

# HearSay

The Official Newsletter of HLAA-PA

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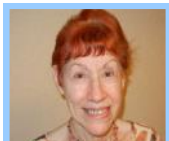


## MESSAGE FROM NANCY

By Nancy Kingsley, State Director

Two bills have recently been introduced to have hearing aids and related audiology services covered by Medicare. The first, H.R. 1653, was introduced by Rep. Debbie Dingell in March, and the second, H.R. 2748 (referred to as the HEAR Act for "Help Extend Auditory Relief" Act), was reintroduced by Rep. Matt Cartwright in June (he had originally introduced it in 2013). Currently, a provision in the Social Security Act prevents Medicare from covering hearing aids, and these bills would eliminate that limitation.

HLAA supports both bills and wrote to thank Rep. Cartwright, noting that 17% of Americans have a hearing loss, including a third of those over age 65



(the percentage rises to nearly half of those over 85). HLAA mentioned that hearing loss is linked to several other medical conditions, including dementia, and the National Council on Aging has reported that people with untreated hearing loss are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and other emotional problems than those with hearing aids.

HLAA gets more calls asking for help in purchasing hearing aids than anything else, and this is also the most frequent request made to Pennsylvania's Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. If Medicare adds hearing aid coverage, that will set a precedent for other insurance policies to do the same. No one should have to cope with uncorrected hearing loss because of an inability to afford hearing aids. Ask your representative in Congress to support these bills.

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**State Happenings and Outreach**

By Carolyn Meyer

**State Happenings Fall 2015**

As Chair of the Outreach Committee for HLAA-PA, I have often been asked the question: "How do I get brochures and support materials if I want to do an Outreach presentation?" Here is the link : [www.hearingloss.org/content/order-materials](http://www.hearingloss.org/content/order-materials). It is on the national website [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org) under "support" on the drop down bar. So take the opportunity to order a batch of whatever you need and it will be shipped directly to you with a small postage/handling charge. The charge is the usually the same no matter how many you order. It is efficient and quick. We can all be ambassadors for HLAA in our communities as often local state representatives sponsor events. Need some hints or help, please contact me [meyer@hlaa-pa.org](mailto:meyer@hlaa-pa.org) and I will respond. Fall is a popular time for outreach. Who can do outreach? "YOU" can. It is an opportunity to meet potential members for your chapter and touch base with your government representatives for future contact on important concerns for people with hearing loss. Exhibit your chapter brochures. Suggestion: if asked for a donation for a door prize, perhaps your chapter will offer a free one year membership to HLAA.

**OUTREACH****July 26 College Workshop**

Montgomery Chapter members Lee Williams and Diana Bender participated in a workshop given at the Osborne College of Audiology at Salus University. The workshop presenter, Dr. Jace Wolfe, demonstrated cochlear implant programming options to practicing audiologists from the US, Canada, Asia, and the Middle East. Dr Wolfe is a well known author and researcher and the Director of Audiology at the Hearts for Hearing Foundation in Oklahoma City..

**September 3 Senior Fair**

State Representative Steve McCarter of the 154<sup>th</sup> legislative district in Montgomery County sponsored the Fair to include state and local agencies as well as health care and other providers relevant to senior living. Carolyn Meyer, Joanne Karpowitz,

Eva Shore, and Sallie Olson participated—all members of Philadelphia Chapter 1 Suburban/Northeast. Event Location: Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Elkins Park.

**September 10 Senior Fair**

State Representative Madeline Dean of the 153<sup>rd</sup> legislative district of Montgomery County sponsored the Fair to provide seniors with education and literature on the issues important to them. Carolyn Meyer, Joanne Karpowitz, Eva Shore, and Sallie Olson, members of Philadelphia Chapter 1 Suburban / Northeast exhibited for HLAA. Location: Rydal Park, Jenkintown.

**HLAA-PA NEEDS YOU TO BE AN ADVOCATE : A REQUEST FROM THE ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR YOU TO SEND IN YOUR COMMENTS**

A recent study, *Prevalence of Disability and Disability Type Among Adults, US, 2013*, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) examines vision loss, cognition, mobility, self-care and independent living. Hearing loss is the third major public health issue after diabetes and heart disease, yet this study fails to make any mention about hearing loss, or even explain why the study failed to examine the prevalence of hearing loss.

HLAA will not sit quietly by while CDC relegates hearing loss to an invisible disability. We are taking action, contacting both the White House and the CDC to ensure that they rectify this huge error.

