



Our mission is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.

Chicago North Shore Chapter Newsletter 2021



Chapter in-person meetings at the North Shore Senior Center continue to be a hope for the near future.

Upcoming Meeting

Panel Discussion on Cochlear Implants by Those Who Actually Wear Them

November 8, 2021 11 a.m. - Noon

All are welcome to this virtual panel discussion and update of one of our most popular programs:

Cochlear Implants (CIs). Members of our Chapter with CIs will discuss many aspects, such as the decision-making process, selection of an MD, expectations, follow-up training, hearing outcomes, and what it's actually like to wear a CI. The panelists will also answer questions from the audience. This virtual program is presented by the Chicago North Shore Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America.

For more information, call Ana Pinshower at 847-784-6079.

Register in advance for this meeting:
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYqd-GgpjgoHtWDHtBS9fJoJ7vtY2MGJM_g
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



Thursday, November 11

2020 - 2021 Chapter Sponsors

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We are very grateful to these Sponsors for their generosity and support of the HLAA Chicago North Shore Chapter.

NOTE: if your name or business is not listed correctly, please let us know.

Recapping Hospital Panel program, 10/11



The program's goal was for the audience to learn about the unique accommodations that certain hospitals from around this country have for people with hearing loss. Each of our presenters were passionate advocates and talked about the accommodations their hospitals provide for people with hearing loss.

Although the panel was inaugurated by the Chicago North Shore Chapter 6 years ago, this was its first national presentation as an HLAA program.

It's News to Us



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Hearing Aid Help Coming

“HLAA is pleased to see the proposed rules on over-the-counter hearing aids released today by the FDA. This is one step closer to seeing OTC hearing devices on the market for adults with mild to moderate hearing loss. We hope that many adults who qualify for these devices are encouraged to take that important step toward good hearing health. The FDA will need to review all comments before the rules become final, which we anticipate will be in 2022. If you think you have a hearing loss, get tested now, don't wait for over-the-counter hearing aids which could take a year or more to come to market. Take care of your hearing health today. The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) will file comments with the FDA on the proposed rules within the 90 day comment period.”

Barbara Kelley
Executive Director
Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)

The full text of the FDA proposal follows.

FDA News Release

Associated Press

October 18, 2021

FDA Issues Landmark Proposal to Improve Access to Hearing Aid Technology for Millions of Americans

Proposed Rule Would Establish New Category of Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids

Today, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a landmark proposal intended to improve access to and reduce the cost of hearing aid technology for millions of Americans. The agency proposed a rule to establish a new category of over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids. When finalized, the rule would allow hearing aids within this category to be sold directly to consumers in stores or online without a medical exam or a fitting by an audiologist. The proposed rule is designed to help increase competition in the market while also ensuring the safety and effectiveness of OTC and prescription hearing aids.

Today's action follows President Biden's July [Executive Order](#) on Promoting Competition in the American Economy, which called for the FDA to take steps to allow hearing aids to be sold over the counter. This effort also builds on the Biden-Harris Administration's goal of expanding access to high-quality health care and lowering medical care costs for the American public.

"Reducing health care costs for everyone in America is a top priority," said Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra. "Today's move by FDA takes us one step closer to the goal of making hearing aids more accessible and affordable for the tens of millions of people who experience mild to moderate hearing loss."

Approximately 15% of American adults (37.5 million) age 18 and over report some trouble hearing. However, despite the high prevalence and public health impact of hearing loss, only about one-fifth of people who could benefit from a hearing aid use one. The proposed rule aims to address barriers to use, including cost, access, social stigma related to hearing loss, perceived value of the devices or certain state and federal regulations.

Many hearing aids can be expensive. The rule aims to facilitate innovation and increase competition by lowering the barriers to entry for new hearing aid manufacturers. Under the proposed rule, hearing aids would be sold over the counter in more traditional brick-and-mortar retail stores or online (rather than doctors' offices or specialty retail outlets) and will likely be less expensive than those currently sold – giving consumers greater choice at lower prices.

The proposed rule implements a key provision of the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act, as enacted in the FDA Reauthorization Act of 2017. President Biden's Executive Order on Competition included a timeline for action, and the FDA has now issued the proposed rule ahead of that schedule.

Hearing loss can be caused by aging, exposure to loud noises, certain medical conditions and other factors. Individuals with permanent hearing loss can use hearing aids to help make speech and sounds around them louder, enabling more effective communication with others.

"Hearing loss has a profound impact on daily communication, social interaction and the overall health and quality of life for millions of Americans," said Acting FDA Commissioner Janet Woodcock, M.D. "The FDA's proposed rule represents a significant step toward helping ensure that adults with mild to moderate hearing loss have improved access to more affordable and innovative product options. The new regulatory category will provide the public with greater control over their hearing aid purchasing decisions at stores nationwide or online without the need for a professional hearing exam, fitting adjustment or a prescription."

The proposed rule would also amend existing rules that apply to hearing aids for consistency with the new OTC category, repeal the conditions for sale for hearing aids and address state regulation of hearing aids. The OTC category, when finalized, would apply to certain air-conduction hearing aids intended for adults age 18 and older who have perceived mild to moderate hearing loss. Hearing aids for severe hearing loss or for users younger than age 18 would be prescription devices.

