

Hearing Healthcare Providers of California — Winter Newsletter

AHAA Supports HHP/CA. Please support AHAA. Purchase at least two instruments each month through your AHAA account. Hearing Healthcare Providers of California thanks AHAA for their assistance in assembling this newsletter!

District Meeting Information: Don't miss your district's meeting!

Host Speaker: HHP/CA Board of Directors

Topics: Legislative Updates Impacting Our Profession
New Website and Managed Care Opportunities
provided by HHP/CA

Nominations will be accepted for District Officers as well
as State Regional Directors.

**District 1
Sacramento Area**
February 5, 2009
6:30 p.m.
Cattlemen's Restaurant
2000 Taylor Road
Roseville
RSVP: Joey
530-533-8912

**District 2-3
Bay Area**
March 26, 2009
6:00 pm
Marie Callender's
2090 Diamond Blvd.
Concord
RSVP: Dave
415-824-6865

**District 4-5
Central Valley/Visalia**
February 26, 2009
6:30 p.m.
The Depot Restaurant
207 East Oak Ave
Visalia
RSVP:
Sandra Souza
ssouza30@yahoo.com
805-547-9500

**District 6-7
Los Angeles/Desert Area**
February 12, 2009
6:30 p.m.
Embassy Suites
3100 East Frontera
Anaheim (91 Freeway at
Kramer/Glassel Exit)
RSVP: Pat Vanderpool
800-998-9787
562-925-7263

**District 8
San Diego Area**
February 9, 2009
6:30 p.m.
3260 East Fox Run Way
San Diego
RSVP: Maxine Glazebrook
619-283-8400

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of California thanks AHAA
for their assistance in
assembling this newsletter!

Hear and Now News

Winter 2009

Join Us in the Mountains of Lake Tahoe



2009 Convention April 16-18
Hit Your Professional Peak with HHP/CA
Reaching New Heights through Education

Mark your calendar and get ready for a new "altitude!" With valuable educational sessions and networking opportunities, our 60th annual convention will provide tools to insure your continued success. It's always informative, and always fun! Don't miss this fabulous opportunity!

This year's convention will be held at the beautiful Embassy Suites South Lake Tahoe Hotel & Ski Resort. Some of the best speakers from around the country will offer valuable information on subjects ranging from hearing aid fitting issues to the latest in tinnitus management. HADB will also be giving a two-hour CEU session concerning Song Beverly and Advertising.

Call (877) 497-8483 to make your hotel reservation and mention Hearing HealthCare Providers to receive the convention rate. Or, visit www.hhpca.org for a hotel reservation link, registration form, and convention information. For additional information, call HHP/CA at (916) 447-1975.

We look forward to seeing you April 16-18 in South Lake Tahoe!

MediCal RFP Update: Managed Care

The final Request for Proposal for contracting MediCal for hearing aids was released January 5, 2009. A bidders' conference for questions and requests for clarification was held January 15, 2009. Tim Shannon and President Cynthia Peffers attended on behalf of HHP/CA. Amnon Shelev, a HHP/CA member, was also present and submitted questions for clarification.

Our general impression of the RFP is that the contract requirements will be difficult to meet. One of the requirements, which must be met by the prospective contractor, is to secure commitments from a minimum of 574 providers throughout the state of California to insure access to MediCal

recipient in all areas of the state. The form that has been provided for you, the provider, to sign securing your commitment does not indicate the amount of reimbursement you will receive. We would like to caution all providers to get a commitment on the amount of reimbursement in writing, if possible, from any solicitor who might approach you to sign this form. The RFP also requires that the provider reimbursements be increased above those currently received, although to what degree or percent is undefined. HHP/CA will continue to update our membership as this process goes forward.

HHP/CA Now Offers Low Cost Web site for Members

See page three for details!

Classifieds jobs, equipment, and opportunities

Wanted: Used Tymponometer, contact Ron J. at hearwell@sonic.net

E-mail your ad to hearwell@sonic.net

\$75 for 50 words and \$2 for each additional word.

100 word max.

HHP/CA is looking for help in coordinating the quarterly newsletters. If you have a good command of the English language and enjoy organizing, then **please call 707-554-6660 and ask for Ron.**

Free Through June, 2009: On-Line Professional Advertisement

Go to www.hhpca.org to send us your on-line ad to sell equipment, buy or sell a practice, or if you are hiring a new employee or seeking a new position. **Free through June 2009.**

Update from the Capitol

Tim Shannon, Legislative Advocate
(For more details, attend your local District Meeting!)

Budget shortfall

The continuing story that dominates the 2009 Legislative Session is the unprecedented budget shortfall of \$42 billion. The Governor has stated that if the deficit is not closed soon, the state will face a "financial armageddon." The non-partisan Legislative Analyst has also stated that the shortfall is "colossal" and has pushed the state to the brink of financial disaster. State Controller John Chiang says that the state will run out of cash by February 27.

In December, the Democrats sent to the Governor a package of cuts and tax increases that would have partially reduced the deficit. Because no Republican would vote for a tax increase, the package could not get the two-thirds vote normally needed to raise taxes. The Democrat package attempted to finesse that requirement with bills that only required a majority vote (through

some maneuvering that has been challenged in a lawsuit). Last week, the Governor vetoed the package and released his 2009/2010 Budget. As this is being written, he is meeting with the Legislative Leadership to once again attempt to find a solution. Among the cuts being pushed by the administration is the elimination of optional Medi-Cal benefits for adults, including audiology. Thus far, the legislature has rejected that proposal.

