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HLAA Makes Our Positions Clear

The HLAA Board of Trustees will issue three new policy statements. To read HLAA's current Policy Statements go to hearingloss.org, click on About Us, then go to Policy Statements.

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Over the past 35 years, our organization has taken positions and set organizational policy on specific topics. The HLAA Board of Trustees publishes these Policy Statements to clarify our positions on issues that impact consumers and allow our professional friends in the hearing health care field, as well as policy leaders, to better understand the consumer perspective.

The Board has decided to write three new policy papers to clearly articulate HLAA's positions on:

- Medicare and insurance reimbursement for hearing aids and aural rehabilitation
- Improving access and elimination barriers to emerging technology
- The need for hearing loss to be an important part of primary care

These new policy statements are outlined by the Board chairperson on page 8.

Why Does HLAA Publish Policy Statements?

Policy documents give background information on issues and how they affect people with hearing loss. Policy Statements can recommend what action needs to be taken to resolve a problem and provide best practices for improving services and programs. They are written on emerging issues with input from various stakeholders and voted for adoption by the full Board. They can then be used by HLAA State Organizations, Chapters, and individual members when discussing issues of concern to people with hearing loss with legislators, industry, the media, the public at large, businesses, and to support requests for communication access.

HLAA Policy Statement papers reflect the needs and desires of our members. They reflect the many aspects of hearing loss, and what we need in order to achieve our goals: to successfully live and function in the hearing world and to be able to communicate with our loved ones, succeed in our work, and contribute to our communities. HLAA Policy Statements, from the provision of hearing assistive technology, to universal screening of infants, to advocacy for greater access to affordable technology, are all directed toward these two major goals:

- Ensuring that people with hearing loss can benefit from the technology, policies and practices that allow them to succeed.
- Ensuring that professionals who deliver services truly understand our needs and the barriers we face.

The HLAA national office uses these statements when we meet with federal agencies, policy makers, or testify before congressional committees. We will use our new Policy Statements when we participate in the upcoming Institute of Medicine consensus study on Accessible and Affordable Hearing Health Care for Adults.

The Grassroots

One of the most important places for HLAA Policy Statement papers to be widely disseminated is at the grassroots level. The more HLAA members know about our positions and policies and talk about them in their communities, the sooner the world will become a more accessible place for persons with hearing loss.

The more you know and talk about HLAA positions, the more effectively you can advocate. As we all know, some advocacy takes place in Washington, D.C., and some in our state capitals. But a great deal of it also takes place in our local communities and in HLAA Chapters across the country. When thousands of HLAA members are writing to their congressmen and state legislators, or talking with regulators and professionals, or with local businesses, our voices are heard and heeded.

How to Use HLAA Policy Statements

Discussing the HLAA Policy Statements can be an excellent way to educate new members about different aspects of living successfully with hearing loss as well as HLAA as an organization. We also need to remember that even though some of the statements have been around for a long time, it is good to remind chapter members that they exist and how we all can use them.

Why not set aside a chapter meeting to talk about HLAA's Policy Statements and let people know about them in your newsletters or point to them from your websites to hearingloss.org? If one of the Policy Statements reflects a particular issue for a chapter, you might want to gather a group of members to approach a legislator or government agency for help in addressing the issue and use the Policy Statements for written explanation of the problem.

For example, one of the greatest frustrations people with hearing loss often face is the lack of insurance reimbursement for hearing aids. The new Policy Statement on Medicare can be used with legislators and policy makers who want to hear from consumers as they consider changing the provisions of Title 18 of the Social Security Act to allow for such coverage.

At the HLAA Convention 2015 in June there will be many opportunities to discuss different aspects of our Policy Statements and even more ways to learn more from and share your experiences with other members from all over the country. It is also a chance to talk with the Board of Trustees and the HLAA staff about these Policy Statements. We want to hear how you are using the papers in your chapters. The best ideas are generated by our membership on the local level and we want to hear from you. **HLM**



HLAA Member, Graphic Designer/Photographer for *Hearing Loss Magazine*, Hits Your Local Post Office

On the first day of spring, the United States Postal Service (USPS) unveiled the water lily FOREVER stamps, featuring photographs by Cindy Dyer, who has designed and photographed *Hearing Loss Magazine* since 2006. The stamps made their debut at the Garfield-Perry March Party 2015 Stamp Show on March 20, 2015, in Cleveland, Ohio. The water lily stamps are available in booklet form at post offices across the U.S. or online. The USPS is printing her water lily stamps in a quantity of HALF A BILLION—500 million stamps—which usually only happens with their holiday stamps. The USPS PR man said flowers tend to sell particularly well so they're hoping this is the case with these.

In January 2014, five of Cindy's fern photographs were released as 49 cent stamps and then re-released in March 2014 as FOREVER stamps. They were released in large quantities for commercial use but are available online at uspsstamps.com.

How are the Images Chosen?

The USPS receives up to 40,000 suggestions a year and only about 20 of them make it to a stamp. Cindy's photos were discovered serendipitously when art director Phil Jordan saw her botanical images at her exhibit at Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria, Virginia.

Cindy, who has been instrumental in the evolution of *Hearing Loss Magazine*, has a blog following of nearly 800 folks with more than a half million hits. She often blogs, FBs and Tweets about *Hearing Loss Magazine*, the HLAA Convention, Walk4Hearing, members, and more, which spreads our message to new audiences every day. You can see more of her work at cindydyerphotography.com.

Congratulations Cindy! When you win, it's recognition for all of us! **HLM**

—Barbara Kelley, editor-in-chief, *Hearing Loss Magazine*

Honor Someone Special with a Gift that Makes a Difference



HLAA will send a personalized card to honor or offer a tribute to someone special in your life when you make a donation in their name.

In Honor Of cards can celebrate a special occasion or achievement.

In Memoriam cards create a lasting tribute and are sent to designated family members and loved ones.

It's easy—send donations to HLAA and please give us the name and address of the person to be honored and he or she will receive a card.

If you want to donate *In Memoriam* of a deceased loved one, please send us the name and address of the family members or friends who should receive the card. Include your full contact information. You can also donate online at hearingloss.org by clicking on the Donate button on the purple bar across the top of the home page.

Thank you for your continued support.