To ensure patient safety, the proposed rule also addresses a maximum output (volume) limit for OTC hearing aids that would prevent injuries from overamplification of sound. In addition, the proposed rule includes certain device performance and design requirements, such as distortion control limits, self-generated noise limits, latency limits (how quickly an OTC hearing aid processes, amplifies and relays a sound), the range of frequencies that the device can reproduce and how uniformly the OTC hearing aid amplifies different frequencies over its bandwidth, as well as a requirement to limit the insertion depth of the device. The proposed rule also includes labeling requirements for OTC hearing aids.

To coincide with the proposed rule, the FDA also issued an updated draft guidance, Regulatory Requirements for Hearing Aid Devices and Personal Sound Amplification Products (PSAPs). The draft guidance describes hearing aids, PSAPs, their respective intended uses and regulatory requirements that apply to both types of products. The draft guidance is intended to provide further clarification regarding the differences between PSAPs, which help people with normal hearing amplify sounds, and hearing aids and to inform consumers that PSAPs are not considered OTC alternatives for hearing aids.

Editors' note: We frequently publish website links to further information related to newsletter articles. If you have a problem with a link, please let us know and we will attempt to provide a printed copy of the reference.

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AMC Bringing Captions (open) to screens across the country

Shaban, Hamza
The Washington Post
October 21, 2021

The world's largest movie chain is bringing open captioning to the big screen, creating more accessibility for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing at a time when younger audiences are used to seeing the spoken word flash on their streaming and social media feeds.

AMC Entertainment said the rollout will cover over 240 movie houses in 100 markets, or roughly 40% of the company's U.S. theaters. The company said filmgoers will be able to find locations and showtimes on its app and website, and that availability could be adjusted based on audience demand and guest feedback.

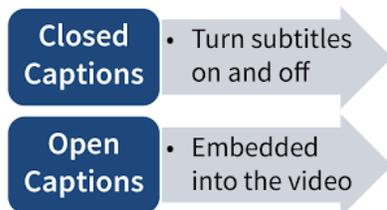
AMC said the open caption showtimes for new releases are intended to expand the moviegoing audience, including those for whom English is a second language. Initial consumer response has been very positive, and we anticipate strong demand with growing awareness of open caption showtimes at AMC.

AMC Chief Executive Adam Aron said that the initiative would arrive in time for showings of Marvel's the "Eternals," which features actress Lauren Ridloff, who is deaf, and who plays the Marvel Cinematic Universe's first deaf superhero.

Meandering Through A Hearing World

I cheered when hearing the news that AMC will offer live captioning in their theaters. Where would I be without my captions! I remember the day, back in the mid-1980s, when my audiologist told me that my hearing loss had taken a turn for the worse. He wasn't telling me anything I hadn't suspected. For some time, I had been having difficulty using the telephone, hearing female voices, and watching television. Dialogue was sounding like alphabet soup. I knew I had a problem before his exam was completed.

I upgraded my hearing aids, but that alone did not solve my television viewing difficulties. Not long afterwards, I visited my parents and was astounded by a new device my mom had added to her television set. My dad suffered from hearing loss, and he, too, was having trouble enjoying television programs. This simple little device, attached to my parent's television output, allowed us to view closed captions. I remember sitting with my Dad, astounded as we watched a local news channel with dialogue rolling across the screen. Finally, there was a way for us to "hear" our favorite TV channels.



In those days not all television content was captioned. A few years later, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) required all television program content to be closed captioned. Closed captioning requires the user to turn on captioning, live captions means the contents are available without the use of any special device.

For the longest time, movie theaters were not required to use any type of captioning. Finally, the ADA was amended, sending those of us with hearing loss back to the big screen. However, movie theaters provided options to view captions that were

not very palatable. One either wore a set of heavy glasses to read captions or use a "mirrored device" to see the captions on the screen. Using these devices required you to hold your head very still or to position yourself unnaturally in your seat. If you moved your head or repositioned yourself even slightly, the captions would appear out of your view. I stopped going to movies. Most new movies releases became available on Netflix or Amazon Prime within a few months of their release. In the comfort of my living room, I could view the film and read the captions more naturally.

Now with the AMC announcement of providing live captions, I may consider returning to the theater. Imagine how this will help those of us with hearing loss. We will be able to sit in the comfort of a seat and view captions sans an awkward device.

48 million people in the USA suffer from hearing loss. We require hearing aids, cochlear implants, or other devices to hear. For a good many of us, those devices are not enough. We need captioning when viewing television programming or movie theater content. I have a sensorineural mixed hearing loss and cannot hear female voices well. Watching a movie without captioning means that I miss content. Perhaps the AMC announcement of providing open captions in their theaters will help us all.

Linda Bibdeau, Sarasota Chapter



Don't Forget!

Daylight Savings Time ends at 2:00
a.m. Sunday, November 7.

So set your clocks back for the extra
hour of sleep we all could use !