Self-Advocacy Presentation

HLAA-Washington Community Day 2026

Greg Bawden

HLAA-Washington Board Member

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To use the file, contact greg.bawden@cablespeed.com

Speak UP!

HOW TO Ask for what *you* need

Share some tips, inspire you to speak up *and BE your own advocate!*

Has this happened to you….

- The doctor’s office
- Check in desk
- Plastic barriers
- And masks
- You explain you can’t hear.
- *What do they do???*

Mean Captain Greg

- Hearing aids – 2007
- Joined HLAA – 2011
- Told I would be fired due to hearing loss – 2013
- Now - Fire Department Emergency Manager
- Cochlear implant, 2025

Mean Captain Greg

In my free time….

- **Outdoor adventures**
- **Travel**
- **Volunteer**
- **Instructor**
- **And *Hearing loss advocate!***

What is self Advocacy?

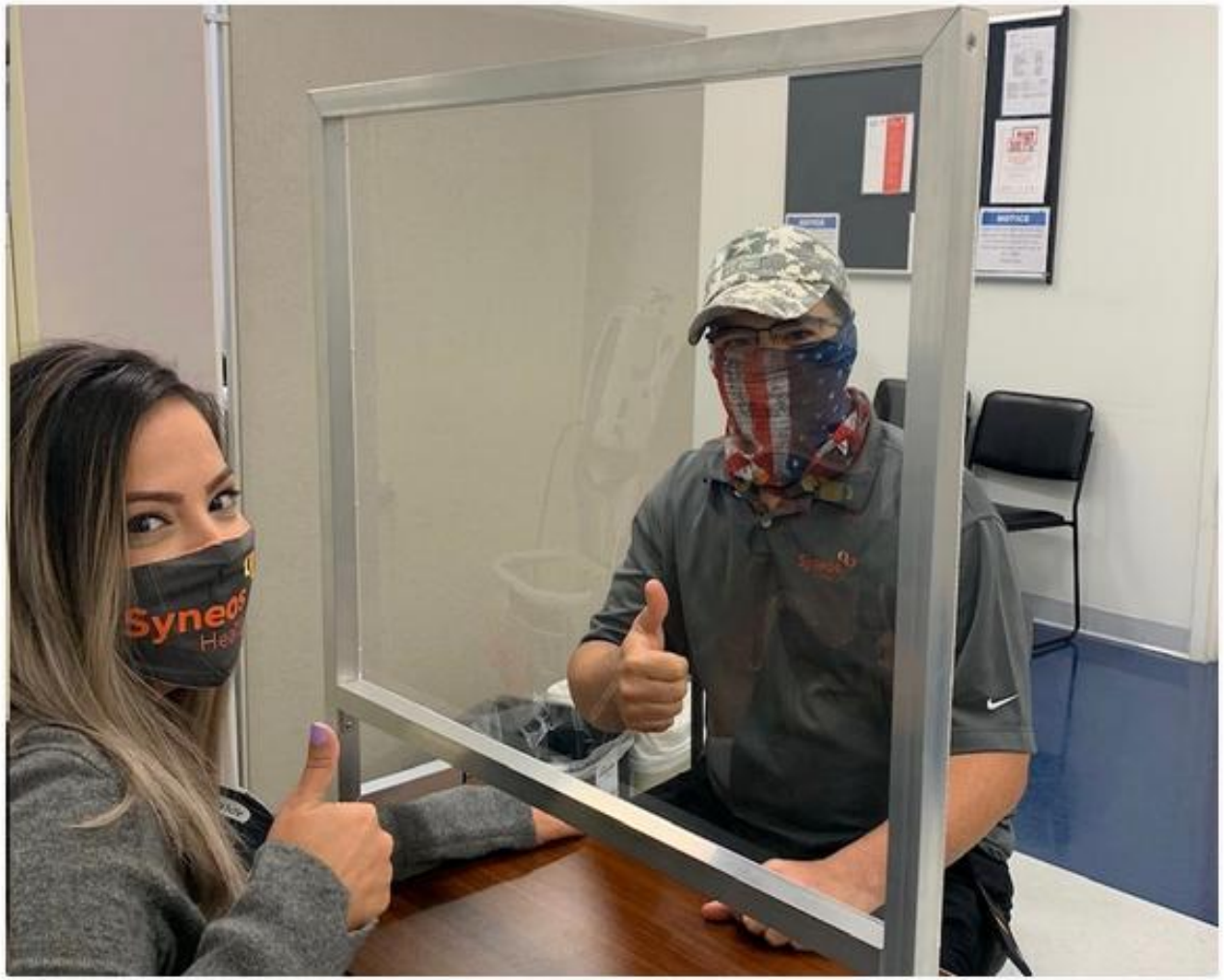
- Educate and Engage
- Focus on a specific cause or issue
- Promote a desired outcome
- It’s a long-term process!

