

Dear Chapter and State Leaders and Chapter Coordinators,

Please read the news brief below and share it with your members.

This Month in Bethesda is a report from HLAA Executive Director Brenda Battat for HLAA state and chapter leaders. The report highlights activities of the national office thought to be of interest to members. Please share all or part of this report in your newsletters, websites, and at your monthly meetings. Also, please include any news you print from this report with the following statement: This information is provided by the national organization of the Hearing Loss Association of America®. For more information about HLAA national advocacy and public policy work, Hearing Loss Magazine and the HLAA e-News, annual conventions, the Walk4Hearing®, the Academy of Hearing Loss Support Specialists®, and more, go to www.hearingloss.org.

Urgent Action Alert: Write to the DOJ in Support of Captioning in Cinema!

- The time has come to make our voices heard on movie captioning. The US Department of Justice (DOJ) is opening up the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to consider regulations for captioning movies. It is vital that the DOJ hears from our members. The ADA is 20 years old and it is time to make movies accessible to people with hearing loss. Please respond to the attached action alert deadline January 24 and get your friends and family to send in comments also. The DOJ is starting with a very low suggested 50% of screens captioned phased in over a period of years. HLAA is asking for 100% unless it is an undue burden to a mom and pop theater. However, there is no reason why the chains cannot comply, as it will be easier to do with the transition to digital. The attached action alert is our position on movie captions. Take action! http://www.hearingloss.org/doj_moviecaptions.asp

HLAA testified before the DOJ at their hearing held in Washington, DC December 16. HLAA will also submit written comments.

We believe there will be a greater impact if people write about their own experiences going to the movies. Tell the DOJ why movie captioning is important to you. Use this link to see our Sample Letter. www.hearingloss.org/advocacy/docs/Sample_letter_DOJ_MovieCaptioning.doc

- The infant hearing screening reauthorization bill (Early Detection and Hearing Intervention Act, EDHI) passed Congress and was signed into law December 22 by President Obama. HLAA is a member of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Alliance that has been advocating for reauthorization of the bill. Though screening is going well with approximately 98% babies screened nationwide there is still a need for better follow up once a child is diagnosed. The Act focuses on improving follow up.

- The Smithsonian Institute is the world's largest museum and research complex, with 19 museums, 9 research centers and more than 140 affiliate museums around the world. Late in November, HLAA staff had a meeting with the accessibility staff of the Smithsonian Institute. It was the first meeting of the newly formed Working Group to address access at cultural venues for individuals with hearing loss or those who are deaf; a second meeting is planned in January.

- CTIA is the acronym for The Wireless Association, an industry trade group that represents a wide variety of interests on behalf of the wireless telecommunications industry in the United States. As a participant of the advisory group for CTIA, HLAA staff met to discuss ways to make the CTIA website on access to cell phones more helpful to anyone with a disability, including seniors and people with hearing loss www.accesswireless.org

- HLAA sent an action alert email to Michigan residents in support of their efforts to pass a state hearing aid tax credit law and received a good response from HLAA constituents in MI. However, the MI House did not take up S403 as its Lame Duck session closed out. The bill made amazing progress thanks to the efforts of numerous HLAA and other MI activists, and came closer to passage than any hearing aid tax credit bill has in any state.

- The Walk4Hearing general information brochure for 2011 has been updated, edited, designed, and printed. Copies to disseminate in communities where a walk will be held are available by contacting Rebecca Lander at rlander@hearingloss.org. The following is a list of the 2011 Walk4Hearing locations.

- Spring 2011 Walk4Hearing Locations

Durham, North Carolina April 2
Rochester, New York May 1
Chattanooga, Tennessee May 14
Milwaukee, Wisconsin May 15
Dayton/Cincinnati, Ohio May 21
SE Michigan May 21
Littleton, Colorado May 21
Hartford, Connecticut June 4
Minneapolis, Minnesota June 5
St. Louis, Missouri June 11
Long Beach TBA

- Fall 2011 Walk4Hearing Locations

Portland, Oregon September 17
Westchester, New York September 18
Philadelphia, Penna. September 24
North Western Ohio October 1
Salt Lake City, Utah October 15
West Windsor, New Jersey October 15
Chicago, Illinois October 15
Mid-Hudson, New York October 15
New York City, New York October 16
Boston, Massachusetts October 22
Houston, Texas November 5
Washington, D.C. November 6
West Michigan TBA