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**Upcoming Meetings and Events**

Special Note: HLAA-NC and Wake Chapter have cooperated to arrange the next two Wake Chapter meetings with nationally recognized presenters. Please forward invitations to anyone interested in hearing loss. Don't miss these meetings.

**Wake Chapter:** The Wake Chapter Zoom program on Thursday, **September 15th, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.** will feature Neil Bauman, Ph.D. He is a dynamic speaker, who travels throughout the USA and Canada presenting at local, state/provincial, national and international conferences and conventions on topics related to hearing loss. You won't want to miss this meeting. Neil is Director of the [Center for Hearing Loss Help](#) in Lynden, WA. His topic will be "**Hearing Loss at the Crossroads – Coping with Hearing Loss the Right Way – So Why Do We Keep Doing It All Wrong?**" Click on this [LINK](#) any time after 6:45 p.m. the night of the meeting.



**Wake Chapter:** Gael Hannan will be our presenter for a Zoom meeting on **Thursday, November 17th, at 7:00 p.m.** Gael is an **advocate, author, humorist, and speaker** who grew up with a progressive hearing loss that is now severe-to-profound. Her talk will be "**Living Better with Hearing Loss.**" She is a past director on the national board of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) and has served as a speechreading instructor and volunteer for many hearing-related programs. She is a frequent speaker at HLAA and other national conferences and is the co-author, with Shari Eberts, of the new book on hearing loss, "**Hear and Beyond.**" Do plan to attend this meeting (The Link to the Zoom meeting will be provided later).



**We're a Community**  
**Join our HLAA Wake Chapter Walk Team**

**Sunday, Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

Where:

WakeMed Soccer Park  
201 Soccer Park Drive  
Cary, NC



Schedule:

Registration-11 AM  
Stage Presentation: 12:00  
Walk: 12:15 (5K 3.1 miles)

**Join our team—as a walker, donor, or observer—  
come out to join the fun.**

[Click HERE to Join our team --- as a walker, donor or observer -- come out to join the fun.](#)

## Are You Ready to W4H?

The North Carolina edition of the annual Hearing Loss Association of America Walk4Hearing (W4H) is set for Sunday, October 9, at WakeMed Soccer Park in Cary, and there are multiple ways for you to get involved.

And why should you get involved?



The Walk4Hearing is the only nationwide walk spotlighting hearing health and empowering people to live well with hearing loss. It's an opportunity for participants of all ages to gather with their families, friends and hearing care professionals to share experiences, learn about hearing technologies and services and celebrate while enjoying snacks and special activities.

On top of all this, walk participants are supporting organizations that provide essential resources and educational programs for people with hearing loss in North Carolina and beyond. That includes the Wake

Chapter. Among other things, funds we raise through the North Carolina Walk4Hearing support a college scholarship program for Wake County students with hearing loss.

You can join the Wake Chapter Walk Team as a walker or support a walker with a donation. [Learn how here.](#) Walkers traverse a scenic 5-kilometer (3.1-mile) course, which comprises fine gravel and grass surfaces. Ample parking is available at WakeMed Soccer Park.

If you'd like to serve as an event volunteer, please contact Alexis Nye at [alexisnye02@gmail.com](mailto:alexisnye02@gmail.com).

Registration begins at 11 a.m. The walk starts following a brief stage presentation at noon.

Details about special activities and guests will be posted on the [HLAA Wake Chapter Facebook page](#) during September.

More general information about the event is available at [Walk4Hearing.org](http://Walk4Hearing.org).

## Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids Clear Final Regulatory Hurdle

Millions of American adults with mild to moderate hearing loss will soon have more choices in hearing aids, and the ability to get them without seeing a doctor or hearing care professional first. The [Hearing Loss Association of America \(HLAA\)](#) – the leading voice for the growing number of Americans with hearing loss – calls the step a win for millions of adults who have hearing loss and may have been waiting to get the help they need.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on August 16 issued the final rule for how over-the-counter hearing aids will be sold to consumers, and devices are expected to be available within the coming months. HLAA advocated for much of the consumer protection pieces of the long-awaited FDA rule, including a clear return policy and labeling on cell phone connectivity.

HLAA is providing free resources for anyone considering over-the-counter hearing aids at [hearingloss.org/OTC](http://hearingloss.org/OTC). Here in North Carolina, the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing plans to provide consumer guidance materials in coming months. The Wake Chapter Newsletter and [Facebook page](#) will promote the availability of those materials. (continued on next page)

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## Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids Clear Final Regulatory Hurdle (continued)

“We are hopeful that over-the-counter options will inspire some to take a first step to treat their hearing loss sooner. Ultimately this can mean a better quality of life, and avoiding the increased risk of dementia, falls and isolation associated with untreated hearing loss,” says HLAA Executive Director Barbara Kelley.

It’s expected that the new over-the-counter class of hearing aids – recommended only for adults with mild to moderate hearing loss – will be significantly less expensive than those currently on the market, which can average thousands of dollars a pair.

Forty-eight million Americans have hearing loss, and most never get diagnosed or treated. Cost and stigma are common barriers, even though untreated hearing loss is linked with other serious illnesses, isolation and even poor job performance. Hearing loss is often progressive, and HLAA thinks OTC products could inspire some people to get help earlier in the process, when they notice hearing changes in certain situations.

“This is an exciting step, but it’s still important to remember there’s no one-size-fits-all approach to hearing loss. For many, a hearing care professional will still be a part of an effective treatment plan. But opening more options is a big step in the right direction, for a growing problem that affects one in seven Americans,” says Kelley.

