

Hear & Now News

Winter 2008

HHP



Hearing
HealthCare
Providers
of California

Serving the Needs of Hearing
Aid Specialists, Dispensing
Audiologists and the Hearing
Impaired Since 1950

Introducing New HHP/CA Lobbyist, Timothy J. Shannon, Jr.

By Cynthia Peffers, President HHP/CA



Tim Shannon is an advocate with over 30 years experience in consulting and lobbying in the State Capitol. He

began his career in Sacramento shortly after graduation from the UC Davis School of Law in 1974. An attorney, Mr. Shannon has held key staff positions with several legislative committees, serving as counsel to the powerful Senate Judiciary Committee and as Chief Counsel to the Senate Insurance Committee.

Mr. Shannon left the Senate staff in

early 1982 to become a lobbyist for the California Medical Association. In 1987, he took the position of Chief Legislative Advocate/Vice President, Government Relations for the California Manufacturers Association. He returned to the California Medical Association as Associate Vice President for Government Relations in 1990. He has been a contract lobbyist representing a variety of business and health care clients since 1995.

Shannon Government Relations is a full-service lobbying firm, founded in 2003, which specializes in representing health care clientele. He is an attorney who has served as Counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee and

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District Meeting Information

Please attend your District's Meeting!

One Hour CEU Class offered by Siemens:
Nitro Power CIC, "The Power to Choose"

CEU available at districts 1, 2-3 and 6-7

District 1 Sacramento Area

March 6, 2008
Cattlemen's Restaurant
2000 Taylor Road
Roseville
RSVP: Georgette at
916-850-1011

District 2-3 Bay Area

March 20, 2008
Marie Callender's
2090 Diamond
Boulevard Concord
RSVP: Josh at
510-526-3824

District 4-5 Central Valley

Call for Information:
Sandra Souza at
805-489-1357

District 6 & 7 Los Angeles & Desert Area

March 13, 2008
Embassy Suites
3100 East Frontera
Anaheim
(91 Freeway at Kramer/
Glassel Exit)
RSVP: Pat Vanderpool
at 800-998-9787

District 8 San Diego

March 6, 2008
Start-up meeting for
current members and
those interested in
joining HHP/CA.
RSVP: Maxine
Glazebrook at
619-283-8400

New Fresno Medi-Cal Address

Effective immediately, the Fresno Medi-Cal field office has a new address. TAR process for hearing aids has been moved to the San Francisco.

575 Market Street
Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94105
Phone: (415) 904-9600
(888) 706-5697
Fax: (415) 904-9754

Ms. Virginia Yamashiro,
Acting Administrator

Please update your
address books!

If you wish to advertise
equipment or employee
positions in our newsletter,
please e-mail:
hearwell@sonic.net

News & Updates

The NBC-HIS National Competency Exam (NCE) is now available in most countries across the globe. All exams are now computer-based, so results are immediate! Visit www.nbc-his.com to download your application and study guide or call our office at 734-522-2900 for copies.

IHS Executive Director Cindy J. Helms, announces that Richard Giles, BC-HIS, has been elected to a three-year term of office as the International Hearing Society's governor for the Pacific Territory. Please join me in congratulating him and wishing him much success as

your representative. Mr. Giles can be contacted at rick.giles@ear-care.com.

Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and the Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) program announces the new billing requirements prohibiting use of Social Security Numbers goes into effect in February 1, 2008. All providers are expected to use the 14-character Medi-Cal identification number from the recipient's Benefits Identification Card (BIC) or paper ID card or they will be denied. ■

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT HHP/CA Legislation Day Postponed!

Legislation day, originally scheduled for the end of February, has been postponed. A small group will be speaking to legislators individually on bills of interest to HHP/CA. Watch for e-mails explaining steps the membership can take on these measures and for future legislation day dates.

Legislation Corner

By *Tim Shannon*

The California Legislature reconvened for the second year of the 2007/2008 Legislative Session on January 7. The first month of the second year is always busy because bills that did not clear their "house of origin" in the first year must pass off the floor by January 31. One such "two year" bill was AB 311 (Dymally), allowing over-the-counter sale of hearing aids. The bill was completely amended on January 7 and now deals with colon hydrotherapy. Members Mimi and Amnon Shalev are to be recognized for their work in having this bill altered.

On January 10, the Governor released his proposed budget for 2008-2009. Facing a \$14.5 billion dollar deficit, this budget proposes across-the-board cuts in many programs, including health programs for the poor. Of concern is the Governor's proposal to reduce Medi-Cal provider rates by 10%, and to eliminate the optional Medi-Cal benefit of adult audiology services. The

proposed effective date for these cuts is March 1. The Senate has scheduled a full Budget Committee hearing on the health care cuts for February 4, and the Assembly Budget health subcommittee is planning a hearing on the rate cut on January 23. HHP/CA opposes these cuts and will be representing your needs at scheduled State Budget meetings.