You can take action too! Contact:

Maria Town, White House Office of Public Engagement, [Maria\\_M\\_Town@who.eop.gov](mailto:Maria_M_Town@who.eop.gov)

Tell Ms. Town:

- People with hearing loss cannot be ignored and must be included along with other disability groups in all studies that impact public policy and programs
- CDC must do a study on prevalence of hearing loss in the states

CDC must partner with HLAA on future projects regarding people with disabilities to ensure that people with hearing loss are included and studies are presented in an accessible way. PLEASE INFORM Lise Hamlin, HLAA Director of public policy if you get a response. [advocacy@hearingloss.org](mailto:advocacy@hearingloss.org)



## Penn Audiology – We are “hear” for you!



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Penn Audiology within the Department of Otorhinolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery at Penn Medicine provides comprehensive assessment, diagnosis, and treatment for people with all types of hearing loss.

All of our audiologists hold a clinical doctorate in audiology and have extensive experience in treating hearing loss. In 2014-2015, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked our program the highest in the Philadelphia region and third in the nation for Ear, Nose & Throat.

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Set up your appointment today:

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<http://www.penmedicine.org/otorhinolaryngology/patient-care/clinical-programs/audiology/>

## 2015 Walk4Hearing

Something exciting is coming up soon! It's the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the PA Walk4Hearing! It's happening on Sunday, October 18, at The Navy Yard (4747 South Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19112). There will be balloon twisters, moon bounces, face painters, a caricature artist and more for all the walkers and their family and friends to enjoy. There will be plenty of food and drinks and various vendors will be sharing information about the latest services and technology available for people with hearing loss. Walkers will enjoy the scenic Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers by The Navy Yard, the parade grounds, historical naval buildings, docked Navy boats, and will even see the Wells Fargo Center during the 3.1 mile long walk! Registration opens at 10am.

If you are interested in joining the walk, please register online ([www.walk4hearing.org](http://www.walk4hearing.org)) or in person the day of the walk. You may create your own team or join one that is already registered. Do ask your friends and family to join. We have many families and teams that bring their own tents and enjoy the day with the free entertainment and

food. When you create a team you will be asked which organization, chapter, or state office will receive a portion of the funds you raise. Not only are you contributing to the Hearing Loss Association of America's (HLAA) national office which provides many services, you are contributing to another cause close to your heart. There are many prizes that you can earn for raising a large amount of money. Each individual that raises a minimum of \$100 will receive an official Walk4Hearing t-shirt. When \$500 is raised, the individual will receive a cool Walk4Hearing backpack! If you are unable to join us on the day of the walk please donate to a team or individual on the Walk4Hearing website.

There are also many opportunities to volunteer, both for walkers and non-walkers. It is the volunteers that make the walk a tremendous success! If you are interested in doing a 2-3 hour shift, contact Alice Pakhtigian: [apakhtig@hotmail.com](mailto:apakhtig@hotmail.com); 610-789-3108, or Mitch Bilker: [mbbilker@comcast.net](mailto:mbbilker@comcast.net).

We really hope you can join us during this exciting time for a fun filled day! Feel free to enjoy the sights of Philadelphia after the walk!

Alice Pakhtigian



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# 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](http://www.CochlearAmericas.com)

Editors note: Captioned videos and product information are available at [www.CochlearAmericas.com](http://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! If you have severe to profound hearing loss, a cochlear implant may be able to help. Unlike a hearing aid that amplifies sound, a cochlear implant is an implantable hearing solution that delivers sound straight to your auditory nerve.

Take the next step in your journey to hearing!

Contact us to:

- Learn about medical treatment for severe to profound hearing loss
- 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](http://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.



## 2015 HCAA Convention Report


I spent a rich and stimulating 4 days at the annual HCAA Convention in St Louis, MO, June 25-28. This 30th-year convention was also the 35th anniversary of the HCAA. Workshops, demos, exhibits, and special evening events marked a very full schedule.

I attended many workshops and spent time at a few of the 60-odd exhibit booths that featured technology. Most helpful was an hour at HCAA's own booth, in conversation with

Lisa Devlin of N-CHAT, the program to train consumers to become trainers in their communities. She set an excellent example of effective communication, both as speaker and listener: in clarity and pace of speaking, continuous focus on my face, attentive listening as I spoke. This was one of the most gratifying experiences of the Convention and the most educational!

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**Julia Weinberg, JD, PhD**  
*Licensed Psychologist (PA, VA, & D.C.)*




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I spent extended time at these Exhibit Booths:

- Sprint/Captel, whose combination of phone captioning and service impressed;
- Sound of Light (SOL), whose speakers insert into lamps for stereo listening, appealing!;
- hi Health Innovations, providing relatively low-cost hearing aids (under \$1000);
- ClearSounds Communications, whose Quattro 4 amplifier I tried with earbuds and was favorably impressed.

