

The newsletter of the Hearing Loss Association of America, Albuquerque Chapter

WIRED FOR SOUND

New Volume Control Standards for Hearing Aid Compatible Cellphones Are Coming¹

Neil Snyder, director of public policy, HLAA

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has just announced a new deadline for Hearing Aid Compatibility (HAC) volume control standards for mobile phones to come within two years. This is a long-awaited, but important, technical standard for cellphone manufacturers and hearing aid users. The [Hearing Loss Association of America \(HLAA\)](#) spearheaded a group of accessibility organizations to push for the new standards. Here's what this means for consumers.

The 50-Year Campaign for HAC and Why It's Important

For people who use hearing aids or cochlear implants, finding a phone that connects easily has historically been a challenge. That's why HLAA fought for decades to ensure all phones meet basic HAC standards, so they work for all people with hearing loss.

Why Volume Control Matters

Volume control is not just a convenience but a lifeline for millions of Americans with hearing loss. Whether someone uses a hearing aid or just needs louder, clearer audio, accessible volume control can be a key component to com-



¹ https://www.hearingloss.org/new-volume-control-standards-for-hearing-aid-compatible-cellphones-are-coming/?gl=1*1co92ay* up*MQ.* ga*MTU4MTA4MTgyMS4xNzc3MzA4MTE5* ga_4GMB4VS26N*czE3Nzc3MDgxMTgkbzEkZzAkDDE3Nzc3MDgxMTgkajYwJGwwJGgw



communicating effectively and independently.

The FCC's rules require all wireless phones to be HAC, but the current technical standard for volume control has proven difficult to implement, and manufacturers needed more time to catch up. Developing the new rules has been a sticking point as technology continues to advance. HLAA stepped in to ensure consumers were protected and delays didn't continue indefinitely.

Recent FCC Action

To prevent disruption, the FCC extended the temporary volume control standard for two more years. This allows mobile phone makers to keep certifying devices using the current method while everyone works toward fully implementing the new system.

HLAA's Important Advocacy

HLAA played a key role in urging the FCC to extend the temporary standard because people with hearing loss shouldn't lose access to phones they rely on every day. By granting the extension, regulators recognized the

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23 May Meeting 10:00 AM - Noon. **Map on Back Page****Aural Rehabilitation - What It Can Be for You and Me**

We may have heard the term "aural rehabilitation", but what is it really? It is a tool to better hearing. It can be used with hearing aid users, cochlear implant users and anyone who wants to understand the viewpoint of someone with a hearing loss.

Sarah Duncan has been teaching the Aural Rehabilitation course at UNM to students in the Speech Language and Hearing program since 2018. While many students in her class are focusing on speech-language pathology, a number will go on to become future audiologists.



Sarah is a practicing audiologist as well, and she will share with us tools & tricks, and some of the good reasons behind some of the practices that can help us learn that our brain is a huge part of hearing and listening. Don't miss this opportunity to learn how to make the most of the hearing resources you already have, and continue moving forward on your hearing loss journey (without assuming your current devices have reached the end of their usefulness).

We encourage you to check out our live meetings now. We are excited to be able to return to having the opportunity to meet in person again.

In January 2026 we had our first in-person meeting at the Deaf Culture Center (DCC). Their charter includes serving both the deaf and the hard of hearing populations in this area. Their event room is on the ground floor of the PAH! Highland Plaza apartment building at 5000 Central Ave SE, Albuquerque, NM 87108. There is a map on back page. Parking is on Jackson Street or at an

We could use help in setup, handling the meeting and tear-down. We also want some new blood. You can ease your way into volunteering and learn how this works. Just email one of the board members (listed on the left). You may also use the chapter email: HLAAbq@gmail.com.

importance of keeping communication accessible while the industry transitions to stronger rules.

HLAA and the other accessibility organizations also urged the FCC to require regular progress reports for transparency, and to limit the extension to two years.

What's Next?

The new standard is expected by 2027, paving the way for stronger, more consistent volume control requirements. HLAA will stay involved to ensure that the updated rules meet the needs of peo-

Loop People, Loop Places

Ginevra Ralph

So You're Going to Court: Part II

You've been called to jury duty. What's your first reaction as someone with hearing loss? Even though courtrooms are required by the ADA to have an assistive listening system and to provide individual accommodation if that is not enough to ensure "effective communication", the summons may still give you pause. What about the jury instruction room? What about the jury deliberation room if you are selected?

Is it worth the effort to be sure you will hear accurately and



ple with hearing loss. This is a win for accessibility, but continued advocacy is needed to make sure consumers are protected and further delays are avoided.

Why It Matters

Cellphones are more than just devices—they're how we stay in touch with family, connect to work and participate in everyday life. HLAA is committed to ensuring that technology keeps people with hearing loss connected, not left behind.

everywhere? If you ask to be excused simply based on hearing loss, however, the community is deprived of one of our important peers for jury selection.