Merger of HADB and Audiology Board

When the Governor released his budget, he also stated that he was planning to propose legislation to "improve governmental efficiency" and "eliminate duplication." Among those proposals will be the consolidation or elimination of state boards and bureaus, including a consolidation of the Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau with the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board. HHP/CA opposes this proposed consolidation, which would diminish consumer protections, not save money, and

blur the important distinction between the professions of hearing aid dispenser and audiologist.

The vast majority of audiologists do not dispense hearing aids. The skill set required to fit hearing aids is not the same skill set needed to perform various audio tests for the physician's diagnosis of ear pathology. HADB is the only entity that can appropriately protect the public, primarily seniors, by enforcing regulations regarding each dispenser's office environment, advertising parameters, basic skill sets, hearing aid instrument guarantees, continuing education specific to the practice, and ethical conduct of the dispenser. HHP/CA will vigorously oppose all efforts to submerge those important functions in the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board.

Elimination of hearing aid dispensing examination for audiologists

Once again, we are hearing that a small group of audiologists are attempting to have legislation introduced that would eliminate the current requirement that audiologists who wish to dispense hearing aids in California pass a written and practical examination (the audiologists also floated a proposal last year in the Senate; HHP/CA representatives met with Senate staff and the bill was never introduced). Currently, anyone who seeks a dispensing license—even physicians—must pass the two-part test.

These audiologists are arguing that their training alone should eliminate the need to take the examination, but the fitting and dispensing of hearing aids is an entirely different skill set, and the nature of the license is different than audiology. A significant percentage of audiologists fail the practical examination, underscoring the need to keep the examination requirement. HHP/CA strongly believes that consumers are best protected by maintaining the important two-part examination, and will oppose any attempt to eliminate these tests.

Use of Social Security Numbers for Billing

Prohibited Beginning February 1, 2009

Effective for dates of service on or after February 1, 2009, providers may no longer bill Medi-Cal using a recipient's Social Security Number (SSN). Claims submitted with a recipient's SSN will be denied. All exemptions to this policy are discontinued except for Medicare crossover claims. Providers may continue to bill Medicare crossover claims using the recipient's SSN.

Claims submitted with a valid nine-digit Client Index Number will continue to be accepted. However, all providers are

expected to use the Medi-Cal identification number from the recipient's Benefits Identification Card (BIC) or paper ID card when verifying eligibility, billing Medi-Cal or submitting Treatment Authorization Requests (TARs). Medi-Cal recognizes the importance of protecting the identity and health information of recipients and strongly encourages all providers to avoid using a recipient's SSN whenever possible. This notice has been published on the Medi-Cal Web site, <http://www.medi-cal.ca.gov/> (<http://www.medi-cal.ca.gov/>), as a link from the home page.

International Hearing Society

by Ron Perry

The International Hearing Society Annual Convention and Expo will be held this autumn from October 14-18 in San Diego, CA at the Town and Country Hotel and Convention Center. This will be an opportunity for California hearing professionals who have never attended an IHS Convention to do so. Let's demonstrate our support for our national association and all plan to attend this event. I will be seeking volunteers to help monitor the IHS continuing education courses—put it on your calendar so that you don't forget! Applications for this event will be on the website soon, <http://ihsinfo.org>.

An ACA (American Conference of Audioprosthology) class is being organized in Ontario, CA. We need about ten to twelve more attendees before we can start the class. This course is an advanced

practitioner's course that covers everything from "soup to nuts", bringing a deeper medical understanding to our practices. It will be held on weekends (one weekend a month) for 13 months. The courses are outstanding, and the networking that you will experience while attending these courses will be invaluable. To sign up for this class, go to https://www.ihsinfo.org/IhsV2/Forms/050_ACA_Registration.cfm

If you want more information on the course, Carrie Pedersen's contact information is on the same webpage, and she can give you any information needed. When you sign up, a \$50.00 fee will be charged. This fee will be refunded if the class is cancelled, or it will be applied to the tuition for the class. If you want more information from someone who has completed the course, you can contact me at 951-652-9655, or Don Tucker at 951-296-1600.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 25-28 AHAA Convention, Nashville

March 11 Legislation Day Event, Sacramento
Meet with and lobby your representatives

March 12 HHP/CA Board Meeting, Sacramento

April 1-4 AAA Convention

April 15-18 HHP/CA Convention

April 15 President's PAC Reception

May 6 HHP/CA Board Meeting

October 14-18 IHS Annual Convention, San Diego
Log onto <http://ihsinfo.org> for more info

Stay abreast of important news flashes via e-mail! Sign up by contacting HHP/CA at hhpca@hhpca.org, or via our website, www.hhpca.org

COMING SOON: District elections and election of regional directors

Please contact your district presidents with your interest or a nomination for district representatives (president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer).

Nominations are also needed for regional directors to serve on the state Board of Directors for a two-year term. We need and appreciate your participation. We are so fortunate to have the degree of knowledge and experience that our members bring to our association. Please share your skills and wisdom! Step forward and make a difference!

Low Cost Websites for HHP/CA Members

Our web master and President Cynthia Peffers have created an example for you to see at: www.creeksidehearing.hhp.org If you're interested contact Suzanne Ward, HHP/CA web manager.

1. Get your own web page hosted by HHP/CA.
2. Your web address will look like www.yourcompanyname.hhpca.org
3. Contact web manager at suzanne@3rdrowdesigns.com or call 760-742-3144 to get started.
4. Price is only \$100.00 for standardized design.