Finally, HHP/CA will be sponsoring legislative efforts to undo a provision of last year's trailer bill which requires the state, by July 1, 2008, to enter into exclusive or nonexclusive contracts for the purchase of hearing aids for Medi-Cal beneficiaries. That provision was enacted over HHP/CA's opposition. It was ill-conceived and will result in providers leaving the Medi-Cal program and thereby further decrease beneficiaries' access to hearing aid services. This will be a top priority for our 2008 lobbying program. ■

NITRO™ CIC: The Power to Choose

NITRO™ and NITRO 16 CICs from Siemens offer the power of a behind-the-ear hearing instrument, but in a much smaller package that allows patients with severe hearing impairment to benefit from custom devices. While NITRO and NITRO 16 pack up to 70 dB of gain, they have more to offer than just power. They also contain a variety of features that enhance the listening experience for all users.

Feedback Cancellation – Provides a more pleasant listening environment by eliminating or reducing feedback.

Data Logging – Records important data such as program usage, environmental analysis and wearing time to better fine-tune the instrument for the individual needs of the patient.

Stationary noise reduction – Reduces steady-state

noises such as cars, fans, etc.

SoundSmoothing™ (NITRO 16 only) – Reduces impact of annoying impulse sounds such as paper rustling, silverware and dishes clanking, etc.

All Siemens products use the CONNEXX™ programming software, providing easy-to-use interfaces and a demonstration tool that contains easy-to-understand explanations of the hearing instrument technology. In addition, audio and video files allow for in-office simulations of many listening environments that users are presented with every day. NITRO CIC allows you to give even more people the option they have been waiting for: a cosmetically appealing hearing instrument that is powerful enough for their severe needs. ■

If you are a manufacturer and wish to be a sponsor of one of our newsletters, please email hearwell@sonic.net. Your involvement allows you to provide a one hour CEU at our quarterly district meetings and your article sent to all licensees in California.

HHP/CA Managed Care Program

by Tricia Hunter, Executive Director

HHP/CA has a contract for our managed care members with Health Net, Blue Cross and Blue Shield plus a number of worker's compensation companies. Our contract is for 70% of manufactured retail price. The HHP/CA Managed Care Provider cannot charge the client any more than this negotiate price. Many of the clients HHP/CA members serve have some insurance coverage for new aids. The coverage can vary from \$500 per aid to a 30% discount off the manufactured retail price. The client is responsible for the cost of the hearing aid up to the discounted price for plans that provide a \$500 benefit.

All the insurance companies recommend that Providers have a contract for the client to sign describing the pricing details. Blue Cross has an example letter that can be downloaded from their web page. There is also a sample in our managed care manual. Occasionally our clients receive billing summaries that imply that they do

not owe any more money than the benefit. The insurance companies assure us that the provider has the right to charge the client up to the 30% discounted price over and above the benefit from the insurance. Having a signed contract with the client makes this clear to all involved.

Blue Cross, Blue Shield and Health Net are also "administrators" of insurance contracts, such as PERS with the State of California. The difference is that PERS owns the contract, not the insurance company and so PERS controls the discount which is greater than our discount through our direct contracts (usually 40% below MSRP).

At this time, we do not have a contract with PERS, but are permitted to bill them through the aforementioned companies. Membership has its advantages. Please contact our Sacramento office to see if you are eligible to become an HHP/CA Managed Care Provider. ■

HHP



Hearing
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of California

**1121 L Street, Suite 409
Sacramento, CA 95814
www.hhpca.org**

Return Service Requested

Hearing HealthCare Providers of California - Winter Newsletter

AHAA Supports HHP/CA. Please support AHAA.
Purchase at least eight instruments each month through your AHAA Account

HHP/CA 2008 Convention

May 1-3, 2008, Redondo Beach

The HHP/CA Convention will be held May 1-3, 2008 at the beautiful Crown Plaza Hotel in Redondo Beach. Go to www.HHPCA.org to see pictures of this beautiful area. The Registration Form will be on this web site by February 1 as well as the program details.

This year we have a new session where all attendees will have a chance to meet with two exhibitors in small groups to dig deep into how their products or services work. This is the time to learn about new products and the latest in technology.

Plan to bring your family and attend the 59th

Annual Convention, "Good Vibrations: Amplified for Success." Room reservations can be made by calling 800-368-9760 and mentioning that you are with the Hearing HealthCare Providers for the special rate of \$189. The code for this special rate is GHH.

Exhibitors can download the application on the web site or call Tatiana Reeves at 310-216-6772 ext. 35. Please watch for the registration form on February 1.



Thanks to AHAA for the assembly of this newsletter