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
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. ODHH/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?)