



Wake Chapter Newsletter Sep 2024

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[Hearing Assistance Dogs Focus of October Program](#)

HLAA Wake Chapter members will have a special opportunity to learn about hearing assistance dogs at our October program meeting.

Join us Thursday, October 24, at Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian Church, 200 High Meadow Dr. in Cary, for a presentation by [Dogs for Better Lives](#), a nonprofit that provides hearing, autism and facility assistance dogs.

The program will feature Dr. Danielle Rose, a member of the Dogs for Better Lives board who lives in Mooresville, NC, and her black Labrador assistance dog, Delight.

Due to technological limitations, the event will not be available remotely via Zoom. It will take place in the church's Fellowship Hall and begin at 7 p.m. Beverages and snacks will be available during and after the presentation. The hall is outfitted with a hearing loop, which will provide telecoil-equipped hearing aid or cochlear implant users with an enhanced listening experience.



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[Support the HLAA Wake Chapter NC Walk4Hearing Team](#)

Save Sunday October 13th and plan to attend the annual HLAA NC Walk4Hearing. It's a great opportunity to get out and meet others with hearing loss in a fun and inspiring setting.

Please join or donate to support our [HLAA Wake Chapter team](#) for the 2024 NC Walk4Hearing. At that link you can Register and select "Wake Chapter" to join our team as a walker. Or, if you prefer, you can simply select "Donate to Event," and search for "Wake Chapter", and then you can make a donation to support any individual walker on our team.

Walk details are provided in the flyer below. Funds raised by the team are shared between our chapter and the HLAA national organization. The walk is the chapter's primary fundraising effort and supports our continued operation, outreach activities and scholarships for worthy local high school graduates with hearing loss. Be a part of our team!



Together, we're bringing hope to hearing loss.

Hearing Loss Association of America
WALK4 HEARING

North Carolina Walk4Hearing
Sunday October 13, 2024

📍 WakeMed Soccer Park
201 Soccer Park Drive
Cary, NC 27606

10:30 am - Registration
12:00 pm - Stage presentation
12:15 pm - Walk begins



**Scan to Register today
or visit walk4hearing.org**

👤 Walk Manager: Ronnie Adler **✉ radler@hearingloss.org**

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HLAA Wake and HLAA-NC Honor Janet McGettrick

The HLAA NC State Association and HLAA Wake Chapter board acknowledged the service of Janet McGettrick at an August dinner in Cary. Janet served both groups with distinction for decades and recently retired from the Wake Chapter board. Participating in the dinner (clockwise, from left) were Kim Calabretta, Steve Barber, Julie Bishop, Janet, Joyce Adler, Wendy Dembeck, Susan Goldner, Steve Latus and Deborah Stroud.



Wake Chapter Supported Apex 55+ Health & Wellness Fair

The HLAA Wake Chapter numbered among more than 50 agencies and companies participating in the Apex 55+ Health & Wellness Fair on Saturday, September 14, at the Apex Senior Center.

Wake Chapter volunteers staffed a table at the fair and provided information about hearing loss and the chapter's support of people with hearing loss.



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Setting Expectations for the Adoption of Auracast



Two education workshops at the Hearing Loss Association of America 2024 national convention provided insights on near-term and long-term expectations for Auracast, an emerging Bluetooth technology that could potentially expand the availability of assistive listening systems for people with – or without – hearing loss.

Unlike other versions of Bluetooth (Bluetooth Classic and Bluetooth Low Energy), Auracast is a broadcast technology. Via Auracast, audio is transmitted from one device to many rather than from one device to one other device. In terms of assistive listening systems, Auracast will find uses in the types of venues now associated with T-coil hearing loops – locations such as conference centers, movie theaters, transportation centers and places of worship.

One conference workshop focused on the current deployment of Auracast. It included representatives from the Bluetooth Special Interest Group, GN Resound, Ampetronic and Listen Technologies. The ReSound Nexia is one of a handful of hearing aids currently enabled for Auracast. Ampetronic is a manufacturer of Auracast transmitters, and it is seeking pilot sites for its product, which will cost \$1,500 to \$3,000 per unit.