## Did You Know? How to Hear Better in Non-Looped Venues

Some live theatres, some churches and other facilities are looped ([See LoopFinder](#) ...also available as an app for your phone), and you can simply switch to telecoil mode to hear better. But how can you hear better in most movie theaters, many live theatres, churches and other facilities that are not looped, but will loan FM or infrared (IR) receivers to patrons with hearing loss?

The receivers typically are available with headphones and that may work for many people but won’t work well for many people with hearing aids or cochlear implants (CIs). Fortunately, if you have telecoils (and they have been activated by your audiologist ...and you know how to switch in and out of telecoil mode), you can use a neckloop instead of headphones. Many places using FM or IR receivers will loan you a neckloop instead of headphones, if you ask. If they don’t have neckloops, you can buy your own neckloop for about \$50 and bring it with you. You simply plug in the neckloop to the same port that the headphones would plug into, put it around your neck, and switch to telecoil mode. You’ll be able to hear the audio much better ... and without the feedback that might occur if you put on headphones over your hearing aid. In a pinch, you can use the headphones instead of a neckloop, since most headphones are telecoil compatible ... that means they emit an electromagnetic signal that your telecoil(s) can hear. You may need to position the earpieces of the headphones over your hearing aid for the telecoil to get a good signal. If using headphones over a hearing aid still causes feedback, you may be able to stop it by turning off your hearing aid’s microphones so that you hear only the telecoil signal.

Many hearing aid and CI users also have a remote microphone or other accessory that can be another alternative to headphones, neckloops and telecoils. Such an accessory will transmit to their hearing devices and can be patched with a male/male 3.5 mm patch cord to the loaned receiver instead of headphones or a neckloop. That’s an even more comfortable way to stream the audio and doesn’t need a telecoil. So, if you have such an accessory, bring it with you with the patch cord and try it.

Having a hearing loss sometimes requires you to be a bit “techie” and innovative to hear your best. It’s not rocket science, so even if you’re not technically inclined, you can do it. If you have any questions, you can email [Steve Barber](#), and he might be able to help.

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## Tech Focus: Bright Future for Direct Audio Streaming

Most of us are familiar with the past and current state of assistive listening technology ... using loops, telecoils, FM and infrared ... and recently Bluetooth. Bluetooth has some exciting plans for the future.



Standard Bluetooth has been available for a while, but until recently, to stream the audio to our hearing aids and cochlear implants (CIs) required a separate receiver usually on a pendant. Recent Low Energy (LE) Bluetooth versions make that separate receiver unnecessary and allow streamed audio to be received directly by some hearing aids and CIs from smart phones and proprietary TV transmitters and remote microphones.

Bluetooth LE was originally implemented as Made for iPhone (MFi) by Apple working with Cochlear corporation allowing the Cochlear N7 implant processor to be the first to receive audio directly from Apple mobile devices. Then, a competing standard called Android Streaming for Hearing Aids (ASHA), developed by Google, allowed selected hearing aids and CIs to stream directly from selected Android phones and standard Bluetooth. The future of the two emerging standards is uncertain, but Bluetooth LE appears to have broader goals than ASHA, so the rest of this article will focus on Bluetooth LE's potential future.

Direct streaming is clearly the future, and LE Bluetooth has not finished with improvements. There's more to come that can make a huge difference in streaming options for people with hearing loss ... and for people with normal hearing. That larger potential market can spark competition that fosters innovation and drives down prices. Here's what to look for:

- Adoption of a single standard that can be licensed to all audio reception devices including headphones, ear buds, hearing aids, and CIs from any manufacturer. Getting past the proprietary fighting among all manufacturers is essential to make direct streaming the norm for everyone.
- Compatible transmitters so cheap that they can be built into all audio sources (the way closed caption technology was built into TVs in 1993).
- Receivers that will hear the compatible transmitters and are so widely available and cheap that they will be built into all serious hearing aids, CIs, headphones, and earbuds.
- Range for all standardized transmitters great enough that even large venues can broadcast audio directly to attendees' hearing devices.
- Latency so short that speechreading from visuals (live or replayed) isn't distracting.
- Power demands trivial enough that battery power isn't a problem for even small receivers like earbuds and hearing aids.
- Automatic pairing of receivers to all in-range transmitters, so users can simply use a remote control (or more likely a smart phone) to select what they want to stream.
- Audio sharing, so you and nearby friends can both hear audio being streamed.
- Broadcast capabilities to unlimited numbers of users within range.
- House-powered transmitters so cheap that every church, movie theater, play, museum or attraction will be accessible to anyone that attends.
- Hands-free phone calls, assuming your smart phone is within range.

We're not there yet, but if you're interested in more information, you can subscribe to free emails from the [Bluetooth Special Interest Group \(SIG\)](#) that's working with the broad audio industry to realize the potential of Bluetooth LE. It's going to take years for all these capabilities to roll out, and there are no guarantees that all these capabilities will be achieved. We'll need manufacturers of hearing devices and audio output devices (like phones, TV, walkie talkies etc.) to implement the new standards, and venues to install future Bluetooth LE transmission equipment. While that happens, and beyond, we'll still need to rely on loop, telecoil, FM and infrared technologies, but the future looks bright for streaming audio directly to our hearing devices wherever audio is available.

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## Wake Chapter Table at the Apex Health Fair

Susan Goldner and Joyce Adler of HLAA Wake Chapter will be supporting a table at the Apex Health and Wellness Fair to help people learn about hearing loss and HLAA. If you're not 55+, you can probably crash the party anyway.



**health & wellness fair**

**apex craft fair**

**Wed, September 14**  
from 9:30am to 1:30pm at the Apex Senior Center

**Free!**

**55+**

Discover all the health and wellness resources Apex and surrounding communities have to offer! Many different agencies and companies will be in attendance to provide you with information on nutrition, staying active, medical providers, home health care and hearing loss. Healthy snacks and beverages will be provided.

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