Recently a friend took her portable hearing loop with her when summoned. She heard the preliminary instructions in the jury pool and the *voir dire* questions in the courtroom. She was selected to serve. She used her portable loop during the trial, after assuring the judge and attorneys that she wasn't recording the proceedings. She then used it in the deliberation room. The verdict wasn't the one she wanted, but she was a full participant in our legal system. Self-advocacy can be powerful and make change one-by-one.

April Meeting Summary

Zoom AI; edited by "Rod" Rodriguez

In our fourth hybrid meeting (April 18), Mary Clark, Director of Programs for the Albuquerque Chapter, discussed managing hearing loss in healthcare settings. Mary shared practical strategies and tools for effective communication with healthcare providers, including using ear stickers and "Face Me" buttons, creating a hospital kit with essential supplies, and employing speech-to-text

apps. She discussed specific scenarios like outpatient procedures, emergency room visits, and discharge instructions, emphasizing the importance of being proactive about communication needs. The presentation included recommendations for han-

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dling situations under anesthesia and tips for air travel.

Healthcare Communication for Hard of Hearing

Mary Clark covered communication challenges faced by hard of hearing patients in healthcare settings. She discussed various scenarios, including filling out forms, doctor visits, outpatient procedures, emergency rooms, hospitals and discharge instructions, emphasizing the importance of clear communication to prevent readmissions due to miscommunication. Mary shared practical tools including ear stickers to alert staff about hearing loss and strategies such as explaining lip-reading needs and using speech-to-text apps. She had extra ear stickers available for attendees.

Healthcare Communication for Hearing Loss

Mary shared practical tips for effective communication in healthcare settings for people with hearing loss. She emphasized the importance of wearing "Face Me" buttons and using stickers to alert staff, discussing hearing needs early with medical professionals, and requesting written instructions to ensure accuracy. Mary also highlighted the value of preparing a hospital kit with essential items like paper, pencil and communication tip sheets, and stressed the importance of being proactive in explaining one's hearing loss and confirming information to avoid misunderstandings.

Hearing Loss Management in Healthcare

Mary presented tips for managing hearing loss in healthcare settings, including using waterproof

containers for devices, carrying extra batteries and utilizing speech-to-text apps. She emphasized the importance of being proactive by creating a communication kit with essential supplies and practicing using "I" language when requesting accommodations. Mary advised not hiding hearing loss and repeating communication needs to new staff members, as this information may not be shared with everyone entering the room.

Medical Communication Challenges Discussion

Mary discussed challenges with communication in medical settings, particularly during procedures like mammograms where providers are behind patients. She suggested solutions including using visual signals like index cards and flashlights, and emphasized the importance of asserting patient rights when feeling unready to leave after procedures. Mary also shared insights about air travel, noting that indicating hearing loss on the assistance form can provide priority boarding and better communication with airline staff.

ADA Rights and Community Events

Mary discussed ADA rights for effective communication in healthcare, particularly regarding hearing aids during medical procedures.

The chapter offered two items for donations: a book called "Here and Beyond" by Sherry Eberts and Gail Hannon, and a chapter T-shirt.

The next meeting will be held on May 23 (not 16), with Sarah Duncan as the speaker. The June 20 meeting is planned to feature a remote (Zoom) speaker from Cincinnati.

Hearing Loss Support Social

HLAA Santa Fe Chapter

Strategies on Coping With Your Hearing Loss

Saturday, May 16th, 10 am to 11:00 am

Travel Bug Santa Fe: Bring a friend — opportunity to talk about your hearing loss or ask questions

839 Paseo De Peralta

For information, contact John Hooper
johnhooper.ref@gmail.com

505-603-2994

Yearly dues are \$15 per household.
They are due in January.

Thanks to those listed below for their generous donations.

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The Hearing Loss Association of America is a volunteer association of Hard of Hearing people, their relatives and friends. It is a non-profit, non-sectarian educational organization devoted to the welfare and interest of those who cannot hear well. **Membership in the national organization is automatic with any donation (separate from any Chapter dues). A \$45 or more donation to National HLAA provides a subscription to the bimonthly publication Hearing Life.**



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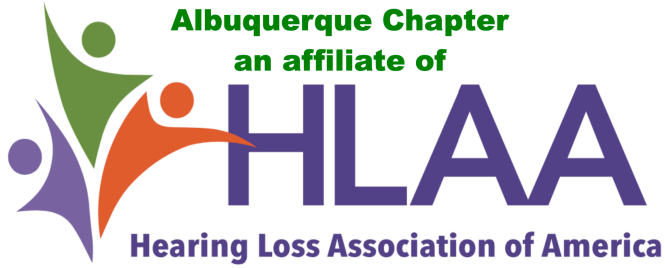
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