



Wake Chapter Newsletter July 2021

Websites: [Wake Chapter](#) [HLAA-NC](#) [HLAA National](#)

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NC HLAA Virtual Meetings Available to All

<p>HLAA-NC NC Walk4Hearing Kickoff Event</p> <p>Thursday Sep 2nd</p> <p>7 p.m.</p>	<p>This Virtual meeting will inspire you about the 2021 NC Walk4Hearing. Participants in this virtual kickoff meeting will be eligible for a raffle.</p> <p>Learn more about how you, your family and friends can participate in this fun event that brings attention to hearing health and raises funds for essential resources and educational programs for people with hearing loss.</p> <p>A couple days prior to this virtual meeting, you'll receive an email with a link that will let you attend virtually using any internet connected device.</p> <p>The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) NC Walk4Hearing returns this fall as a "live" happening. See the article on Page 2 of this Newsletter for more details about the NC Walk4Hearing, which will take place October 10 at WakeMed Soccer Park in Cary.</p>
<p>HLAA Charlotte Chapter Virtual Meeting</p> <p>Thursday Sep 9th</p> <p>6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>You're welcome to join the HLAA Charlotte Chapter via ZOOM (with CART captions and ASL and ASL Interpreters) to discuss topics of interest to people with hearing loss/hard of hearing in our community.</p> <p>Charlotte Eye Ear Nose and Throat Audiologists are planned presenters.</p> <p>The Zoom Meeting link is: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86178078863</p>

How to Attend These Virtual Meetings

- A couple of minutes before the meeting is scheduled to start, just click on the Zoom meeting link on any Internet connected device with a video camera, speakers and a microphone. Some chapters provide the link:
 - In the meeting announcement like in the Charlotte meeting, above.
 - In an email a few days before the meeting.
 - Request in the announcement that you email them for the link.
- Make sure the right microphone and speakers are selected, and choose captions if you want them using a menu on the screen.

NC Walk4Hearing Returns as “Live” Event in October



Two- and four-legged members of Team Double Trouble enjoying the 2019 NC Walk4Hearing.

Following more than a year of virtual Walk4Hearing events across the country, we're delighted that the North Carolina walk returns this fall as a “live” happening. The North Carolina Walk4Hearing is set for Sunday, October 10, at WakeMed Soccer Park in Cary. Registration/check-in begins at 11 a.m. and the 5-kilometer (3.1 miles) walk starts at noon.

Organized by the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), the Walk4Hearing is the only nationwide event bringing attention to hearing health and raising funds for essential resources and educational programs for people with hearing loss. Children and adults of all ages participate in the walk, making valuable friendships, enjoying lunch and special activities, and learning about hearing health and its connection to their overall health.

Wake Chapter is forming a walk team. You can join the team or donate to support one of the walkers for our team. You're more than welcome to do both! Donations as a walker or to any team walker will be shared between HLAA-National and our chapter. This funding is the main source of our chapter's income, enabling us to help people in our area with hearing loss through projects such as the chapter's scholarship program for college-bound high school graduates.

Learn more about the event during a virtual kickoff event on Thursday, September 2, at 7 p.m. Participants in the event will be eligible for a raffle. A link to the Zoom call will be emailed to all chapter members a couple of days before the event.

Wake Chapter will have a team, soon. Wake Chapter members will receive an email with instructions on how to join our team or donate to a walker as soon as our team is defined. General information about the event is available at [Walk4Hearing.org](https://www.walk4hearing.org).

Walk4Hearing Sponsorships

We are seeking sponsors for our NC Walk4Hearing to be held on October 10. Do you have an audiologist or ENT doctor who may want to donate? The money we raise goes toward college scholarships to recognize exceptional Wake County high school seniors with hearing loss. Other worthy causes include funding for BEGINNINGS For Parents of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Camp Woodbine, Camp Sertoma and others.

