

HearSay

The Official Newsletter of HLAА-PA

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MESSAGE FROM NANCY

By Nancy Kingsley, State Director



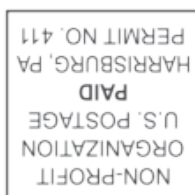
An important hearing loss settlement was recently reached in New York City with the aid of Disability Rights

Advocates (DRA) and Meenan & Associates, a law firm specializing in civil rights. DRA (which has a website at www.dralegal.org) is a nonprofit disability legal organization that provides its services throughout the U.S. It has been in operation for over 20 years, litigated over 400 cases, and won almost all of them in such areas as health care, employment, transportation, and education.

In this case, a police officer who developed a hearing loss in the line of duty had been forced to retire from the New York Police Department (NYPD) after 20 years' service because of a blanket policy banning hearing

aids. The policy violated the Americans with Disabilities Act, so HLAА, AARP and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) filed a friend of the court brief against it. The police officer was reinstated, and the NYPD will consider evaluating officers on a case-by-case basis while they are wearing their hearing aids. In the meantime, officers will be allowed to wear hearing aids during testing and keep their jobs if they can meet the hearing standards.

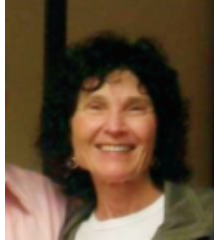
While this settlement applies specifically to New York City, it sets a precedent for similar cases anywhere in the U.S. and applies to others besides police officers. (The VFW signed on as a friend of the court because many war veterans have a service-connected hearing loss.) The important underlying principle is that people with hearing loss shouldn't be able to be forced from a job because they can't pass a hearing test without their hearing aids.



Hearing Loss
Association of America Pennsylvania
State Office
126 Cedarcroft Road
Kennett Square, PA 19348
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

State Happenings and Outreach

By Carolyn Meyer



HAAA-PA wishes to thank Pam Reiher for her dedication and hard work as Editor of "HearSay."

During the years she has been Editor, we have seen "HearSay" grow into a truly professional newsletter under her leadership. She has helped us in the transition to include color copy, a new format, and pictures. We appreciate her time spent in addition to her personal life including a full time job and family. She has been so attentive to detail and responsive to our requests. We wish Pam good luck in her future endeavors. In the fall, Don Groff, our HAAA-PA webmaster and Vice-President of the Montgomery County Chapter, will become editor. The Advisory Council's welcomes Lee Williams as a new member. The council now consists of 12 members.

STATE LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

As part of their May meeting, members of the Montgomery County chapter of HAAA signed a letter to Representative Brendan Boyle of Pennsylvania's 13th congressional district encouraging him to become a sponsor of the Hearing Aid Tax Credit Bill, HR 1882. Representative Boyle's district covers parts of Philadelphia and Montgomery County and the chapter meets in a library in that district. HR1882 would provide a tax credit of \$1,000 for the vast majority of people who need two hearing aids, and \$500 if only one were needed. This assistance is critical in making hearing aids affordable for many people, since 61% of all hearing aid purchases involve no third-party payment. More than 40 representatives of both political parties have already signed on to the house bill and HAAA is working to identify additional supporters. The tax credit would apply once every 5 years and has an income cap of \$200,000 per person. HR 1882 would require Medicare to cover hearing aids. If you are in Representative Boyle's

congressional district, please write to him to urge him to support HR1882.

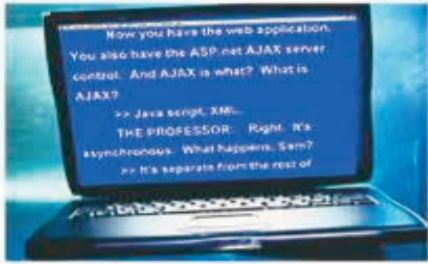
CHAPTERS

Central PA Chapter Coordinator: Dale Long recently visited several chapters in his territory to discuss any concerns they might have. Dale felt he was well-received by the Capital Region Chapter (Camp Hill/Harrisburg area) and Lebanon County Chapter (Cornwall Manor). The Lebanon County Chapter now has a new loop for their large meeting room in addition to the loop in the small board room. On May 11th, Dale visited State College.

