities. Although by definition, such disabilities occur before age 22, projects to make society more communication accessible for people with developmental disabilities also benefit those with adult-onset hearing impairments. The Developmental Disabilities Act is a federal law that provides funding to increase independence, productivity, and inclusion, and every

state has a developmental disabilities council to promote advocacy and system changes.

On October 7, 2009 I attended a focus group meeting in Harrisburg sponsored by the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council (PADDC), and Pat Brockley attended a second one on October 8. The purpose was to assess how well PADDC is serving the various disability populations and what more it could do.

The following are the main points I made:

1. Hard of hearing needs are very different from Deaf needs. Because of these differences, a member of one of these groups cannot serve as a spokesperson for the other group.

2. When communication access is described, all the hearing loss accommodations--interpreting, CART, and assistive listening devices/systems--should be listed, because the public is often unaware of anything besides sign language interpreting.

3. Although 1/3 of senior citizens have a hearing loss, assisted living residences generally don't accommodate hearing loss very well and need to be educated in how to do so.

4. There are projects supported by PADDC that could relate to hearing loss needs but don't appear to address them. For example, there is a transportation project dealing with paratransit (special transportation for people with disabilities), whereas people with hearing loss need LED signs to display the stops on regular transit. To ensure that hearing loss needs are included in future grants, hard of hearing advocates need to be able to provide input when requests for proposals are being developed.

5. PADDC provided grants to two current projects that affect hearing loss. One is for VSA Arts to enable people with disabilities to attend performances; part of this is for the development of software for theaters to use to caption their shows. The other is for the Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living to produce a guide for civic groups, etc. to enable deaf and hard of hearing people to participate in public life. HLA-PA is asking PADDC for the opportunity to provide input into the development of this guide.

*Nancy Kingsley, HLA-PA Advocacy Committee Chair  
kingsley@hla-pa.org*

## State Office Happenings

Despite the snow, it has been a busy few months for HLA-PA. Many of us have braved the storms to make things “happen”! Events and meetings are listed where members of the Advisory Council and others were asked to represent HLA-PA to voice our concerns for people with hearing loss. Social and outreach functions are listed here as well. If you see an area of interest and would like to participate, please contact Diana Bender: [bender@hla-pa.org](mailto:bender@hla-pa.org). We would love to have you!

**January 9-16, Farm Show:** With the approval and financial backing of the state organization’s Advisory Council, Steve Schultz organized our HLA-PA exhibit at the 2010 Farm Show in Harrisburg. Steve is the President of the Capital Region Chapter and a member of the Advisory Council. It is estimated that over 400,000 people visited the show. Over 100 people signed our “Visitors’ Log” and many of them asked for a subscription to “Hearsay”. As a service to A.G. Bell, we displayed and distributed a lot of their items as well. Steve said, “From my standpoint, it was a successful outreach activity for HLA-PA. All who participated were extremely positive as to the outcome. It was a joint effort and showed how effective HLA-PA teamwork could be”. Twenty-eight HLA-PA members staffed our HLA-PA Booth. Thanks Steve for taking charge of this event from start to finish.

**January 14, “Working Together” HLA-PA sponsors Employment Conference:** Diana Bender, Marcia Finisdore, and Donna Penman attended the third meeting with Mike Wakefield, OVR Rehabilitation Manager and other OVR personnel in Norristown. They discussed the one-day Employment Conference to be held on October 29, 2010 from 8:30 until 5:00 pm. The attendees will be job seekers and employees with hearing loss, as well as employers or other Human Resources personnel. Flyers with pertinent information will be distributed in May and brochures in August. The conference will be fully accessible with CART, ASL, and assistive listening devices. Tables will be available for vendors. If anyone is interested in

more information or wishes to be on the committee for this conference please email [conference@hla-pa.org](mailto:conference@hla-pa.org)

**January 26th, Walk4Hearing:** Debra Canon, our Walk Chair and newest member of the Advisory Council, organized the first committee meeting at her home. Sub-committees were formed to cover all aspects of the Walk. For further information or to volunteer contact Debra at [Cannon@hla-pa.org](mailto:Cannon@hla-pa.org). Our fundraising goal for 2010 is \$1,000,000!

**January 27:** Marcia Finisdore and Nancy Kingsley of HLA-PA met with Kathy Gotts of PADDCC, Amy Beck, director of LVCIL and Nicholas Butterfield, a hard of hearing LVCIL board member. The purpose was to discuss HLA-PA's concerns regarding a grant that PADDCC provided to the LVCIL to produce a guide to enhance the involvement of deaf and hard of hearing people in public life. HLA-PA had wanted to review the draft to ensure that it covered hard of hearing needs appropriately. Amy said that the guide has already being printed, but she would send a copy to Nancy. Kathy invited an HLA-PA member to apply to serve on the PADDCC, and Steve Schultz planned to do so.

### **Independence Starts Here---with all of us!**

The new ISH program dedicated to providing accessibility to those with limited vision and hearing loss has taken off! Thanks to Marianne Lock for her great organizational efforts to establish group rates for us to attend many of these events.

