

# The Time Has Come

*We're raising our membership rates. Something we haven't done since 2008.*

BY DON DOHERTY

Research has shown that transparent organizations—those that communicate information openly and freely—enjoy a higher level of trust, respect and loyalty among their customers or members. At HLAA we take that philosophy very seriously. After all, HLAA is *your* organization; you deserve transparency.

It is with that in mind that I will get right to the point: We are raising our membership rates as of July 1, 2019.

This is not a decision we made lightly or hastily. We could tell you how it's been more than 10 years since our last rate increase (2008), or how our direct costs (such as the paper to print this magazine and

the postage to mail it) and indirect costs (rent, utilities, salaries, etc.) have risen since then, but these are not the things that matter to you. What you want to know is, am I getting my money's worth? Since you have already made the wise decision to join HLAA we hope the answer to that question is clear.

There are those out there who believe this great magazine you are reading is your membership benefit. While it is arguably the most visible benefit, it is only the tip of the iceberg. For instance:

■ **Advocacy:** In a recent member survey (December 2018) you told us the number one reason you belonged to HLAA was because of our advocacy efforts on behalf of people with hearing loss. Sure, it might not be something you can see or touch, but let me assure you it is something you feel the effects of every single day. Whether it was the Hearing Aid Compatibility Act of 1988, the Television Decoder Circuitry Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (as well as the ADA Amendments Act of 2008), the 21st Century Video and Communications Act of 2010, or the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017, HLAA has been in the vanguard of advocacy for people with hearing loss.

- **Discount to the HLAA Convention:** HLAA Members get a reduced rate for our annual convention. For the HLAA2019 Convention, members receive a \$46 discount on an individual full registration package over non-members. That alone pays for your annual membership with a little money left over!
- **Chapter Support:** HLAA Founder Rocky Stone once said, “Hope flourishes in community, not isolation. That is why the concept of chapters at the local level is so important.” Joining an HLAA Chapter brings you together with other people with hearing loss right in your own community to find—and offer—support, share stories, and make new friends. And now, with the introduction of the concept of virtual chapters “community” doesn't have to just mean in the same physical locale; it can be a community of any group of like-minded people. In fact, I also serve as president of the very first virtual chapter, The HLAA Veterans Across America Virtual Chapter.
- **Online Activities:** While we'd love to see you in a chapter meeting or at the Convention, there might be times when you don't want to leave the comfort of your own home (or computer). With things like monthly webinars, videos, various groups to join (or start—like a virtual chapter!), forums (you should check out the new Mayo Clinic Connect group for people with hearing loss.) It's at [hearingloss.org/forums-mayo-clinic-connect](http://hearingloss.org/forums-mayo-clinic-connect)), or *Hearing Life e-News*, we've got you covered.
- **Product Discounts:** Did you know that you can receive member-only discounts on a wide variety of products and services from hearing aids and assistive devices to car rentals. And don't forget our brand new benefit—\$30 worth of free batteries and a handy battery tester keychain (a total value of \$40) for HLAA Members who join hearOclub, a hearing aid and cochlear implant battery subscription service.



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- **Hearing Life:** Did I save the best for last? Of course not—all of our benefits are valuable! But I don't think I need to go into too much detail on this one since you're already reading it! And hopefully you now see that this publication is but one of the many benefits of being an HLAA Member.

Everything we do is about helping you—our members—live better with hearing loss. We want to expand our programs, offer more resources and provide more support, but we need your help to do that. Every dollar you give to help support us—whether it's through a membership, donation, volunteering in chapters or the Walk4Hearing, or some other way—goes right back to our members in one way or another to give you more.

Our members are incredibly valuable to us; without you we wouldn't exist. Maybe consider the rate increase as an investment, to help current members, new members, and even future generations live a better, fuller life with hearing loss, supported by the work of *your* HLAA.

We will be communicating with you frequently about the dues increase between now and when it takes effect July 1, and in that vein you can find more details on page 18. **HL**

Semper Fi.

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## Mayo Clinic Connect—A New Online Support Group for People with Hearing Loss



Mayo Clinic Connect is an online forum with more than fifty groups, each related to a condition or disease. There are discussion groups such topics as aneurisms, mental health, neuropathy, transplants, and many more.

Together with the Ida Institute and HLAA, Mayo Clinic Connect recently launched a group dedicated to hearing loss. The Hearing Loss group is a welcoming and safe community where you can share your story, ask questions, and well...connect! Like all Mayo Clinic Connect groups, the Hearing Loss group is moderated by a team which includes volunteers and Mayo Clinic staff.

"The experience of hearing loss is so diverse. Overcoming barriers of geography, people can connect online with others like them, build circles of trust and dissolve isolation," says Colleen Young, community director of Mayo Clinic Connect.



HLAA is proud to be part of this initiative with the Mayo Clinic and the Ida Institute. Connecting with others is a powerful mechanism to living well with hearing loss.

Getting started is easy. Visit **[Connect.MayoClinic.org](http://Connect.MayoClinic.org)** and click Join. Set up an account by entering an email and password and choosing a username. That's it!