Self advocacy

- In many situations, you are *legally entitled* to assistance
- Help yourself,
- Help others
- If you don’t make your needs clear…
  - *Who will?*

Doctor’s offices

- Plexiglass
- Masks
- Background Noise
- Staff talking to their computers
- *What do you do?*



Make your needs clear

- **I hand them this note**
- **This explains what I need**
- **USUALLY this results in a positive experience!**

My name is Greg Bawden

I have an appointment today

Please understand that:

- I have a significant hearing loss and will have trouble hearing you.
- I will not be able to hear the medical assistant call me unless they are within a few feet of me.
- Yelling does not help!

Medical office waiting room

- You are waiting
- Medical assistant pokes their head out the doorway
- They call your name
- And…
- You can’t hear them!
- What happens next?

Make your needs clear

- Share the note about hearing loss
- Ask where to sit
- Remind them you may not hear them

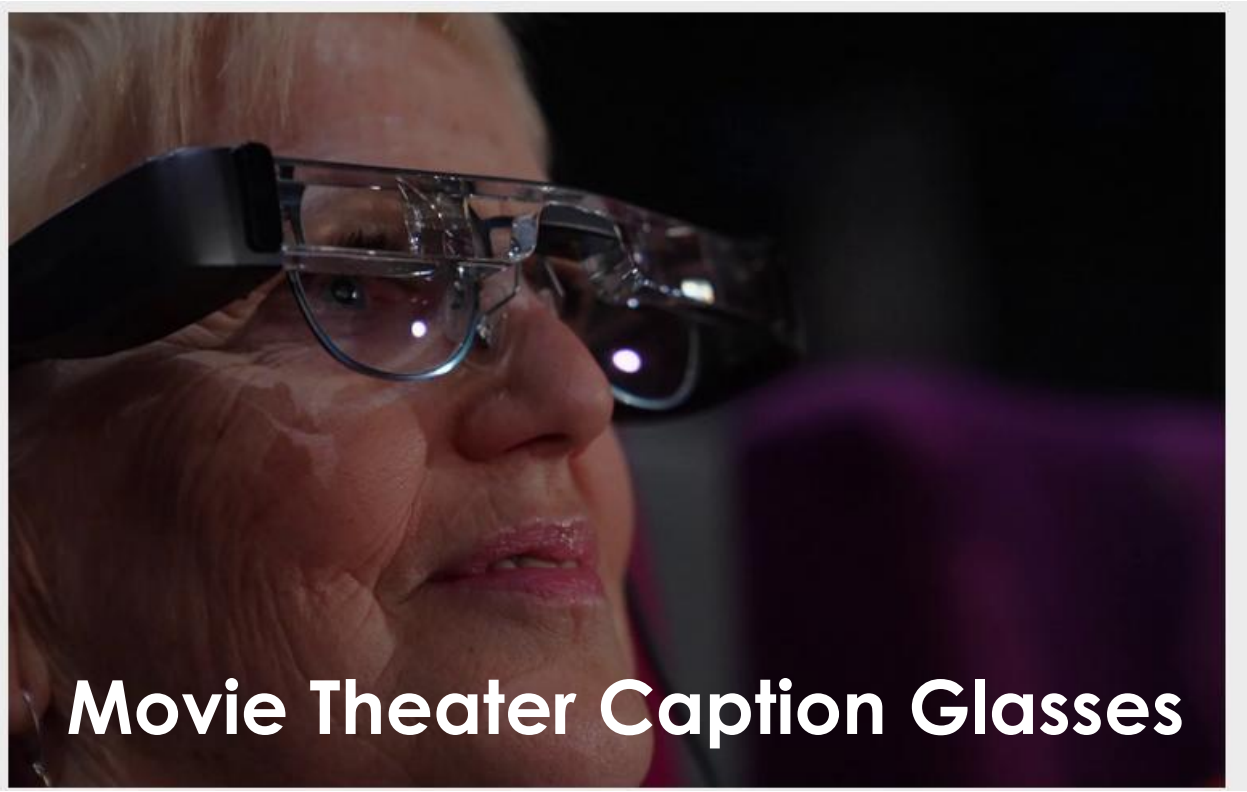
Doctor’s offices

- You are entitled to help – captions, assistive listening, other
- New options - video sign language interpreters, captions
- Make your needs known when scheduling, AGAIN during tests and appointments

The Theater

- Distance from the stage
- Accents and sound effects
- Loud soundtracks
- You can’t hear the words
- What do you do?

