

HEARSAY



The Official Newsletter of Hearing Loss Association of PA

Volume 6, Issue 3

September 2007

MESSAGE FROM DIANA

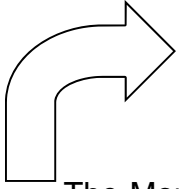
As this issue of HearSay goes to press, HLAA volunteers from PA, NY, NJ and DE are hard at work finalizing arrangements for the **All 4 To Hear** conference in Harrisburg, which will take place October 5 – 7, 2007. This is the first of its kind regional conference for our area and a wonderful opportunity to meet friends from nearby states while learning more about living with a hearing loss. Festivities will begin on Friday afternoon with a 2 hour scenic ride aboard The Pride of the Susquehanna, an authentic stern paddlewheel riverboat owned and operated by the Harrisburg

Area Riverboat Society. Before ending on Sunday at noon, the conference will provide information about emergency preparedness, a variety of workshops and plenary sessions on living with a hearing loss, technology which can help, and an exhibit hall filled with information related to hearing loss. If you haven't registered yet and would like more information, please email me at bender@pa-shhh.org. I'm looking forward to seeing many HearSay readers there.

Diana Bender, HLA -PA State Director

NON PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MEDIA PA
PERMIT 267

HLA-PA
4 State Road, #109
Media, PA 19063
RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED



Focus On Chapters: Montgomery County Chapter

The Montco chapter has been meeting for over 20 years on the first Wednesday of the month except in July and August. They meet at the WM Jeanes Library in Lafayette Hill. Many members from Ambler, Phoenixville, Villanova, Plymouth Meeting, and Philadelphia often stop at the Plymouth Meeting Mall before attending the meetings.

With 15 loyal members and their spouses they have been doing workshops on a wide variety of hard of hearing and non hard of hearing subjects. All the members have benefited from the new Univox loop system (thanks in part to Dick Myers of Pure Direct Sound), and an oral interpreter by the name of Lyda Cipriano.

The topics have included the Disabilities Law Project, Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF), a presentation of mental health issues, Safety and Security in the Home, Fraud Protection, etc. Most of the members now have cochlear implants due to having had all the CI representatives sharing invaluable information.

The Chapter has a superb newsletter with solid pertinent information and has done outreach work providing hearing screening testing, distributing free screening vouchers at the Montgomery County Senior Citizens Expo and participating in the Expo.

Some of the advocacy work members of the chapter have done includes meeting with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Department of Pastoral Care for Persons with Disabilities to provide Assistive Listening Devices for churches; and also worked with the National Constitution Center to

improve the captioning provided in their Theater shows.

A librarian at the meeting space has commented that the meetings always seem so interesting. No matter what the topic, there is a lot of laughter and everyone has fun.

Every December they have a holiday party where they have spent so much time chatting about hard of hearing subjects that they have incorporated Member Chat meetings which are conducted twice a year. These rap sessions are a popular way of gaining information from the best experts –the Montco chapter members - especially regarding one our most popular subjects, Assistive Listening Devices.

For more information about the chapter please contact Alice Dungan: alicedungan1@prodigy.net



Denied a Medication Through Medicare Part D? Appeal!

Every Medicare Part D plan has a formulary or list of covered drugs. Plans can have special rules for drugs on their formulary. For example, they may require prior authorization or step therapy (trial and failure of formulary alternatives) before they cover certain medications or they may have dosage or quantity limits.

If you are having problems getting a particular medication covered by your Part D plan, you or your authorized representative* can go through your plan's appeal process. Please note: you cannot use the appeals process if your plan denies a medication that is excluded from the Part D benefit (i.e., a benzodiazepine like Ativan or barbiturate like Phenobarbital) unless you are enrolled in an "enhanced plan" that covers drugs otherwise excluded from Part D.

*Authorized representatives include Power of Attorneys and legal guardians but can also include anyone you appoint to act as your representative such as your prescribing doctor, family member, or social worker.