May 6: Dr. Emilio Cortez, Co-Chair of the HAAA-PA "Turn Down the Volume Committee," visited the Philadelphia Chapter/Suburban-Northeast. Dr. Cortez's presentation included suggestions on how to deal with excessively loud noise in public venues to avoid damage to hearing. His demonstration included several headphones to reduce and control incoming sound levels—some geared toward children of different age groups—as well as decibel meters to measure sound levels in the environment. Specific apps were mentioned that could be used free of charge on smartphones for persons to measure the sound levels of places they frequented. Dr. Cortez indicated exposure levels that damage hearing within specific time limits. He is the husband of Patty Cortez, Co-Chair of the committee. Patty is a member and past-president of the Montco Chapter. You can contact Dr. Cortez for further information egcortez1@gmail.com. Dr. Cortez has been willing to visit local chapters to create awareness of the dangers of excessive noise and what actions we can take to advocate for change in situations where these dangers exist.

OUTREACH

May 15: Health Fair at Twining Village Senior Retirement Community, Holland, PA. Marianne Lock and Carolyn Meyer exhibited for HAAA-PA. The event had a large turnout. HAAA-PA donated a raffle prize of one year's membership to HAAA to a lucky winner.



ODHH Advocates for CART Services for Court Hearing

An individual who is hard of hearing contacted ODHH for information. This individual stated that they had a court hearing in several weeks and wanted to know options for effective communication. After a discussion of possible options, ODHH and the individual agreed that CART (Communication Access Real-Time Translation) would be reasonable. A request was made to the court system which was denied because the individual had hearing aids and could hear "just fine." ODHH contacted the court administrator, then the judge, to explain how hearing aids work and that the individual is required to receive effective communication during the court hearing by implementing CART services. After several conversations, the court administrator and the judge agreed to obtain CART services for the hearing.

Note: ODHH is the Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing which is located in Harrisburg. They can be contacted at 717.783.4912 or odhh@pa.gov

Submitted by Nancy Kingsley

MrPAWS by Snow

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126 Cedarcroft Road
Kennett Square, PA 19348

Lunch and Learn Focuses on Hearing Loss Research

On April 19, nearly 100 people gathered at the Radisson Valley Forge in King of Prussia for a presentation on the current status of hearing loss research by Dr. James Saunders, Professor Emeritus of Research Otolaryngology, Physiology and Neuroscience at the Perelman School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania. His talk was followed by State Director Nancy Kingsley's report on how hearing loss research led to the development of cochlear implants.

Don Groff of Lansdale received the Marcia Finisdore Award for Advocacy, which was presented by previous awardee Alan Kutner, since Marcia was unable to be present. Don selected Children's Hospital of Philadelphia as the recipient of the award's charitable donation. Lynn Mather of Philadelphia received the Diana Bender HLAA National Convention Scholarship Award, which enables a deserving member in Pennsylvania to attend his or her first HLAA convention.

Raffle prizes were donated by Clear Sounds, Harris Communications, Serene Innovations, and Sonic Alert. Attendees also had the opportunity to visit exhibits by Advanced Bionics, Cochlear Americas, East Coast Hearing Loops, HLAA-PA, MED-EL, the PA Captioned Telephone Relay Service, and TDDP.

A generous grant from the Louis N. Cassett Foundation helped to make the highly successful event possible.

Submitted by Nancy Kingsley



Audism and Genetic Selection

Dr. Neil Bauman and Dale Long attended a presentation about audism and genetic selection against deaf babies. The presenter was Dr. Patrick Boudreault, a deaf professor. This program was organized by the F&M faculty and students. They had arranged to provide an oral interpreter for Dr. Boudreault, but they did not plan any CART services.

Before the meeting Dr. Bauman contacted the meeting organizers and explained to them that their presentation would be accessible for hearing and deaf people but hard of hearing people would be left out and wouldn't come because they wouldn't be able to hear. As a result of information that Dr. Bauman provided them, they arranged to have CART provided by Archive Reporting from Harrisburg.

We felt that after advocating for CART services, we should at least show up for the presentation and so Dr. Bauman and myself attended. The CART was visible to the whole room, and since the sound system in the gymnasium was not good, I am sure that it was helpful to many people.