We also welcome sponsors from businesses that are not related to hearing loss. Individuals are also encouraged to be sponsors. There are sponsorships to suit all levels of interest and each includes appropriate recognition. For sponsorship forms and questions about sponsorship, contact Janet McGettrick at jmcgettrick106@gmail.com.

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Changes to the HLAA Wake Chapter Board

Because Zoom technology enabled us to conduct virtual programs and board meetings, the HLAA Wake Chapter has remained healthy during the COVID pandemic, and we're taking steps to meet the challenges of an exciting new era.

At our May board meeting, we made some changes that promise to strengthen our chapter.

Steve Latus has agreed to be our new president, and the board has unanimously approved. Steve had joined HLAA Wake Chapter after moving to Raleigh and has quickly volunteered for a leadership role in the Walk4Hearing planning, and he has helped make our new Wake Scholarship program a huge success. See a letter from our new president [HERE](#).



Steve Barber and Janet McGettrick have stepped down after many years as co-presidents.

Steve will continue to do many of the tasks he has done for many years, serving as our media coordinator. Steve will continue managing our chapter's email list of members, and editing our Wake Chapter newsletter. He also developed and maintains our NC HLAA web site for all the chapters in North Carolina. Steve encourages any member who would like to contribute or suggest articles for our Wake Chapter newsletter or items to include on our State-wide or Wake Chapter web page to [send them to him](#).



Janet will serve in the new role of membership outreach coordinator. She says: "I look forward to developing this position with a goal of improving our efforts to welcome new members and to stay in touch with long-time members. I hope to help members get the information that they seek regarding hearing loss and how to cope with the challenges. Her other goal is for members to feel a greater connection to the chapter and with each other. [Email Janet](#) with questions you may have regarding our chapter. I'm ready to help you get involved.



Susan Goldner has agreed to continue to be our treasurer. As treasurer, Susan makes every effort to be timely with donations, to produce reports of who and when, to thank donors for all generous gifts we receive and pay any expenses we incur including Zoom membership, rental of venues, fees for fairs and activities we represent to spread our support.



GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY'S PEER MENTORING - DEADLINE AUGUST 1, 2021

August 1 is the registration deadline for the next cohort of Gallaudet University's Peer Mentoring program. This program, which commenced in 2005, is a two year certificate program conducted primarily on-line, whereby Deaf/Hard of Hearing adults are trained to become peer mentors to other adults with acquired hearing loss. We feel this is a very important and needed program, as it allows many hard of hearing individuals to talk to peers, who, in turn, may be able to provide them with important information and support pertaining to hearing-related healthcare.

If you are interested in this program, you can learn more about it [here](#).

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Focus on People – Steve Latus, Wake Chapter’s New President



Greetings!

This is my first opportunity to address you, the HLAA Wake Chapter membership, since the board named me chapter president a couple months back.

I’m relatively new to Wake County, moving here nearly three years ago from New Jersey as a new retiree. I’m anything but new to hearing loss, however. Nearly 40 years ago, I experienced sudden deafness in my right ear and tinnitus.

Almost 10 years later, I experienced a similar episode in my left ear. As with most cases of sudden deafness, the cause for my losses could not be identified. For more than two decades, I functioned with two hearing aids, but my residual hearing gradually worsened and what I could hear became increasingly distorted. I reached a breaking point in 2017. I totally bombed a routine hearing test. My speech comprehension score for my right ear while wearing my hearing aid was close to zero. My audiologist told me that I might qualify as a cochlear implant candidate.

By this point in time, I had discovered HLAA. I attended a New Jersey state association meeting, where I was able to talk to several attendees with cochlear implants. I asked them about their satisfaction with their implants, about their surgeries and the rehabilitation process. Those conversations convinced me to move ahead, and in June 2017 my right ear was implanted. I now have four years of experience with a cochlear implant in my right ear and a hearing aid in my left. My hearing ability is far from normal, but it’s far better than four years ago.