Once you find out that the medication or dosage you need is not covered by your plan, you or your authorized representative should contact your plan to request a "coverage determination". This is the first step in the Part D appeals process. After making this request, the prescribing doctor must provide the plan information about the medical necessity of the requested medication. Specifically, the doctor's information must show that:

- Any drug on the plan's formulary would not be as effective and/or would be harmful to you, *and/or*
- All other drug or dosage alternatives on the plan's formulary have been ineffec-

tive or caused harm, or based on sound clinical evidence and knowledge of the patient, are likely to be ineffective or cause harm.

The Part D plan has 72 hours after receiving the prescribing doctor's information to make their coverage determination. With few exceptions, the approval of coverage is good for the remainder of the calendar year. Please note: if your doctor believes that waiting 72 hours for a decision may seriously jeopardize your life, health or ability to regain maximum function, she can request an expedited decision and the plan must respond in 24 hours.

If you disagree with your Part D plan's decision, or if your plan fails to make a decision in a timely manner, you can go through further stages of appeal. These stages include Redetermination by the plan, Reconsideration by an external entity, Administrative Law Judge Hearing, Medicare Appeals Council, and Federal Court Review. There are certain conditions your case must meet in order to proceed with the higher stages of appeal. Any time the Part D plan makes a decision it must provide information on the next steps in the appeal process.

Please see the PA Health Law Project website (www.phlp.org) for more information about Part D and the appeal process. If you have Medicare and Medical Assistance, you can contact PHLP's helpline for more information about Part D appeals-1-800-274-3258 (voice) or 1-866-236-6310 (TTY). Otherwise, you can contact the State Health Insurance Program (APPRISE) at 1-800-783-7067.

Erin Guay, Paralegal, PA Health Law Project

REGIONAL CONFERENCE MEETING IN NEW JERSEY

Saturday, July 21st, 2007, a beautiful day in my neighborhood, I have been reading the book "The Four Agreements, A Toltec Wisdom Book", by Don Miguel Ruiz. The First Agreement is to be impeccable with your word. I, therefore, felt so bad about missing the meeting in New Brunswick, New Jersey after I said I would join Diana Bender and Bill Pfeifer.

I planned to go since I was looking forward to meeting Committee Members from the three other States involved in the Conference. I went out to my car to drive to the Gateway Shopping Center to meet Diana and Bill by 8:30 a.m.

The car would not start and I got somewhat upset since I could not think of any way to get in touch with Diana nor Bill to say I would not be meeting them.

My husband came to the rescue and offered to drive me to New Brunswick so as to keep my word. I called The Elks Lodge and spoke to Marvin who gave me great directions, alas, to no avail, since we were not destined to get to the meeting.

We did not get very far when the car began "acting" very funnymy husband was nervous about the shaking, etc. but when he got out and checked, he found that we had a flat tire!!

We called Allstate Road Service and were told it would be a 45 minute wait. So, in the meantime, I called my brother who lives nearby and over he came to the Blue Route, Exit 16A, to see if he could help us. My husband was hesitant to change the tire and, of course, the doughnut would be of no use to continue on to New Jersey. My brother was getting started when the Allstate Road Service fellows arrived and said they were delayed because they got a flat tire on the way over to us! In

the meantime, my nose started to bleed!! Then the police arrived to see what our problem was!!! It was becoming quite busy on the Blue Route.

BUT...the tire did get changed, the Allstate fellows left, the police left and so did my brother and my nose stopped bleeding. We came home and my husband went to a local tire fixing place and had the tire repaired – a broken valve and dented rim were causing the problem. It was now Noon and too late to make the trip to the meeting.

I am reminded of the quote "The best laid plans of mice and men". My husband treated himself to a Manhattan and I had a tall glass of iced tea. Oh, well, tomorrow is another day.

I am anxious to hear what I missed today in New Jersey. We are a dedicated group, are we not?

Dolores Rogers, Member, Regional Conference Committee



National Walk4Hearing Update

Hearing Loss Association of America started Walk4Hearing, a national program to help raise awareness about hearing loss, and raise funds to provide information about hearing loss. Our first year in 2006, we raised over 300K with six walkathon sites across the country and PA was one of the six sites. In 2007, the program has expanded with nine walks in the spring and 6 more in the fall and so far we have raised over 500K. We are not done. PA had another successful walk and raised over 44K. The PA walk was in 3rd place for raising the most money and I would like to thank the committee for doing an outstanding job of organizing the walk and fundraising so well. Please enjoy some of the pictures throughout the newsletter from the PA

walk thanks to K.S.N. Images, Inc.