Several devices on the market are “Auracast-ready,” including the Cochlear Nucleus 8 processor. Bluetooth realizes it needs to do more to convince manufacturers – including makers of products such as earbuds for consumers with normal hearing – to incorporate Auracast in their products. At this point there are few public spaces offering Auracast capabilities.

A second conference workshop looked further into the future of Auracast. Leading the session was Thomas Kaufmann, the founder of OTOjOY, a company that has installed 1,000 hearing loops in the United States.

Kaufmann is an unabashed fan of Auracast. He calls it “the holy grail of hearing technology.” In addition to all the benefits of hearing loops, says Kaufmann, Auracast offers high-fidelity (stereo) sound and is easier and cheaper to deploy.

While Kaufmann sees great potential in Auracast, he sees technical challenges yet to overcome and practical challenges that only will be overcome with time.

Right now there’s no easy way to connect with Auracast without using a smartphone. This makes Auracast inaccessible to people with complex physical disabilities. Currently there’s also no solution for delay compensation in a large venue. If you’re in the back of a large auditorium, the Auracast sound will reach your hearing device faster than will the sound from the auditorium’s speakers. Unless you have the means to totally block the auditorium audio, you’re going to experience an echo. Questions also remain about how well Auracast will perform in crowded spaces.

The basic practical challenge facing Auracast adoption is the replacement cycle for hearing aids and cochlear implant processors. It will take many years before large numbers of people will own Auracast-enabled hearing devices.

Due to these challenges, Kaufmann recommends the continued installation and use of hearing loops as a step leading to full-fledged Auracast adoption.

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Summer Social Setting Comfortable and Colorful

The HLAA Wake Chapter summer social attracted 19 members to the JC Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh on August 25.

New friendships were forged, and old ones were rekindled in the air-conditioned comfort of the arboretum's education center. Several attendees braved the summer heat to tour the arboretum's splendid gardens following the light lunch.



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[Consumer Reports on Over-the-Counter \(OTC\) Hearing Aids](#)

Do you have mild or moderate hearing loss? You may be a candidate for over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids. Keep in mind that OTC hearing aids often don't come with as much support from audiologists or other hearing professionals as traditional hearing aids. A recent *Consumer Reports* article provides details on support offered by various OTC brands, as well as their return policies, which could vary depending on the retailer.

The [article](#) compares eight over-the-counter hearing aid brands, including Eargo, Jabra, Lexie and Sony.



[Apple AirPods Offer OTC-Level Hearing Aid Capabilities](#)

Apple announced improvements to its AirPods Pro 2 earbuds that introduce over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aid features. On September 12 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved a piece of software that will transform the latest model of Apple's AirPods Pro earbuds into over-the-counter hearing aids. The company's hearing aid feature will be pushed to eligible devices through a software update in coming weeks, Apple said.

An iPhone app will allow you to take a hearing test, the results of which can then program the compatible AirPods Pro models to increase the amplification of frequencies to help with your specific loss. Apple claims the AirPods include hearing protection to reduce very loud sounds, and AI features that monitor the sound environment and adjust settings in real time.



As with other OTC hearing aids, they are designed for mild-to-moderate hearing losses and do not have the power for more serious losses. Compared with some OTC hearing aids, the AirPods Pro 2 battery runtime may be limited and may be more suitable for less than full-day use. But, the announcement does present an interesting option for those with mild-to-moderate losses considering an OTC hearing option.

For more information, here's a news [LINK](#) that summarizes the new announcement and includes comments by HLAA Executive Director Barbara Kelley.

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Tech Focus: Audiograms Report More Than dB Loss

This article introduces the three primary ingredients of an audiogram.

Hearing Level vs. Frequency Chart: The most familiar part of your audiogram is the large graph (See Fig 1) showing the quietest sound you can hear at several key frequencies. The audiologist (or hearing instrument specialist) plays a series of beeps starting at volumes you probably won't hear at all, and slowly increases the volume of the beeps until you raise your finger to indicate you heard the beeps. That is recorded on the graph for each ear and indicates the amount of hearing loss in dB you have at the measured frequencies.

How well you hear actual sound down your ear canal is shown with **X** and **O** symbols, but a vibrating device behind your ear may be used to plot with **[** and **]** symbols your cochlear function (bypassing the middle ear function).

