

By Brenda Battat



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From the Executive Director's Desk

Looking Back at 2010

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This is the last issue of 2010 and it seems like a good time to take stock of what HLAA has accomplished over the past 12 months. Here is a sampling of what we have done to bring more public attention to hearing loss, reduce the stigma, expand communication access, and protect your rights in the workplace.

- Produced seven captioned videos on Hearing Loss 101 to encourage people to seek help for their hearing loss. We partnered with Knowlera Media, Inc., to produce the videos which are posted on YouTube, www.monkeysee.com, and on www.hearingloss.org. With funding from the Better Hearing Institute, the DVDs are available free on request from HLAA for anyone who wants to show them in their waiting rooms, at HLAA chapter and state events, or for other educational uses.
- Developed a new informational Wiki for parents of children with hearing loss. The goal of the site is to empower parents of children who are hard of hearing and deaf by providing the resources necessary for them to make informed decisions about their children's hearing loss. www.kidsandhearingloss.org
- Partnered with the American Academy of Audiology on the "Get in the Hearing Loop" project to increase usage of technology beyond the hearing aid that benefits people with hearing loss. With funding from two family foundations, we are developing educational materials on telecoils, assistive technology and how to advocate for them in local communities.
- Secured funding to hold the 2nd International Hearing Loop Conference overlapping with the Hearing Loss Association of America 2011 Convention in June
- Held 18 Walk4Hearing events throughout the nation to raise public awareness and generate funds to improve services for people with hearing loss
- Conducted a Leadership Training for HLAA state and chapter leaders
- Advocated for a mandate for captioned telephone nationwide; a hearing aid tax credit; the standard on classroom acoustics to be added to the Americans with Disabilities Act; captioned movies in theaters, on airline flights, at live events and on the Internet; hearing-aid-compatible wireless handsets; continuation of the infant screening law; access to 9-1-1 and emergency preparedness
- Testified before Congress in support of laws to require captioning of videos on the Internet. The Bill passed in both the House and Senate and was signed into law by President Obama on October 8, 2010
- Successful in getting the Federal Communications Commission to include our recommendations for accessibility for people with hearing loss in the national broadband plan
- Stopped a tax from being imposed on hearing aids in the new health care reform
- Reversed the Department of Justice's employment testing policy so that the Marshal Service's hiring policy allows court security officers to keep their hearing aids in when undergoing hearing testing
- Provided direct support to employees with discrimination issues in the workplace
- The HLAA Board of Trustees approved a new position paper on Job Qualification Testing. The paper can be found at <http://www.hearingloss.org/advocacy/positionpapers.asp>
- For consumer protection, produced a checklist for consumers to know what to expect when purchasing a hearing aid and a chart of state regulations outlining the sales of hearing aids and dispensing laws. These can be found at www.hearingloss.org/learn/hearingaids.asp. The checklist is on page 33 of this issue.

There is still much to be done to reach our ultimate goals, which are to:

- have hearing loss recognized as a health issue;
- have hearing aids and cochlear implants be the standard of care;
- de-stigmatize hearing loss in society; and
- increase consumer protection: educated consumers.

Along with the national office staff, and the Board of Trustees, I wish everyone happy holidays. 🎉

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