

Do You Know What Our Position Is?

BY LISE HAMLIN

The HLAA Board of Trustees develops and approves position papers on topics concerning people with hearing loss. These documents give background information, and in some cases, advocate for change. When HLAA advocates for people with hearing loss, we often point to the position papers to give some extra weight to our discussions with policy makers, or when submitting written filings.

These papers also provide a perspective into HLAA, and can be used by you, too! Individuals, HLAA Chapters and State Organizations can use them when talking to legislators, the media, businesses, or anyone who wants to know more about HLAA's views.

HLAA currently has position papers available on the following topics:

Insurance Coverage for Hearing Aids—HLAA recommends that health insurance cover the full cost of acquiring hearing aids.

Aural Rehabilitation—HLAA supports the use of an aural rehabilitation model for hearing health care to reduce or eliminate participation restrictions and activity limitations imposed by hearing loss.

Medicare Coverage of Hearing Aids and Aural Rehabilitation—HLAA supports amending Title 18 of the Social Security Act to include coverage of hearing examinations for the purposes of prescribing, fitting or changing hearing aids, coverage of the hearing instruments themselves and aural rehabilitation.

Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids—HLAA supports a regulated market for over-the-counter hearing aids that are intended for adults with mild-to-moderate hearing loss and which meet strict performance and labeling criteria to ensure safety and effectiveness.

Screening for Hearing Loss in Primary Health Care Settings—HLAA supports the inclusion of a standardized approach to screening for hearing loss in primary health care settings that includes both a subjective and objective component in all adults during routine physicals; the “Welcome to Medicare” assessment; and Medicare

annual risk assessments, that are accomplished in primary care settings.

Telecoils and Hearing Loops—HLAA supports the inclusion of telecoil technology in all hearing aids and cochlear implants as well as the installation of high quality, well-maintained hearing loop assistive listening systems in public spaces such as ticket counters, auditoriums, houses of worship, classrooms, theaters, concert halls, airports, train stations, and public transportation.

Wider Access to the Full Spectrum of Hearing Technology Benefiting People with Hearing Loss—HLAA supports a hearing health care system that provides consumers access to the full spectrum of safe and effective hearing technology to meet their individual needs.

The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NAS) Report—On June 2, 2016, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine released its historic report on *Hearing Health Care for Adults: Priorities for Access and Affordability*. The report emphasizes that hearing loss is a major public health concern and provides 12 recommendations to improve hearing health care. HLAA strongly supports those recommendations and is working to achieve their implementation.

Job Qualification Testing—It is HLAA's position that employees and applicants who use hearing aids must be tested with their hearing aids when determining their qualifications for jobs where a level of hearing proficiency is a legitimate criterion.

All the HLAA position papers are available for download from our website at hearingloss.org/about-hlaa/position-papers. **HL**



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