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### **Mission**

The mission of HLAA is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.

### **Program Service Accomplishments (fiscal year 2015 – 2016)**

#### **October 2015**

#### **HLAA Issues Statement that it Supports the PCAST recommendations for hearing aid access.**

HLAA enthusiastically endorses a new report issued by the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST). The findings of the report, titled "Aging America & Hearing Loss: Imperative of Improved Technologies," serve to open the market for new innovation in hearing device technologies and also increase choice for consumers of hearing aids, both essential strategies long espoused by HLAA that are necessary to enhance hearing health care.

The PCAST report focuses on the nearly 30 million adults over the age of 60 who have age-related, progressive, mild-to-moderate hearing loss. Only a small percentage of people with hearing loss (according to the report about 15-30 percent) seek treatment. There are several factors contributing to this low number, but the PCAST report points out that two of the driving factors are that the market is characterized by high cost and low innovation, and that the current distribution channels create a barrier to access.

#### **November 2015**

#### **HLAA Works to Make All Wireless Phones HAC**

Thanks to a collaboration among HLAA, the wireless industry (represented by the Telecommunications Industries Association, CTIA – The Wireless Association®, and the Competitive Carriers Association) and consumer groups (represented by HLAA, the National Association of the Deaf and Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc.), a consensus letter was filed with the FCC outlining a plan to make *all* wireless phones hearing aid compatible within the next eight years. Specifically, it requires that 66% of wireless phones be hearing aid compatible within two years; 85% within five years; and 100% within eight years.

#### **HLAA Celebrates 36-Year Anniversary**

On November 27, 1979, Rocky Stone, founded this organization as Self Help for Hard of Hearing People. A retired CIA agent with a hearing loss, Rocky realized there were many others like himself who were "between two worlds," not fully hearing but not deaf.



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### **HLAA Strongly Supports PCAST Report on Hearing Aid Access**

HLAA works regularly with government agencies including the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Justice (DOJ), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Federal Trade Commission (FTC), to ensure that laws sensitive to people with hearing loss are enforced.

### **March 2016**

#### **HLAA Supports Volume Control Standards for Wireline and Wireless Phones**

HLAA, Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TDI), the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Technology Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) joined in comments supporting the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) proposed modifications to the wireline handset rules to incorporate the standard developed by the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA). Incorporating this standard will make it easier for consumers with hearing loss to compare handsets and to select telephones with volume control sufficient to meet their communication needs. In these comments, we supported the adoption of a wireless volume control standard. Ways to include consumers and consumer organizations in the standards-making process were also discussed.

#### **HLAA Fights for Inclusion of Hearing Assistive Technology Under the Affordable Care Act**

In March 2016, HLAA signed onto comments provided by the Coalition to Preserve Rehabilitation (CPR), the Independence Through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid (ITEM) Coalition, and the Habilitation Benefits (HAB) Coalition, and the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Health Task Force. These coalitions submitted comments on the Summary of Benefits and Coverage and Uniform Glossary (the Comment Request) published by the Internal Revenue Service at the Department of the Treasury (IRS), the Employee Benefits Security Administration at the Department of Labor (EBSA), and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services at the Department of Health and Human Services (CMS).

### **April 2016**

#### **HLAA Continues Training Program on Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT)**

HLAA has completed another successful in-person meeting of our train-the-trainer program, N-CHATT (Network of Consumer Hearing Assistive Technology Trainers). During the weekend of April 1-3, 2016, trainees and facilitators gathered at the HLAA office in Bethesda, MD for the start of an intensive program to learn about and work with HAT. It also gave attendees the opportunity to learn more about how to conduct successful training sessions for those impacted by hearing loss.



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This is the second year of a five-year grant that was awarded to Gallaudet University from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). HLAA is a subcontractor on the N-CHAT grant. With our partners, Gallaudet University's Hearing Technology Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) on Improving the Accessibility, Usability, and Performance of Technology for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing as well as Hands & Voices and the American Institutes on Research (AIR).