Make your needs clear



Assistive Listening Systems

- They work!
- Few people ask for them
- Theaters won’t provide them (even when required by law)
  - ***<u>if no one ever uses them!</u>***

Airport Screening

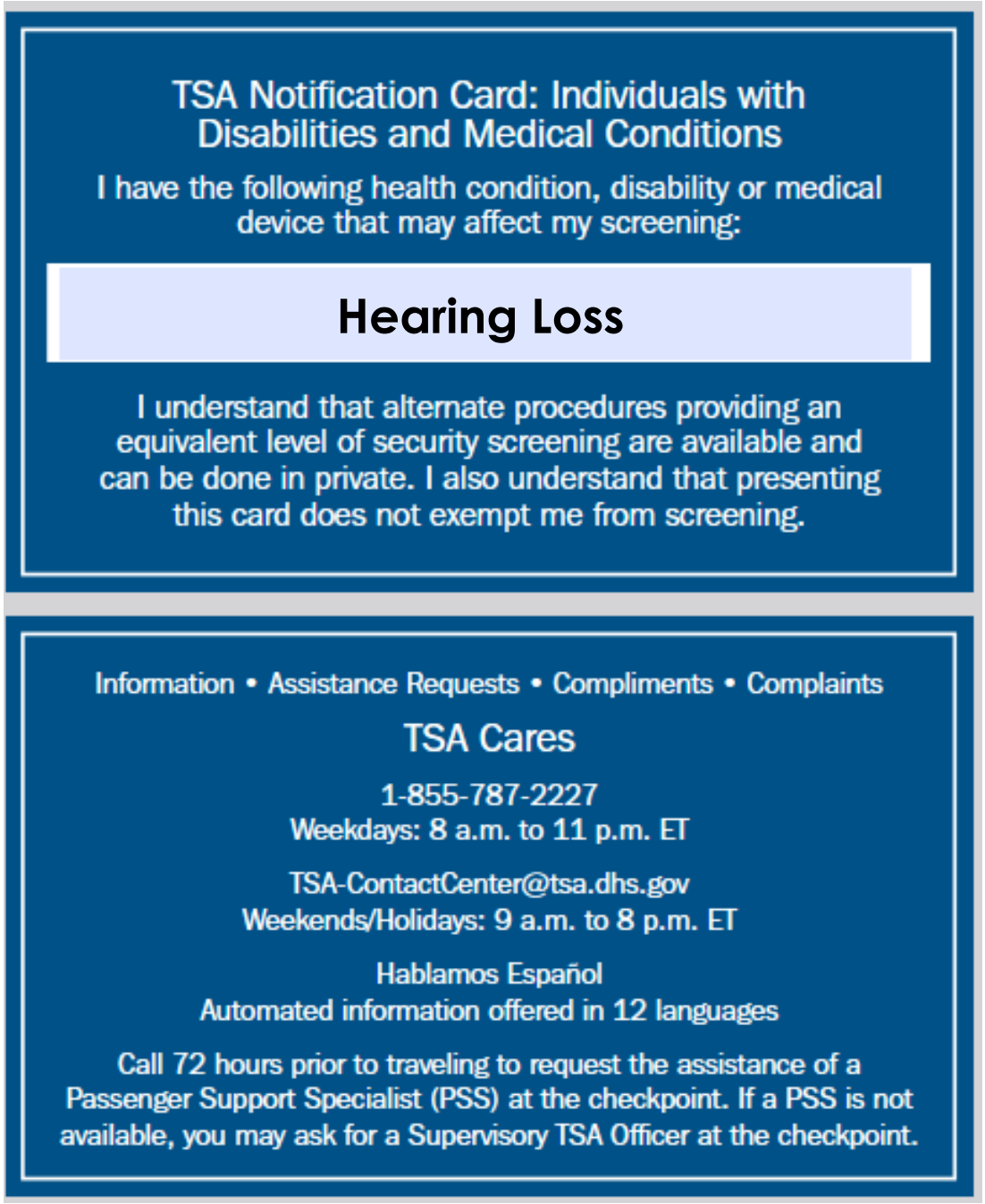
- Lines
- Background noise
- No written directions
- Agents accustomed to given spoken direction
-

