HLAA Monthly Meeting
Saturday, April 8, 10:00 a.m.
Snacks and socializing at 9:30 a.m.

Meeting at
Southside Church of Christ
South parking lot entrance
2101 Hemphill St., Fort Worth 76110

Hearing Health Seminar
presented by Cochlear Americas

Presenters
Erin Washburn Au.D.
& Maliha Baggia

The presentation will cover:
• Reviewing hearing loss
• Implant candidacy
• Hearing implant technology
• Evaluation process
• Implant procedure
• Activation process

“Hybrid Hearing”: The presentation will include the new “Hybrid Hearing solution” now being advertised by Cochlear Americas. The company says, “The system uses acoustic amplification to improve the hearing you still have, while taking advantage of cochlear implant technology to restore access to the hearing you’re missing.” Major surgery is not involved, the cochlear manufacturer says.

Erin Washburn received her Bachelor of Science degree in Speech Pathology and Audiology from the University of Arkansas in Little Rock and her Au.D. from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

Early in her career she developed a particular passion and interest in providing care for those who have undergone cochlear implantation. Erin implemented the audiology program at Methodist Charlton ENT before joining Cochlear Americas as an Associate Clinical Territory Manager in February, 2016. As an Associate Clinical Territory Manager, she now provides technical, clinical, surgical, and business support for clinics and hospitals in North Texas and Oklahoma.

Maliha Baggia received her Bachelor of Science degree in Communicative Disorders from Northern Illinois University in 2007 and then focused on Audiology after graduation. She worked in a hospital setting managing newborn hearing screen programs. Soon after, she was licensed as a hearing instrument specialist and ran two hearing aid clinics in the Chicago area.

Her passion to help people hear led her to Texas, where she worked for a hearing aid manufacturing company as a trainer and a quality and technical support specialist.

Still looking to help others improve their quality of life, Maliha joined Cochlear Americas as an Engagement Manager in July of 2016. As an Engagement Manager for North Texas and Oklahoma, she is an outreach specialist and also an educational counselor, helping guide individuals looking for information about cochlear implants, providing help to all recipients and supporting Cochlear’s amazing volunteers.

Photo Credit: The photograph of The Fort Worth Herd on our Heard In Fort Worth banner is used by permission of The Fort Worth Herd and its sponsor, the Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Department.
Have you ever spent time attempting to find the best performing hearing aid or cochlear implant? I would venture to guess that if we have one of those devices or are considering getting one, we all have attempted to find the answer to which brand of hearing aid or cochlear implant is the best one.

There is an endless amount of resources on the Internet that you can explore to get more information about each brand. For most of us, even after reading all this information, we are still in a quandary as to which one to choose.

Depending on who you talk to, there are six major hearing aid manufacturers and brands: Starkey, Resound, Siemens, Widex, Oticon, and Phonak. Cochlear implants have three major brands, in my opinion: Advanced Bionics, Cochlear Americas, and Med-El.

These manufacturers are popular because they invest large amounts of resources, time, and money into their research and development for new and improved products. These products are not identical, so each will have its own strong points. However, because of their focus on R&D, their products are forever changing, and the best performer today will most likely be different tomorrow.

There are many research organizations that attempt to rank these manufacturers based on several factors. These results are almost always after an extensive study conducted over time.

While this research is going on, the manufacturers are continually developing new products and making upgrades to their existing products. When these studies come to publication, the current state of the art products are most likely not included in their study. One thing is certain: the rankings will change based on the stage in the development cycle of each vendor’s products. Technology advances are changing rapidly, and these companies regularly leapfrog each other with their technical advances. This is not a bad thing; they push each other. Thus, these devices continue to improve.

So, which one is the best? All of these companies make the best hearing instruments in the industry. You can expect nothing less since they are the leaders in this market. Factors such as technology, dependability, and customer service will drive different audiologists to have their favorites.

Choose an audiologist near you that you trust. Ask for a device recommendation, and then ask why they made this recommendation for you. We are all different, with different lifestyles and different types of hearing loss. Your audiologist should take the time to understand your lifestyle and hearing loss attributes to be able to match up the best device for you.

Cost will always play a role in your decision, but among the major brands, the cost is roughly the same at the same technology level and whether you need a hearing aid or cochlear implant.

Regardless of which of these brands you choose, it should be done in concert with a professional audiologist who specializes in the type of hearing device you are evaluating.

One thing is for sure – the key to that device working the best for you depends on how well your audiologist can program the instrument to best fit your hearing loss needs and lifestyle. For me, the major factor I use to choose is the recommendation of my audiologist. They are the biggest “difference makers” – not the product brand name.

– David Edmondson, Chapter President
Help Staff Our Booth

We need volunteers to help staff our information booth at Senior Synergy Expo, Thursday, May 4, at Will Rogers Center. This year 3,000 people are expected to attend, and most of them, along with other exhibitors, will pass our booth. It’s a great outreach opportunity. Please offer your help.

Volunteers are needed in shifts from 8:00 – 10:00 a.m., 10:00 – noon, and noon to 2:00 p.m. To volunteer, please contact our chapter president David Edmondson (david_edmondson@att.net).

Senior Synergy Expo provides Tarrant County boomers, seniors, and caregivers with a forum to learn more about living a healthy, safe and productive life. This huge event offers free health screenings, workshops, and entertainment, along with 100+ registered exhibitors. The event is promoted by Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley (County Commissioners Court).

If you plan to attend, register early (before Monday, April 24) to receive a free lunch and free parking. Register online or download a registration form at www.seniorsynergyexpo.com.

It’s a Call to Action!
Join HLAA in Supporting the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017

On March 21, U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.), and Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.), reintroduced legislation (S. 670) to make hearing aids for those with mild to moderate hearing loss available over the counter (OTC). A companion bill (HR 1652) led by Representatives Joe Kennedy III (D-Mass.) and Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) was also introduced in the House.