I’ve been blessed to serve in various volunteer capacities over the years, but volunteering with HLAA is something I’m truly passionate about. We all have unique perspectives on hearing loss, and I feel a strong sense of responsibility to share my perspective with others, learn from others, and do what I can to help others as they deal with hearing loss, be it their own or the hearing loss of a loved one.

As a chapter, I want to make sure that we continue to leverage all of our unique perspectives for the broader benefit of our region and state. I’m committed to asking for your input and help every step of the way as we move forward and advance HLAA’s mission: To open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.

Thank you for your interest in the HLAA Wake Chapter.

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Should I Adjust My Microphone Sensitivity?

Many hearing aids and cochlear implants (CIs) now offer the user control over something called “sensitivity” ... or to be more specific, “microphone sensitivity”. But what is it really, and how can it help you hear a little bit better in noise?

Audiologists and hearing aid dealers often explain microphone sensitivity as a way to reduce the size of the hearing “bubble” around you ... that lets you hear nearby sounds better than far away sounds. That’s true; it does help to reduce sounds originating farther away, but it’s not really a “bubble”.

Microphones only hear sounds that arrive at them at a volume they can detect. They have no way to know how far away a sound originated. Lowering the microphone sensitivity level, essentially makes the microphone ignore arriving sounds that aren’t loud enough for the microphone to hear. If you lower your microphone sensitivity, it will ignore and not send those arriving sounds that are below the sensitivity level you have determined. Even though the microphone doesn’t know how far away the sound originated, it does tend to block some sounds that originated farther away.

But it doesn’t block all sounds originating outside of the imaginary “bubble.” Distant sounds that are loud enough to arrive at your microphones above the sensitivity setting will still be heard. Only very quiet sounds, diminished by travelling far enough will not be heard. That explains why you can use to block some distant sounds, while still hearing most nearby sounds.

Reducing microphone sensitivity also helps block reverberated noise. Sound waves expand in all directions from the source. Some arrive at your microphones in a straight line, but sound bounces off walls, ceilings, floors, and windows, and that reverberated part of the sounds arrives a little later at your microphones. That muddies the clarity of what you hear. But if its volume is reduced to below the sensitivity level of the microphones, it will be ignored and improve the clarity of the sound you hear. That’s especially helpful in noisy situations.

Of course, there’s a limit to the benefit of lowering the sensitivity. It also ignores very quiet sounds that came from nearby. So, if you lower the sensitivity too much, that will reduce the clarity of speech of someone nearby that you’re trying to understand. So, just be careful not to reduce your microphone sensitivity too much, because while it does help improve clarity in noise, it reduces clarity of nearby quiet sounds, too. Fortunately, it works pretty well if not overdone. The microphone sensitivity setting is usually only available from a smartphone app that allows the user to control it. Some hearing aids and CIs may also require your audiologist or hearing aid dealer to make that setting available to you. If you have a hearing aid or CI that uses a smartphone app, and you don’t see a microphone sensitivity setting in the app, ask your audiologist or hearing aid dealer if your device has a sensitivity setting. Just be sure to only reduce the microphone sensitivity a little in noisy situations and return the setting to normal when it’s not needed.

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Help Researchers Assess Medical Care for People with Hearing Loss

The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) is encouraging its members to participate in a research study that's assessing how well the health care system cares for people with hearing loss.

Researchers at the Johns Hopkins University Disability Health Research Center are seeking respondents age 60 or above with age-related hearing loss who have seen a health care provider within the past two years to complete a 15-minute web survey. To participate, go to this link: bit.ly/HopkinsHearingSurvey.

People age 60 or above who experienced hearing loss later in life that was sudden in nature but due to an unknown cause also may complete the survey.

