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“Get in the Hearing Loop” campaign promotes doubling functionality of hearing aids

The American Academy of Audiology on behalf of audiologists, and the Hearing Loss Association of America on behalf of people with hearing loss announce a collaborative public education campaign “Get in the Hearing Loop.”

“Get in the Hearing Loop” is a campaign to enlighten and excite hearing aid users, as well as audiologists and other professionals who dispense hearing aids, about telecoils and hearing loops and their unique benefits. Hearing loops transmit the audio from a PA system directly to telecoil-equipped hearing aids and cochlear implants. The telecoil functions as an antenna, relaying sounds directly into the ear without background noise just like Wi-Fi connects people to the web.

Hearing aids can easily and affordably become wireless receivers for use with telephones and hearing assistive listening systems – hearing loops and neckloops – by adding a telecoil option to the aid. Sixty-nine percent of all hearing aids dispensed in the U.S. today have telecoils. Yet far too few consumers and hearing professionals know about or use them.

Pat Kricos, Ph.D., president-elect of the Academy, enthusiastically agreed to join the HLAA in this endeavor, stating, “Thanks to the passionate ground-breaking work carried on by HLAA member David Myers, Ph.D. in his Let’s Loop America advocacy endeavor, there have been steady increases in accessibility for individuals with hearing loss. However, we still have a long road ahead of us before people with hearing loss can expect to hear in public areas via hearing loop technology. This collaborative awareness campaign by HLAA and the Academy will ensure that both consumers and audiologists will become fully aware of the remarkable benefits of telecoils and hearing loops.”

HLAA Executive Director Brenda Battat comments, “Though HLAA and the Academy have worked together on advocacy issues for many years, this is the first time they have worked together on an educational campaign. My feeling was that educating consumers about telecoils and assistive listening systems would not be effective if the hearing professionals were not on board. It was important to get their buy-in. This is a way to address it from both sides and have a greater impact.”

“A successful local hearing loop campaign in the Fox Valley of Wisconsin made me realize that hearing loops can *profoundly* affect people who use hearing aids” explains Juliëtte Sterkens, AuD, audiologist and committee member of the “Get in the Hearing Loop” campaign. I want to help bring this news to every hearing aid user in the country and help make my audiology colleagues aware of an opportunity we are missing to help our clients get more from their hearing aids.”

The campaign will culminate in the Second International Hearing Loop Conference to coincide with the HLAA annual convention in Washington, D.C., June 16 – 19, 2011. The first International Hearing Loop Conference was organized by the European Association of Hard of Hearing People in Winterthur, Switzerland in September 2009.

About Hearing Loss Association of America

The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), founded in 1979, opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, advocacy and support. HLAA publishes the bimonthly *Hearing Loss Magazine*, holds annual conventions, produces the national *Walk4Hearing*, hosts online learning with the Hearing Loss Academy, holds monthly webinars, and advocates for the rights of people with hearing loss. HLAA has more than 200 chapters and 14 state organizations. The national headquarters is located at 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200, Bethesda, MD 20814. Phone: 301.657.2248 or visit www.hearingloss.org.

About the American Academy of Audiology

The American Academy of Audiology is the world's largest professional organization of, by, and for audiologists. The active membership of more than 11,000 is dedicated to providing quality hearing care services through professional development, education, research, and increased public awareness of hearing and balance disorders. The Academy promotes quality hearing and balance care by advancing the profession of audiology through leadership, advocacy, education, public awareness, and support of research. Further information about the Academy can be found at www.audiology.org, as well as on the Academy's consumer website www.howsyourhearing.org.