

Hearing Healthcare Providers of California - Summer Newsletter

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Purchase at least two instruments each month through your AHAA Account

WHY JOIN HHP?

HHP MEMBERSHIP = PROFESSIONAL ASSURANCE

- **Legislation** – HHP is the only professional organization representing the needs of the Hearing Healthcare Specialist in the Sacramento Legislature.
- **Education** – We offer more than 36 hours of CEU courses: 18 hours at the annual convention, two 9 hour all-day trainings and occasional one hour courses.
- **Managed Care Contracts** - The only independent organization in California that specifically includes Hearing Health Care Specialists in their managed care contracts serving over seven million Californians.
- **Buying Co-op** – Our buying co-op provides members with competitive discount pricing.
- **AHAA** – Automatic membership providing business, advertising and discount purchasing pricing.
- **Annual Convention** – Brings together technology and education, while providing a positive networking setting for you and your peers.
- **Quarterly Publication** – To keep you informed of important state news, upcoming district meetings and CEU trainings.
- **Support** – A full-time Executive Director and a Legislative Lobbyist in Sacramento protecting your interests.
- **Consumer Help and Referrals** – A toll-free number for consumer information and referral assistance. Assistance for peer and consumer complaints.

**All this for only \$295/year, how can you afford not to join?
Call 1-916-447-1975 to join today!**

Hear and Now News

Serving the Needs of Hearing Aid Specialists, Dispensing Audiologists and the Hearing Impaired Since 1950 **Summer 2007**

HHP Day at the Capitol 2007 A Legislative Success

As of March 12, Assemblyman Dymally had advised his staff not to set AB 311 for a hearing. This bill would have allowed the sale of over-the-counter hearing aids in California if the FDA were to relax their prohibition of over-the-counter hearing devices. HHP was successful in persuading Assemblyman Dymally that while his bill was well intentioned, it was not a good health care policy. Once again, HHP was successful on our **HHP Day at the Capitol 2007** in educating the legislators and ultimately derailing a bad piece of legislation.

Thanks to all who participated in this event and a special thank you to HHP board member Amnon Shalev and his wife Mimi, who took the time to speak with Assemblyman Dymally that day and inform him of the pitfalls of this bill. HHP continues to work hard for its members and the hearing impaired of California.



HHP on the Legislative House Floor

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Thanks to AHAA for the assembly of this newsletter

District Meeting Information Please attend your District's Meeting!

1 hour CEU class on the Sunset Review Process will be provided by Tricia Hunter, Executive Director of HHP.

District 1 Sacramento Area

July 12th, 2007

Info and Reservations: Twin Cities Hearing Aid Center at (530) 671-2472

District 2-3 San Francisco Area

Date: July 19th, 2007

Marie Callender's
2090 Diamond Blvd.
Concord, CA 94520

Info and Reservations:
Josh at 510-526 3824

District 4-5 Central Valley

Date: TBD

District 6 Los Angeles Area

Date: TBD

District 7 Desert Area

August 2nd, 2007

Cocktails: 6:30 p.m., Dinner: 7:00 p.m.

The Embassy Suites

3100 Frontera, Anaheim, CA 92806

(91 Freeway @ Krammer/Glassel Exit)

Cost: \$40.00 (at door)

Info and Reservations:

Pat Vanderpool at 800-998-9787

MEDI-CAL UPDATE

Checks are in the Mail

DeeDee McKesson of EDS announced that additional refunds for underpayments for codes V5298 (digital hearing aids) and code Z5946 (non-conventional hearing equipment mostly for children) will be issued around June 21, 2007.

New Medi-Cal Threat

New Medi-Cal bill directs agency to contract with manufacturers for better hearing aid pricing. HHP fights for bill withdrawal or a fitting reimbursement increase. Warns Sacramento that legislation will force many dispensers to stop providing services.

Refunds and More

By Dean Manning

Many of you received refunds last fall from Medi-Cal due to underpayments from 2003, 2004, and 2005. During that time Medi-Cal had been reimbursing dispensers based on acquisition cost of hearing aids rather than single unit cost as outlined in their regulations. HHP had numerous meetings with Medi-Cal to resolve the issue and we were ultimately successful in attaining refunds totaling \$5,000,000.

This has been quite a success for HHP and for the hard work of Dave Vasquez, Gary Cooper, Tricia Hunter and many others. During that time, we created a working group with Medi-Cal officials which have proved very beneficial as a platform for discussion of other issues that face us. The latest being proper reimbursement for digital and non-conventional hearing aids and we will let you know the results as the talks proceed.

Appointments to HADEC

Deane Manning, 55, of Fallbrook, has owned and operated Superior Hearing Aid Service since 1996. He is a former president of the Hearing Health Care Providers of California and is a member of the Menifee Valley Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors as well as currently serves as vice-president of the Menifee Valley Medical Center Foundation. Manning is a Republican.

Marta Carrera, 41, of Sacramento, has served as the director of human resources and administrative services for Easter Seals Superior since 2005. They provide services for children and adults with disabilities and other special needs. She previously was director of human resources for Administrative Services at El Hogar Incorporated from 2001 to 2005 and senior manager of resource management for the Timberlake Corporation from 1986 to 2001. She is also the parent of a hearing impaired child. Carrera is a Democrat.