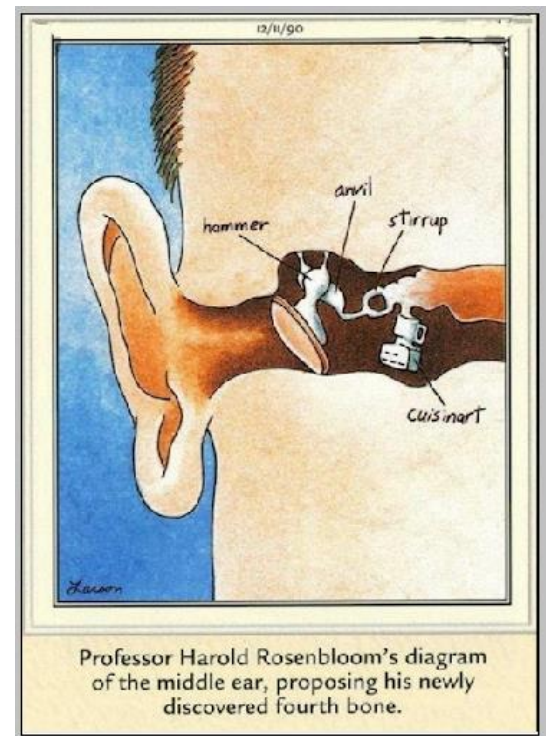
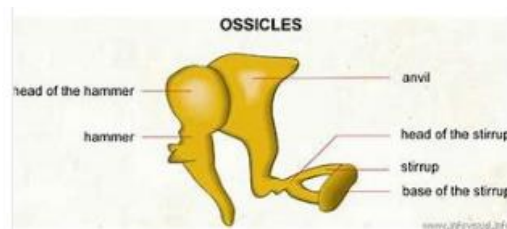
If you have any questions, email [Jessica Campanile](mailto:jcampanile@hlaa.org).

HLAA has created a task force to address the critical issue of communication access for people with hearing loss in medical facilities. Articles on the topic of health care communication access are now found in each issue of HLAA's *Hearing Life* magazine.

Tinnitus Explained

Most people with hearing loss are familiar with tinnitus ... also often referred to as "ringing in the ears". There are lots of different causes of tinnitus, and we can cover more about that in a future newsletter, but for now, we're just going to cover one theory with the cartoon at the right. Tinnitus can certainly sound like you've got a Cuisinart ossicle, sometimes.

Just so there's no confusion, here's what your ossicles really look like. Note that there's really no Cuisinart bone



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Medicaid Communication Access Services

Did you know that healthcare providers are required by [law](#) to provide effective communication to people who are Hard of Hearing? This means if you need [Communication Access Real-time Translation](#) (CART) or an [amplification device](#), and request it, your healthcare provider must make arrangements to provide it for you. One reason many healthcare providers are resistant to providing communication accommodations is the cost related to these services. We are excited to announce that the Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) can now assist healthcare providers with these costs through an initiative set up in partnership with the Division of Health Benefits. To be eligible, the Hard of Hearing person must have Medicaid. However if you have Medicare AND Medicaid, your healthcare provider does not need to bill Medicaid for us to reimburse for communication access. Examples of visits covered are doctor appointments, eye exams, in-home health care, Hospice services and many more! Healthcare providers will be eligible for assistance in paying for [services related to communication access](#). This service also covers assistance with communication access services for companions (e.g., spouse).

HLAA Wake Chapter thanks David Litman, Medicaid Communication Access Coordinator, Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, for this article.

We encourage you to share this information with your healthcare providers so they can register for this new pilot service. Below is some helpful information you can share with them:

1. Medicaid provider must register with DSDHH using the [Medicaid Provider Registration Form](#).
2. Individual must be Medicaid recipient prior to date care is provided.
3. Most services taking place outside of hospital are covered (hospitalizations and inpatient care not covered by this program).
4. Training and resources on communicating effectively in healthcare settings available at no cost.

Even if you do not have Medicaid, we encourage you to request the communication access service you need for effective communication. Remember, your healthcare provider is required by [law](#) to make their services accessible to you. We also encourage you to share this information with your healthcare provider, friends, and family.

For more information about this service, or to share feedback and suggestions on making this a success, please contact DSDHH Medicaid Communication Access Coordinator [David Litman](#), or phone/VP (984) 884-1093.

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