TSA Cares

- TSA Cares
- Call ahead to request assistance (not easy for HoH)

Or

- Present a card
- *You still go through the screening process*

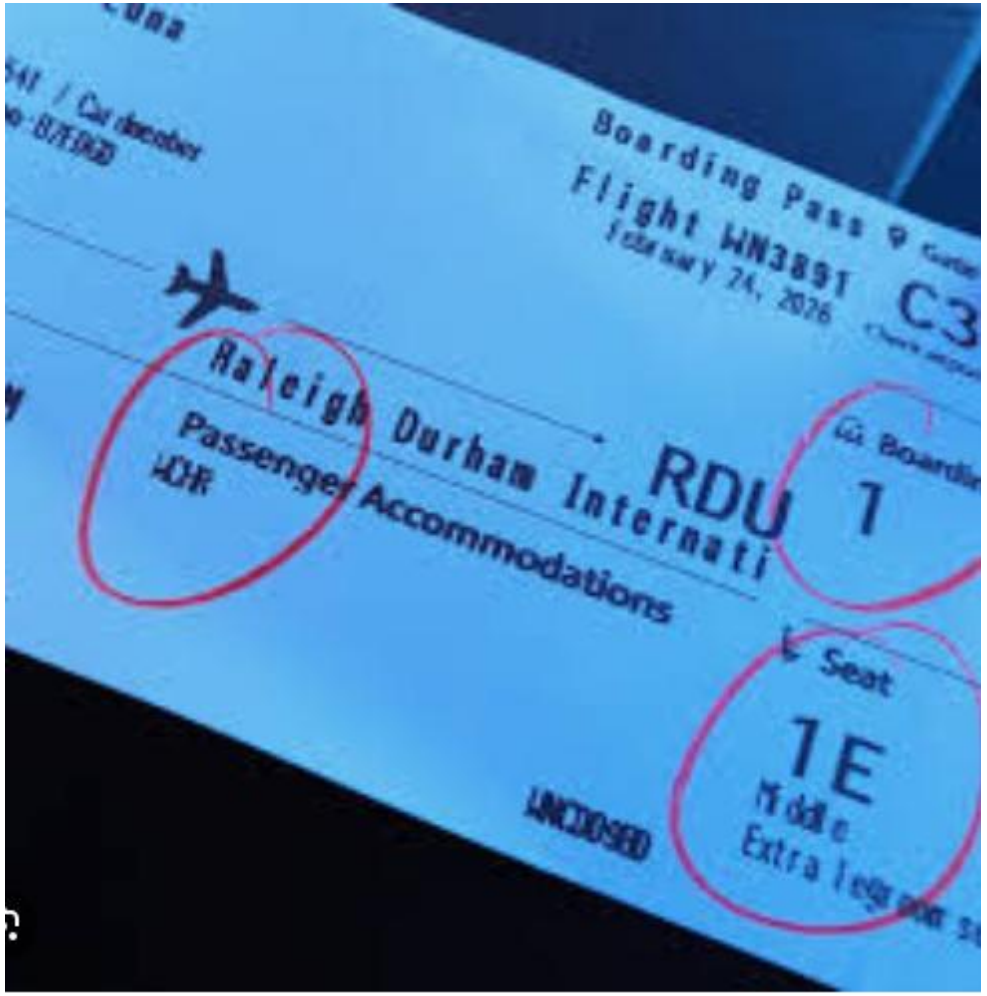


Airport waiting areas

- Background noise
- Garbled overhead announcements
- Out of sync monitors
- Easy to miss important information

Make your needs clear

- Some airlines – you can self-identify as Deaf or Disabled on your ticket
- Let the gate agent know
- Let cabin crew know
- Pre-board
- Will it help?



Self Advocacy and your audiologist

- You don’t wear your hearing aids because ..
- They are uncomfortable?
- Too loud?
- Cause feedback?

Make Your needs known

- Talk to your audiologist!
- They can’t help you if….
- They don’t know there is a problem!

What works for YOU?

Questions?