The Over-The-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017 would make certain types of hearing aids available over the counter and remove unnecessary and burdensome requirements that currently create barriers for consumers who could benefit from hearing aids.

HLAA is issuing a Call to Action to ask for your help in sending Congress a message that passage of this bill would be life-changing for the millions of Americans who don’t seek help for their hearing loss simply because they can’t afford to.

You – we – now have the opportunity to influence Congress to change that. We have created a new section of the HLAA website entirely devoted to over-the-counter hearing aids. It includes information on what exactly an over-the-counter device is, what all this means to people with hearing loss, the NAS report, information on the Call to Action – what you can do to help, useful links and much more.

Research Opportunity for Hearing Aid and/or Cochlear Implant Users at UTD

The University of Texas at Dallas seeks Cochlear Implant users for research studies to investigate novel sound processing strategies designed specifically to improve speech perception with CI devices in natural or noisy listening situations.

Users with a combination of a CI plus a hearing aid are also encouraged to participate.

Studies are conducted at UT-Dallas in Richardson. The time involved is four to eight hours. Compensation is $25/hour + food + travel allowance.

Project Investigator: Dr. Hussnain Ali.
Email: hussnain.ali@utdallas.edu.

HLAA Supports Increased Funding for NIH

The first recommendation of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NAS) report Hearing Health Care for Adults: Priorities for Improving Access and Affordability is to “Improve population-based information on hearing loss and hearing health care.” In short, we need more information and data about hearing loss to have a better understanding of, at a minimum, risk factors associated with hearing loss, hearing health care needs, and the impact of hearing loss and its treatment on health, function, economic productivity, and quality of life.

The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has been at the forefront of research since its authorization in 1988.

HLAA recently submitted written testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies to support increased funding for the NIH.
HIGHLIGHTS OF MARCH 2017 PROGRAM:

What Everyone with Hearing Loss Should Know about Hearing Aids and Hearing Loops

Presented by Richard McKinley, Managing Director, Contact, Inc.

Edited and excerpted by Darlene Liesner from the meeting transcript by Maribel Arredondo, CSR.

Here are a few highlights on looping.

Our March meeting was held at First Baptist Church in Arlington in their fellowship hall, which is looped. Richard McKinley is the Managing Director, of Contacta, Inc. in Holland, Michigan. The company designs, builds, and supports hearing loop products.

Richard gave an emotional, passionate, and informative presentation about hearing loops.

With degrees in math, physics, industrial/scientific photography, and business management, Richard is the leading hearing loop engineer in the United States and does training in the U.S. and in the UK.

A hearing loop, also called an audio-induction loop, audio loop, or simply a loop, is a loop of wire connected to an amplifier to create a magnetic field. The telecoil in the hearing aid or cochlear implant picks up the magnetic transmission.

A telecoil is a small copper coil in most hearing aids and in all cochlear implants. People without telecoils can hear through the loop by using a portable receiver and headset.

The hearing loop connects the listener directly to the sound source while eliminating most of the background noise.

Today’s hearing loop wires run under and around all the seats, so every seat gets a good signal. Hearing loops can be installed in vehicles, cinemas, theaters, elevators, classrooms, airports, libraries, professional offices, TV rooms, bedrooms, places of worship, post offices, and arenas, and at ticket windows, counters and drive-throughs. Loops can be used to accommodate employees in a workplace.

Richard cited the many advantages of properly installed loops over other hearing assistive technology. Infrared and FM systems require wearing a device around the neck, paired with ear buds or head phones. Receivers must be maintained. Batteries die. Headsets can be unsanitary. The user exchanges his driver’s license for the receiver and headset, and then must return the equipment after use.

The main advantage of a loop system is that a listener needs only to activate his telecoil. No extra equipment is required. Loops are dignified and allow comprehension and understanding. Once people have used their hearing aids with a loop, they report being much more satisfied with their hearing aids.

In terms of numbers of people using a loop system vs. infrared or FM systems, loops are much cheaper. That is, more people can and will use a loop system, compared to the use of boxy receivers for the other systems. If properly installed and checked, hearing loops require little maintenance and may last 30-40 years. Captions can take the listener away from the presentation. Lip reading becomes unnecessary.

A sign with the blue ear symbol with a capital T (for telecoil) in the lower right hand corner indicates that a venue is looped.

Elizabeth Johnson, Au.D., FAA, of Arlington Audiology Associates, gave an audiologist’s perspective on telecoils. In her office, the reception area is looped. With digital hearing aids and Bluetooth, many audiologists and hearing aid users do not use a T-coil for the phone. Elizabeth encourages her customers to choose aids with a T-coil because they may attend places where they can use it. Some audiologists choose a device with a T-coil, but don’t always activate it. Consumers can ask to have it turned on.

Completely-in-the-ear-canal hearing instruments may not be large enough to accommodate a T-coil. Some users insist on the tiniest hearing instruments possible. Small behind-the-ear (BTE) hearing instruments can accommodate telecoils. If a hearing instrument company comes out with a BTE product without a T-coil, Elizabeth tells them she is going to use another product.
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Research Symposium, and all workshops

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**2017 Gold:** Johnnie Carter. **Friend:** Emma Hill.

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Hearing Loss Association of America - Fort Worth Chapter

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The Hearing Loss Association America (HLAA), founded in 1979 by Rocky Stone, 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 Walk4Hearing® events, hosts online learning, and more. HLAA has an extensive network of chapters and state organizations. Further information can be found at www.hearingloss.org. The national headquarters is located at 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200, Bethesda, MD 20814. Telephone: 301-657-2248.

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