The best thing was that after the meeting we congratulated the faculty and students that had organized the event and explained many issues that are relevant to the hard of hearing population. We had a number of lengthy and valuable conversations and I am hopeful that they will think of CART for future presentations. It turned out to be a very positive day, and we were able to educate some students and faculty who are interested in deaf/ASL issues about hearing loss.

Submitted by Dale Long

When Hearing Aids Aren't Enough, Cochlear Implants Can Help

Straining to hear each day, even when using powerful advanced hearing aids? Feeling frustrated and sometimes even exhausted from listening?

Whether it happens suddenly or gradually over time, hearing loss can affect physical and emotional health. Being unable to hear impacts one's ability to socialize with friends, communicate with co-workers, and can force people to become more reliant on family members to constantly interpret for them.

By age 65, one out of three people will have a hearing loss, according to the Hearing Loss Association of America. Signs of hearing loss include:

- Difficulty understanding speech on the telephone
- Trouble following a conversation with two or more people talking at the same time
- Difficulty hearing in a noisy background
- Having to strain to understand conversation
- The need to ask people to repeat themselves
- Misunderstanding others and responding inappropriately

If you or someone you know is experiencing more than two of these signs, it could be beneficial to schedule an evaluation with a certified audiologist to learn if your loved one has a hearing loss. For people diagnosed with severe to profound hearing loss, who no longer benefit from hearing aids, there may be a solution. Unlike a hearing aid that amplifies sound, a cochlear implant is an implantable solution designed to mimic natural hearing using sophisticated software and state-of-the-art electronic components.

Ann Dexheimer, a former certified American Sign Language interpreter and teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program in Sonoma County, was diagnosed with hearing loss as a child. Starting at age 12, her progressive loss started to worsen.

Throughout her career, Dexheimer had taken professional courses and learned about cochlear implants, a technology that is often covered by many private

health insurance plans and Medicare, and may be covered by Medicaid. Because her own hearing had worsened, it dawned on her in a class one day that she should consider getting a cochlear implant herself. "For me it was a no-brainer. I'd seen the remarkable success of children with cochlear implants."

Having a cochlear implant has become more than a device to assist her in hearing. "It becomes who you are," Dexheimer says. "Some days you don't even realize or notice that you're hearing everything. Then all of a sudden you'll have a CI (cochlear implant) moment. You'll hear a leaf hitting the ground and go, "Wow I heard that. It's amazing. I'm so fortunate."

To learn more about cochlear implants and request a free information kit, visit www.CochlearAmericas.com

Editors note: Captioned videos and product information are available at www.CochlearAmericas.com



DENISE P. – Cochlear Implant user enjoys dining out, talking on the phone, listening to music and meeting new people.

"My hearing was restored with a cochlear implant!"

Struggling with your hearing aids? Cochlear implants can activate your hearing and your life!

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Contact us to:

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- Talk with others who hear with cochlear implants
- Learn how cochlear implants are covered by Medicare, most insurance plans, and may be covered by Medicaid.



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For more information visit www.CochlearAmericas.com or click on the link below to find an informational meeting close to you. <http://www.cochlear.com/wps/wcm/connect/us/home/stories-and-community/events-calendar/cochlear-americas-events>

You should talk to your physician about who is a candidate for implantation with a cochlear implant and the associated risks and benefits of the procedure. ©2012 Cochlear Limited. All rights reserved. Trademarks and registered trademarks are the property of Cochlear Limited or Cochlear Bone Anchored Solutions.

Hear now. And always.



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Enclosed is my tax-deductible, contribution of \$ _____ to support HearSay. Please make checks out to HLAA-PA.

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About HLAA and its State Office, HLAA-PA

The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), founded in 1979, is the nation's foremost membership and advocacy organization for people with hearing loss. HLAA opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy. The national support network includes the Washington, DC area office, 14 state organizations, and 200 local chapters. HLAA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Hearing Loss Association of America
7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200
Bethesda, MD 20814
www.hearingloss.org

HLAA-PA is the all-volunteer state office of Hearing Loss Association of America. We were established in 2001 to carry out the mission of HLAA for Pennsylvanians with a hearing loss, their families and friends.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

Assist the HLAA-PA State Director by serving on the Advisory Council or one of its committees. The Council meets periodically at locations convenient to its membership. But committees conduct most of their business by e-mail and occasionally meet in various parts of the state. If you think you would like to serve on the council or any of its committees, please contact one of the state leaders listed here:

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