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## Statement of Strategic Intent

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Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) remains true to its mission and to the vision of its founder, Howard E. (Rocky) Stone.

***HLAA Mission: HLAA opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, advocacy, and support.***

HLAA works to make the world a better place for people with hearing loss. We advocate on behalf of our constituents in Washington, in state capitals, and in communities across the country. We provide support services and up-to-date informational resources that enable people to live and work successfully with hearing loss. Our chapters and state organizations provide opportunities for people with hearing loss to discover the power of self-help and to join with others in making their local communities more hearing and access friendly communities in which to live.

HLAA is first and foremost a consumer and advocacy organization. We represent the interests of the 36 million people (approximately 17% of the population) in the U.S.A. with hearing loss<sup>1</sup>, and their families and friends. We work with a grass roots base of chapter and state organizations, and other volunteers and supporters.

Hearing loss is a major public health concern and the third most common chronic health condition affecting older adults. One in five teenagers has some hearing loss. However, fewer than 20 percent of those with hearing loss, who require intervention and treatment, seek help for their condition.<sup>2</sup>

Untreated hearing loss has been shown to impact a person's overall health and quality of life, sometimes leading to social isolation, depression and even dementia. People with hearing loss face significant barriers in seeking to access the central elements of mainstream American culture and earn less on average than the rest of the American work force.

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<sup>1</sup> National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders  
<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/funding/programs/09HHC/Pages/summary.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

## **A. Programs and Services**

HLAA's programs and services are the mechanisms we use to make the world a better place for people with hearing loss.

### **1. Advocacy**

HLAA's accomplishments advocating on behalf of people of all ages with hearing loss are noteworthy. Our advocacy has focused on gaining access to mainstream American culture for people with hearing loss in such areas as technology, telecommunications, hearing health care, employment, education, and leadership, to name a few.

HLAA builds on this legacy of effectiveness. The Association's strategic initiatives include supporting expanded options to access hearing health care, promoting affordability of hearing technologies, and advocating for access to mainstream consumer technologies in the marketplace. Other initiatives will be pursued as opportunities arise and as resources permit. We will pursue opportunities for collaboration on local, regional and national advocacy efforts.

HLAA's advocacy efforts seek to:

- Change the way society views hearing loss;
- Change the way policy makers view hearing aids and other hearing technologies;
- Promote the development of more hearing and access friendly environments;
- Leverage "state-of-the-art" technologies that deliver information and services to those with a hearing loss, and
- Support innovation that facilitates greater access to quality, affordable hearing health care.

Recognizing the power of collaboration, HLAA continues to work through coalitions and partnerships to achieve common goals. We have developed an impressive array of contacts in Federal agencies, the hearing health care community, educational institutions, and in the private sector. This network provides important leverage when there is common ground for cooperation.

### **2. Collaboration with the Grass Roots Base**

A more robust collaborative network among national headquarters, chapters, state organizations, and other elements of our base of support is critical for the long-term health of HLAA. This requires a vibrant multi-directional and ongoing dialogue so that HLAA leverages our strengths in all our undertakings.

We seek to expand opportunities for collaboration through national committees and task forces. Further, HLAA provides leadership training and development, support for the Walk4Hearing in increasing numbers of communities across the country, collaboration and support in local advocacy efforts, and program development assistance for chapters and state organizations.

### **3. Services to Constituents**

Local, state, regional, and national arms of HLAA provide a rich array of services to constituents, including personal support and training in self-advocacy. Informational resources cover a breadth of topics including hearing technologies, hearing research, and employment, and access to mainstream American culture such as education and the arts.

Current population-based initiatives target parents of children with hearing loss, and young adults and veterans with hearing loss. The looming challenge of a “baby boomer generation” faced with incremental hearing loss in their lives presents a clear opportunity for outreach and service for HLAA and its affiliates. We must vigorously address the needs of these constituents.

### **4. Growing the Grass Roots Base of Support**

A relatively small number of our constituency are active members of HLAA. Therefore, HLAA must expand its reach and build its effectiveness to attract a larger number of people with a hearing loss to our cause. We must leverage our contacts in the hearing health community and related organizations to expand our membership and grass roots base.

## **B. Organizational Strength**

HLAA must build upon its strengths and attend to its organizational infrastructure needs as a necessary condition to continuing to advance our programs and services. We will vigorously do so irrespective of economic conditions in the USA.

### **1. Finances and budget**

The scope and scale of the work we undertake is mediated by limits imposed by human, financial and other resources. Therefore, we must grow and diversify the revenue base while positioning ourselves to leverage unanticipated opportunities. Finally, we must be fiscally responsible and prudent in the utilization of our resources, and strive to maximize ‘added value’ for our donors, members, and constituents.

### **2. Organization and leadership**

Hearing Loss Association is a network of chapters and state organizations along with a substantial cadre of volunteers and supporters across the country. This is a major source of our strength. There are two major strategic initiatives we must undertake to strengthen our network.

**First**, we will better leverage the work of the central office, and chapters and state organizations. We must become a better-integrated network, collaborating more effectively and learning from the successes we enjoy across the country.

**Second**, we will energize and engage the largest possible base of constituents. There is power in numbers. As we grow our base of support, our ability to influence public policy and engage with the private sector will grow concomitantly.

Other ongoing strategic imperatives will include board development and management succession. Assuring strength and continuity of leadership are fundamental to building organizational strength and vitality over time.

### **3. Name Recognition and Branding**

Enhancing Hearing Loss Association of America's name recognition in the marketplace and elevating and protecting the brand are fundamental requirements. We will work to develop ways to increase our visibility across the country. Further, we will work closely with chapters, state organizations, and local Walk4Hearing volunteers to foster a consistent use of our branding elements to assure that the image of the Association is consistent, effective and relevant.

## **C. Conclusion**

Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) remains true to its mission to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, advocacy, and support. This mission serves as the bedrock foundation for all we do and who we are as an association.

Adopted:

Board of Trustees  
Hearing Loss Association of America  
2012 National Convention  
Providence, RI