

HLA-WA
2017 Washington State Legislative Strategy

The overarching goal: to raise awareness about hearing loss and the need for communication access and hearing care among state-level lawmakers and other leaders.

Key points

- ✓ 48 million Americans (common, includes veterans, children, seniors, others); huge public health issue
- ✓ Invisible disability (underserved, lacking infrastructure, stigma)
- ✓ Hearing care is not covered and not affordable for many (including hearing aids); equity issue as vision care, other disabilities are covered
- ✓ Significant harm comes from untreated hearing loss (social, mental, physical)
- ✓ Need for hearing care, infrastructure increases as population ages

Legislative Priorities

1. Accessible and affordable hearing health
 - a. Reinstate Medicaid coverage of hearing care, aids
 - b. Include hearing aids under Medicare
 - c. Provide tax credits for hearing aids
 - d. PCAST recommendations
 2. ADA compliance
 3. Consumer protections from hearing aid sellers
 - a. Hearing aids need telecoils to be compatible with hearing loops
 - b. Locked programming (Costco, MiracleEar, Walmart often use proprietary programming not available via standard distribution; lack of standardization is confusing)
 - c. Audiologists often specialize in certain brands and offer special prices and incentives for manufacturer's preferences
 - d. Over-the-counter and Internet sales
 4. Advisory
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Medicaid Initiative

1. Issues
 - a. Will vision and hearing be restored or just hearing?
 - b. How to word legislation
 - c. Who introduces from House? Senate?
2. Update on what's current
3. Key players
 - a. Senior Lobby
 - b. Walt Bowen
 - c. Jerry Reilly
 - d. BNA
 - e. AARP
 - f. HCA
 - g. JLEG
 - h. Alzheimer's
 - i. ODHHS/DVR
 - j. Cyrus Habib
4. Communications methods
 - a. Meetings: who do we need to visit
 - b. Email
 - c. Who will do it?
 - i. Internal
 - ii. Committee
 - iii. Executive officers
 - iv. Board
 - v. Members
 - vi. Supporting groups and affiliates
 - vii. External support like HLAA President or legislative liaison
 - d. Marketing collateral (fact sheets)
 - i. How to distribute and when
 - e. Website
 - f. Mail Chimp
 - g. Social media
 - h. Sound Waves
5. Collaborators
 - a. Hearing health organizations (HSDC, WSAA, etc.)
 - b. Political groups (Democrats, who else?)
 - c. Disability groups (DRW, Seattle Commission, Alliance of People with Disabilities, PROVAIL?)
 - d. League of Women Voters
 - e. Statewide Poverty Action Network? Washington CAN? Other poverty groups?
 - f. Senior groups (AARP, Senior Lobby, AgeWise African American Elders)
 - g. Other health equity type groups (Seattle Indian Health Board, SeaMar, El Centro De La Raza, Int'l Community Health Center?)