**February 5:** Carolyn and Joe Meyer attended a play at the Amaryllis Theatre that had audio description (AD) for the blind as well as open captioning (OC) for people with hearing loss. The ISH committee was invited to see all the accommodations in a live performance to evaluate them.

**February 7:** About 40 members and friends of HLA-PA attended the OC performance of “Visiting Mr. Green” starring our own Alan Kutner. This heartwarming play was followed by an informal interview session with the actors and producing director. HLA-PA provided the funding to have that session live captioned by Debbie

Cunningham. Please attend some of these performances so we can show the theatres how important it is for us to have open captioning so it will continue. Elsewhere in this newsletter there is a sign-up form to get information about upcoming performances.

**PA SLIC meeting:** Steve Schultz will represent HLA-PA at the February PA Statewide Independent Living Council Focus group meeting in Harrisburg. The Council wants to hear about general life experiences of those with disabilities in the state. Topics covered may include housing, transportation, support, etc. Steve will mention any issues we feel the SILC needs to address for people with hearing loss.

*Submitted by Carolyn Meyer  
meyer@hla-pa.org*

### **ODHH Forums**

The Pennsylvania Office of Deaf & Hard of Hearing (ODHH) is sponsoring a series of meetings for hard of hearing people which will focus on technology available to help people with a hearing loss, communication at work, communication real-time translation (CART), hearing aids, laws and advocacy. Come find out more about the services that ODHH provides to hard of hearing people and bring up any concerns about accessibility in your area. For more information contact ODHH by phone at 800-233-3008 (PA only), 717-783-4912 or by email at [dkeiser@state.pa.us](mailto:dkeiser@state.pa.us)  
*Nancy Kingsley kingsley@hla-pa-org*

#### **April 7, 2010 – Towanda**

The Riverstone Inn  
RR6 Box 6128  
Towanda, PA 18848  
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
Host: ODHH Rep. Denise Brown

#### **April 8, 2010 – Honesdale**

Location to be announced

#### **April 13, 2010 – Lancaster**

Eden Resort/Best Western - Lancaster  
222 Eden Road  
Lancaster, PA 17601  
6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.  
Host: ODHH Rep. Kenneth Puckett

### **Message from Diana**

This past winter has produced more than our usual amounts of snow and cold weather, so it's comforting to look forward to the coming of spring and upcoming HLAA events for the rest of the year. Many of you will remember the employment conferences HLA-PA sponsored several years ago in the Philadelphia area, in Harrisburg and in Pittsburgh. This year we are again working with the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to bring the conference back to the Philadelphia area. We welcome volunteers who would like to help with the conference and/or our annual Walk4Hearing.

**June 17 – 20, 2010:** HLAA Convention in Milwaukee, WI. There are lots of fun and educational events planned, so be sure to check out all the information on the HLAA website at: [convention@hearingloss.org](mailto:convention@hearingloss.org). Discounts are available to first-time convention goers.

**Saturday, September 25, 2010:** PA Walk4Hearing, Ridley Creek State Park, Newtown Square, PA. For more information check out our website at [www.Walk4Hearing.org](http://www.Walk4Hearing.org) or contact Debra Cannon, PA Walk4Hearing Chairperson at [cannon@hla-pa.org](mailto:cannon@hla-pa.org).

**Friday, October 29, 2010:** Employment Conference, Radisson Valley Forge Hotel, King of Prussia, PA. For more information contact the organizers at [conference@hla-pa.org](mailto:conference@hla-pa.org)

*Diana Bender,  
HLA-PA State Director*

#### **ODHH FORUMS CONTINUED**

#### **April 16, 2010 – Monaca**

Hampton Inn  
202 Fairview Drive  
Monaca, PA 15061  
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
Host: ODHH Rep. Gerald Penna

#### **May 7, 2010 – Warren**

Hampton Inn  
3291 Market Street Ext.  
Warren, PA 16365  
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
Host: ODHH Rep. Gerald Penna

## HearSay Subscription

If you would like to receive your own copy of **HearSay**, the official newsletter of HLA-PA, please fill in this form and mail it to the address below. A **HearSay** subscription is free; however, HLA-PA is a not-for-profit organization run exclusively by volunteers and we are grateful for any donations.

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**Marcia Finisdore  
HLA-PA  
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## Telephone Contacts

For HLA-PA Activities or Other Information,  
feel free to call:

Teresa Nellans, (Western PA) - 412-767-9769  
Barb Beard, (Central PA) - 717-534-0820  
Ronnie Adler, (Eastern PA) - 610-644-3154

## Save the Date: Employment Conference!

What: Employment Conference for Hard of Hearing Employees, Hard of Hearing Job Seekers and Employers

Where: Radisson Valley Forge Hotel, King of Prussia, PA

When: Friday, October 29, 2010, 8:30 am – 5 p.m.

Watch for more information in the June issue of HearSay and on the events page of our Website: [www.hla-pa.org](http://www.hla-pa.org) or contact the organizers at: [conference@hla-pa.org](mailto:conference@hla-pa.org)