At "Hearing in Noise/Difficult Environments" Workshop, manufacturers' reps spoke of future developments, including these that spoke especially to me:

- "Accessories" may become our most helpful and basic tools, beyond hearing aid themselves;
- Battery life, power, and size, as well as special features will become more individualized;
- "Unbundling" of charges will significantly reduce cost of hearing aids.

HCAA's Cynthia Compton-Conley presented a workshop on the Consumer Technology Initiative (CTI). This fall, CTI will launch at the HCAA website. Expectations are that it will become the fundamental resource for those with hearing loss and their community, and one that will also educate and influence health care providers, government and industry

At the Opening Session, former US Senator Tom Harkin received an award for his advocacy for HOHs (hard-of-hearing). He spoke of HR 1653, a bill to allow coverage of hearing aids and related examinations that is currently in House Committee and may reach the floor of the House this summer. This is titled "Medicare Hearing Aid Coverage Act of 2015". Also that evening, Regal Entertainment Group (movie theaters) received an award for providing national access to persons with hearing disability.

I found Convention attenders to be warm and outgoing, eager to exchange stories of hearing loss, and effective and ineffective solutions. .

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**Editor's Note**

As the new editor of HearSay, I want to thank Pam Reiher for her fine work in this position for a number of years, and hope to maintain the standards she set. I've been a member of the Montgomery County Chapter for ten years, and have worked with the State Office for about five, and I've also been responsible for the e-mail version of HearSay.



We have recently introduced advertising to HearSay, a means reaching its readers with important messages and supporting the work of HLAA-PA. We also welcome submission of articles of interest to the hearing loss community for publication in HearSay.

**Don Groff**

groff@hlaa-pa.org



**The Din in Dinner**

Why are so many restaurants so noisy and what can we do about it?

HLAA Center City members attended an expert panel discussion on why restaurants seem to be getting noisier, sponsored by Philadelphia Friends in the City on July 8, 2015

The Center City Chapter followed some of their advice two weeks later when they held their monthly meeting at the popular Le Cheri, which also has a reputation for quiet. Members had a nice dinner together and then filled out a questionnaire. They enjoyed the overall experience quite a lot (8.6 on a

scale 1-10), but less so the sound ambiance (5.8).

**Pat McGeever**

**Southeastern Pennsylvania Picnic**

The 16<sup>th</sup> annual SE Pennsylvania picnic was held on Sunday, July 12, 2015. This year MontCo chapter hosted the picnic at a lovely pavilion at Fort Washington State Park. HLAA members and guests from Bucks, Central Philadelphia, Chesco, DelHOH, Lancaster, and Montco chapters enjoyed homemade salads and desserts under beautiful sunny skies.



**Diana Bender**

**Jacob's Ride Comes to Pennsylvania**

HLAA-PA members helped welcome Jacob Landis at the Reading Phillies game on July 16 and manned an exhibit table there. Jacob's Ride was established in 2013 to raise funds and public awareness about the benefits of cochlear implants for the deaf. Jacob Landis, a cochlear implant recipient when he was 10 years old, has dedicated himself to helping others receive the gift of hearing. <http://jacobsride.org>.



**Bill Best and Carolyn Meyer**



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### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!**

Assist HLAA-PA by serving on the Advisory Council or one of its committees. The Council meets periodically at convenient locations and most work is done by e-mail. If you think you would like to serve on the council or any of its committees, please contact State Director Nancy Kingsley (kingsley@hlaa-pa.org)

### **2015 Marcia Finisdore Award for Advocacy Nominations Due November 1, 2015**

The Marcia Finisdore Award for Advocacy was established by Hearing Loss Association of Pennsylvania in 2004. This award is presented to an individual in recognition of excellence in improving communication access for hard of hearing people.

The criteria for selection are:

- A positive vision for the hard of hearing community and a continuing commitment to leadership
- A demonstrated record of advocacy work for the rights and needs of hard of hearing people in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Nominations should include a written statement about the nominee and why this individual deserves the award. Please include contact information for yourself, as well as for the nominee.

Nominations should be sent to

Ms. Linda Heffernan  
LHeff99@aol.com  
19 Benjamin West Ave.  
Swarthmore, PA 19081



### **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.org](http://Hlaa-pa.org)

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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 hearing loss, their families and friends.

Mention of products and services in HearSay does not imply endorsement by HLAA-PA

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To receive HearSay by e-mail, sign up at [hlaa-pa.org](http://hlaa-pa.org) or scan this QR code.



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