## **May 2016**

### **HLAA Promotes Theater Access**

HLAA joined theatreWashington, the Disability Rights Law Clinic at American University's Washington College of Law, the D.C. Arts and Access Network, and the Kennedy Center's Accessibility Office in a collaborative presentation to highlight the ways in which theaters can welcome patrons with hearing loss.

Lise Hamlin, director of public policy, joined Betty Siegel of the Kennedy Center's award-winning Accessibility Office, and Patrick Kinser, one of the students working on the project for the Disability Rights Law Clinic. The presentation reviewed practical inclusive strategies, and provided perspectives within the cultural access community for an audience of D.C. area theater staff. A lively discussion on access issues was held after the presentations.

### **HLAA Joins M-Enabling Summit**

The Fifth annual M-Enabling Summit, the only program exclusively dedicated to promoting mobile accessible technology and assistive applications and services for users of all abilities, will be held June 13-14, 2016 at the Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. HLAA Director of Public Policy Lise Hamlin will chair the panel "Mobile Enabling Solutions: Deaf and Hard of Hearing." This session will cover the fast expanding sector of mobile apps and services available to users who are deaf or have hearing loss. Lise will also be a panelist in the session "21st Century CVAA Scorecard," moderated by Karen Peltz Strauss, deputy chief of the FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau.

### **HLAA Accepted for Advisory Committee on Accessible Air Transportation Department of Transportation's ACCESS Advisory Committee Hits the Runway**

HLAA was selected by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to represent people with hearing loss on the newly chartered Advisory Committee on Accessible Air Transportation (ACCESS Advisory Committee). Lise Hamlin, director of public policy at HLAA, attended the first meeting of the Advisory Committee on May 17-18.



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## June 2016

### **HLAA Strongly Supports Groundbreaking New Report That Could Change Hearing Health Care**

HLAA Strongly Supports Recommendations of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Report – Hearing Health Care for Adults: Priorities for Improving Access and Affordability

HLAA applauds a new report issued by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (the Academies)\*, Hearing Health Care for Adults: Priorities for Improving Access and Affordability. The groundbreaking report documents the critical nature of hearing loss and provides 12 recommendations that underscore hearing loss as a significant public health concern. The recommendations accurately reflect the needs, concerns, and frustrations that consumers face when making hearing health care decisions, including whether to seek treatment at all. HLAA is proud to be the only consumer organization to serve as one of the sponsors of the report.

Implementation of the recommendations will provide people with hearing loss greater access to accurate information, offer more affordable choices and options, and will empower consumers to take steps to address their hearing loss. The current hearing health care model needs to change to be more consumer-focused, and implementing the recommendations contained in the report would go a long way toward realizing that change.

**Convention 2016** was held at the Washington Hilton, Washington, DC, June 23 – 26, 2016. HLAA was the host of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People which brought more than 1,600 attendees from 23 countries.

## July 2016

### **HLAA Files Comments with the Federal Aviation Administration**

HLAA filed comments with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in response to their draft Advisory Circular (AC), Access to Airports by Individuals with Disabilities.

The FAA offered the AC for public review and comments in June 2016. The AC provides guidance and recommendations for operators of airports to ensure access to airports by individuals with disabilities. The National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TDI) both signed onto HLAA's comments.



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### **Fall 2015/Spring 2016**

**Walk4Hearing** – there were 14 events held in the fall of 2015 with approximately 6,000 walkers participating; and another 7 Walks in the spring of 2016. A key element of the Walks has been a Call for Action communication access (#CommAccess).

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**Financial Information for Fiscal Year Ending 8/31/16**

Total Revenue: \$2,411,887

Total Program services by major program category:

- Convention - \$633,101
- Chapters, state organizations, members - \$360,130
- Web, magazine, publication - \$247,583
- Advocacy - \$101,171
- Other program services - \$85,921
- Walk4Hearing call to action - \$78,409
- LOOPS - \$76,208
- RERC/HAT training - \$56,547
- Academy - \$5,282

Total Fundraising: \$590,770

Total Administrative: \$221,863

Total End of the year net assets: \$1,260,240