



A key job of the board is renewing itself. HLAA board members serve three-year terms, and up to three consecutive terms. All board members are constantly on the prowl for new prospects who may wish to donate their time, treasure and talent to the organization to help it fulfill its mission.

## Serving on the HLAA Board of Directors

BY KEVIN H. FRANCK

I've served on the Hearing Loss Association of America's (HLAA) Board of Directors since 2015. I'm confident that HLAA has benefited from my service, but I have benefited, too. I've been able to have a front row seat to some of the most fundamental changes in the hearing health care field. I joined HLAA as it was sponsoring the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine study on Hearing Health Care for Adults—Priorities for Improving Access and Affordability. The study came out with 12 recommendations regarding how to improve access to hearing health care for adults. Then, HLAA was the trusted advisor to legislators, serving as the voice of the consumer as they drafted the bill to address **Recommendation 7: Implement a New Food and Drug Administration Device Category for Over-The-Counter Wearable Hearing Devices**. HLAA stayed active and is now commenting on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's proposed definition of OTC hearing aids. Also, Medicare is now considering hearing aid service and device coverage, asking HLAA what its constituents want. I would not have had this view if not for my HLAA board position.

I've learned about board governance. I aspire to be a member of for-profit boards, and the nonprofit context has been a great place to gain direct experience.

My fellow board members are a fascinating group comprised of e-commerce executives, professors of health policy and hearing science, higher education executives, state advocacy champions, U.S. Marines, global ministry directors, writers, Hollywood creators, future and current physicians, lawyers, film distributors and real estate developers. I learn from every one of them every time I interact with them.

During my tenure, we've navigated the Black Lives Matter societal shift. I've learned the impact embracing diversity can have on our group dynamics and am beginning to see how this can help us reach people we wouldn't have been able to reach before. Our commitment to diversity wasn't as deliberately integrated as it is now. This required conversations I'd never had, and I feel better equipped now to improve how I see the world and embrace differences.

We've adapted to the COVID-19 global pandemic, and I've learned how to remain effective behind a computer screen—perhaps even more effective.

### Serve on HLAA's Board of Directors

But enough about me. This column is a call for interest of others to serve on HLAA's Board of Directors.

To be a nonprofit in the United States, an organization needs to have a board. The board and individual board members are fiduciaries, ensuring the organization's well-being. The board works with management to oversee major functional duties such as budgeting and other committee work, and to set the overall strategic direction of the organization. Finally, the board chips in—leveraging everyone's unique set of skills and perspectives to provide input to the organization as volunteers. The board also chips in literally to fundraising efforts, donating money and helping others to do the same.

A key job of the board is renewing itself. HLAA board members serve three-year terms, and up to three consecutive terms. All board members are constantly on the prowl for new prospects who may wish to donate their time, treasure and talent to the organization to help it fulfill its mission. We look for new board members who are seasoned in their board experiences, but also people who bring new perspectives. We look for members who are familiar with hearing loss, but also those who could translate a related experience. We seek diversity in many forms, as the lived experiences of hearing loss are as unique as each of the qualities that define us. From this diversity, we seek to build the tools, policies and community to support this relevant quality of each of us.

Board member prospects come from nominations of HLAA's existing board and staff, but anyone can also nominate or even self-nominate for board service. To do so, follow this link to see relevant instructions: [www.hearingloss.org/about-hlaa/our-team/board-of-directors/](http://www.hearingloss.org/about-hlaa/our-team/board-of-directors/). Selfishly, I can't wait to work with you as we work together and with the talented leadership of HLAA. **HL**

*Kevin H. Franck, Ph.D., is chair of the HLAA Board of Directors and lives in Concord, Massachusetts. He can be reached at [chair@hearingloss.org](mailto:chair@hearingloss.org).*

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