As Walk4Hearing manager, this has truly been an incredible experience. Working with hundreds of volunteers across the country and increasingly raising awareness about hearing loss, we are certainly making Hearing Loss an issue of national concern. We had hearing impaired children and their families join various walks across the country- truly reaching out to people of all ages and professions. We have so many hearing loss related agencies joining us on this wonderful mission and the program will continue to grow and grow. Eventually Walk4Hearing will become a recognized event across the country.

Ronnie Adler, Walk4Hearing Manager

Consumer Advisory - Buying the Right TV

The DTV transition, the switch from analog to digital television, is approaching. Congress set the deadline of February 17, 2009 for the DTV transition. This means that on that date all U.S. television stations will stop broadcasting in analog format as they do now, and will transmit only in digital. Consumers will benefit from digital technology that will provide improved picture quality and sound quality like that experienced at the movies. As a consumer, what should you consider in the purchase of a TV set?

Read our new Advisory—Buying the Right TV: What every Consumer Should Know
<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/dtvlabels.html>

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is concerned that consumers may experience difficulty in receiving and/or viewing closed captioning on some digital television (DTV) programming, including high definition television (HDTV), provided by a programming distributor such as a cable company or a

satellite television provider. These difficulties generally could arise from two causes: 1) the consumer's set-top box and/or DTV are not properly set to allow closed captions to be displayed; or 2) there are technical problems with the cable or satellite provider's system that prevent closed captions from being received and decoded by the set-top box and/or DTV.

Read our Advisory for more information: Closed Captions for Digital Television
<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/dtvcaptions.html>
Source: FCC-Consumer News
Mail to: FCC-ConsumerNews@fcc.gov



HearSay Subscription

If you would like to receive your own copy of *HearSay*, the official newsletter of HLA-PA, please fill in this form and mail it to the address below. A *HearSay* subscription is free; however, HLA-PA is a not-for-profit organization run exclusively by volunteers and we are grateful for any donations.

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

E-MAIL : _____

Enclosed is my contribution of \$_____ to support HearSay. Donations are tax deductible.

Make donations payable to HLA-PA and mail to:

I would like to remain anonymous

**Marcia Finisdore
HLA-PA
4 State Road, #109
Meida, PA 19063**

I cannot contribute, but would like to receive HearSay.

HLA-PA DONORS

A special thanks to those who make it possible

Harold Yates
Susan Streib
Gerald Lacey
Richard Strauss
One Anonymous

**In Memory of Marie Hanlon
Josephine Debus
William and Gail Brady**

To all of our subscribers:

The past two issues have seen a substantial increase in the number of issues of HEARSAY that are returned. It has cost HLA-PA approximately \$75 to cover the cost of the returns. Please try to remember to notify us if you move. Remember this newsletter is written, edited, labeled, and mailed by volunteers. We are reimbursed for the cost of postage but would like very much to reduce the cost of returned newsletters.

Thank you.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

Assist the HLA-PA State Director by serving on the Advisory Council or one of its committees. The Council meets periodically in Carlisle but committees conduct most of their business by e-mail and occasionally meet in various parts of the state. If you think you would like to serve on the council or any of its committees, please contact one of the state leaders listed here:

State Director: Diana Bender (bender@pa-shhh.org)

Membership: Russ Green, Chair (green@pa-shhh-org)
Barb Beard (beard@pa-shhh.org)
Ronnie Adler (adler@pa-shhh-pa.org)

Communication: Linda Rusinko (rusinko@pa-shhh.org)

Telephone Contacts

For HLA-PA Activities or Other Information, feel free to call:

Teresa Nellans, (Western PA) - 412-767-9769

Barb Beard, (Central PA) - 717-534-0820

Ronnie Adler, (Eastern PA) - 610-644-3154