Randall Sager, 56, of Concord, has served as a hearing aid dispenser and regional trainer for West Coast Hearing since 2006. Sager previously worked for Miracle Ear from 1987 to 2006 in several positions including regional manager, district manager and general manager. Sager is a Republican.

Other Changes to HADEC

Executive Officer **Tonya Blood** is leaving to work for the Bureau of Automotive Repair. While HHP is very happy for her career move, we are very sorry to lose such an excellent advocate of consumer's rights and supporter of hearing aid dispensers. Her replacement for the interim is **Robert Puleo**, who has worked within the Department of Consumer Affairs Legislative Unit for many years. We wish Tonya the very best.

Hearing Aid Tax Credit Legislation Reintroduced at Hearing on the Hill

The Hearing Industries Association (HIA) hosted Hearing on the Hill on May 16th in Washington, DC to educate federal policy makers on hearing health care issues. This biennial event launched the third introduction of the Hearing Aid Assistance Tax Credit Act which provides for a tax credit, once every 5 years, of up to \$500 toward the purchase of a hearing aid for individuals age 55 or older and their dependents.

The tax credit bill is very important for the hearing health profession and we urge you to take an active role in the push to get it passed. You can help by getting involved in the following ways:

1. Visit your Senators and Representatives.
2. Encourage your patients, employees and friends to write to their legislators.
3. Submit petition.

You will find all the materials needed on the IHS website at <http://ihsinfo.org/> Please feel free to use the Talking Points, Basic Guidelines for Meeting Success, Petitions, Sample Letters and related handouts as needed.

Classified Ads Available in Next Issue

Starting in our Fall Newsletter we will be offering the California dispensing community advertising space under three classifications: Help Wanted, Position Wanted and Equipment. Cost will be \$50 for 50 words and \$1 for each additional word. Ads must include your name and phone number or email address.

To submit your ad, please....

2007 Convention was a Seaside Success

HHP's annual convention held at the Hyatt Regency in beautiful Monterey was a splashing success. This year attracted over 40 vendors, dispensing audiologists and even a dually-licensed ENT. High caliber speakers such as Max Chartrand linked with a beautiful relaxed environment encouraged productive networking among 120 attending colleagues. HHP's goal of demonstrating to the dispensing audiology community that it truly represents their educational and professional needs was best expressed in the letter below from Ingrid Armstrong.

To all dispensing professionals,

I recently attended the Annual California Hearing HealthCare Providers' Conference in Monterey, CA. As a dispensing audiologist, I was somewhat skeptical attending a function that was not specific for audiologists. I must say, I was pleasantly surprised. The topic matter was very informative and relevant to audiologists, dispensers and practice owners. The lectures were diverse and creative. In addition, the exhibitors were knowledgeable and abundant. I did not expect many vendors, but not only were they plentiful; they also provided audiological equipment, as well as, hearing aid information and supplies. As I am currently seeking a new ABR unit, this was great. I would highly recommend this conference to all single and dual licensed dispenser's in the future.

Ingrid Armstrong, M.S
Dispensing Audiologist



Pictured left to right:

Bobby Sprain, Starkey Representative
Deane Manning, HHP Past President
Cynthia Pelfers, HHP President
Paul Phillips, Starkey W. Managing Director
Howard Hait, HHP Past President
Maureen Seydel, Starkey Representative

HEARING LOSS AND SAFETY ISSUES

According to MarkeTrak VII as published in the April 2007 Hearing Journal, 20% of people planning to purchase hearing aids in the near future decided to do so because of safety concerns. Using real life stories enables people with untreated hearing loss to vicariously recognize their own untreated hearing loss. Ask new users the reasons for their coming to see you for their first hearing aids, "So tell me what happened that caused you to seek out my services today?" or "Tell me what brings you here today." Most people will say something like, "My hearing loss is getting worse," and then you would say "Please share with me how you came to that conclusion."

We would appreciate it if you would share with the Better Hearing Institute (BHI) patient stories around the issue of safety. In submitting, these stories please disguise your patient's names, but give contact information for yourself. Please send your stories to skochkin@betterhearing.org with the subject heading "Safety Stories."

Better Hearing and Speech Month presented an invaluable opportunity to educate people about hearing loss and its treatment. This year BHI's focus was on baby boomers. With nearly 15 percent of Americans between the ages of 41 and 59 already experiencing hearing problems, boomers and their families are an important audience to reach. Our goal is to motivate as many individuals in this age group as possible to get their hearing checked so they can address any hearing health problems early on.

BHI will develop a Speakers Bureau and PowerPoint presentation based on requests from more than a thousand hearing health care professionals. BHI will be developing a scripted professional consumer outreach talk in 2007, with a companion speech for medical practices in 2008. I would appreciate a review copy by email of existing PowerPoint presentations currently being used to promote hearing health care practices. In addition, if hearing health care practitioners would like to give early input in terms of their needs, please send all sample presentations and commentary to: skochkin@betterhearing.org with the subject heading "Speakers Bureau."

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