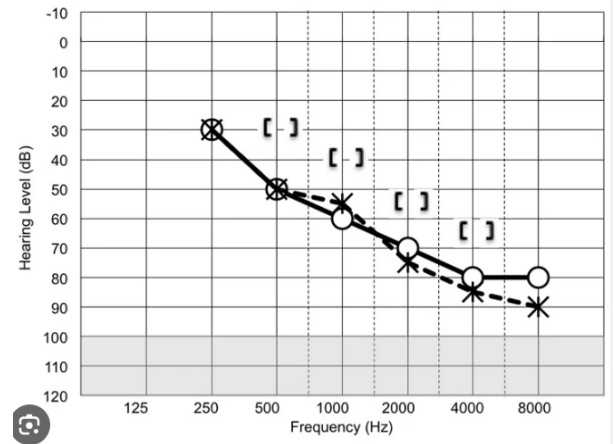


FIG 1

Speech Audiometry: Speech understanding is assessed using speech audiometry measurements. There are three main types of audiometry tests (see Fig 2):

- **Speech Recognition Threshold (SRT):** This is the lowest volume level at which a tested subject can recognize and repeat back 50% of speech material (usually words or sentences). It helps determine the softest speech they can understand.
- **Speech Discrimination Score or Word Recognition Score (WRS):** The audiologist or hearing instrument specialist will say or play several words or sentences. This score reflects the percentage of words a person can correctly repeat when presented at a comfortable loudness level (above the **SRT**). It indicates how clearly someone can understand speech, not just hear it.
- **Speech-in Noise-Tests:** These tests are similar to **WRS** but with noise in the background to assess how well someone understands speech in noisy environments. Examples include the **QuickSIN** (Speech-in-Noise test) or **HINT** (Hearing-in-Noise test).
- **Tympanometry:** Tympanometry is a method of testing the function of the middle ear. The result is reported on a tympanogram (see Fig 3). Instead of testing the ear's sensitivity to sound or the hearing threshold of the patient, tympanometry is used clinically to determine if the middle ear space is functioning correctly or if there is a condition affecting the transfer of sound through the middle ear to the cochlea. Conditions such as middle ear effusions and Eustachian tube dysfunction are common pathologies which you can detect with tympanometry,

SPEECH AUDIOMETRY				
	RIGHT	LEFT	SP	TEST MTRL
SRT/SOT				MLV
Word Recog. %				W-22
Word Recog. % (S/N -10 dB)				NU-6
Pres. Level				PBK-50
MCL				WIPI
UCL				NU-CHIPS

FIG 2

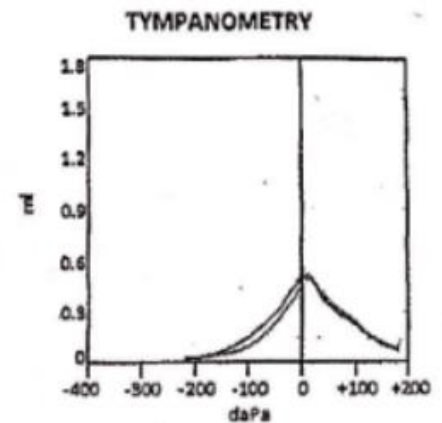


FIG 3

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Voting Deadlines Approaching

The 2024 general election is fast approaching, and if you need assistance voting because of hearing loss, you have specific rights.

Disability Rights North Carolina is a legal advocacy agency that fights for the rights of people with disabilities. Visit the agency's [Your Voting Rights](#) webpage to learn what assistance you're entitled to at a polling site.

Not registered to vote? Learn how with a visit to the North Carolina State Board of Elections webpage titled [How to Register](#)



OCTOBER 11, 2024

**Voter Registration
Deadline**



OCTOBER 17, 2024

**In-Person Early
Voting Begins**



OCTOBER 29, 2024

**Absentee Ballot
Request Deadline**



NOVEMBER 5, 2024

**2024 General
Election Day**

Wake Chapter Contacts

Steve Latus (President)

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Steve Barber (Media)

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Member Outreach

Open; seeking volunteer for this vital role

Susan Goldner (Treasurer)

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