

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

WIRED FOR SOUND

In-Person Meetings on Hold

“Rod” Rodríguez, HLAA Albuquerque

The in-person attendance at our members meetings has steadily declined since we began hybrid meetings after the pandemic. It seems this is a common pattern for activities such as ours. During the pandemic, any such activities that could be done on Zoom or equivalent platforms moved to virtual meetings out of necessity. However, many people discovered that they actually liked virtual meetings. It’s just convenient to “meet” in the comfort of your home. You save the commute time and expense, and you don’t have to dress up as much. (How many jokes have you seen about “pants optional” Zoom meetings?)

The down side is that we miss the in-person interaction. We are social creatures, so most of us need some personal contact for our emotional health. Recognizing that need, we (HLAA Abq) went the extra mile to resume in-person meetings in the 2022-23 season.

However, the in-person attendance has dwindled to a point that it is not worth the significant effort required. I have described some of the challenges to providing audio support for a hybrid meeting in past articles, but the visual half of “A/V” setup is also quite labor-intensive. We need to provide for both the Zoom and in-person audiences to hear and see the speaker (whether in-person or on Zoom) and see the presentation charts, and the signers must be seen on Zoom. Also, both audiences want to hear and see anyone asking a question. Getting ready for all of that takes three or more people about three hours Friday afternoon before each Saturday morning meeting. And afterwards it all has to be taken down and put away for safekeeping. On top of that, there’s “hospitality”—



preparing snacks and beverages and cleaning up afterward—and tables for guest check-in and brochures.

I think at our June meeting we had only a couple of regular members in person. Board members and signers literally outnumbered regular members. This was not an anomaly, but the culmination of the trend.

Even before that, I had argued to the board that if we had to pay for A/V support, any savvy business person would call it off. Continuing just because there is no cost would be disrespectful to our devoted volunteers.

So, here is what we are going to do. Our meetings are going to be on Zoom only until we hear from enough of you who commit to coming in person. If you value meeting in person, talk the meetings up among your friends and acquaintances who you think can benefit from our programs. Let us know by email, text or snail-mail that you (and maybe some friends) plan to come in person as soon as we resume. We’re not asking for some kind of pledge, just to let us know.

How many do we need? The board felt we need to expect about 10 to justify resuming meeting in person.

I have felt for some time that the key element that correlates with good attendance is the applicability of the topic. In other words, more people used to come (before the pandemic) to meetings where they perceived that the specific topic was

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HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
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Providing support and advocacy for
people with hearing loss

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Hearing Loss Association of America
– Albuquerque chapter



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16 Sep Meeting 10:00 AM To Noon—**on Zoom****Diabetes and Hearing Loss**

In September, we are delighted to have Dr. Norm Dawson, an engaging speaker who will talk about diabetes and hearing loss. He will talk about how diabetes and hearing loss can occur together.

Hearing loss happens for many reasons. You probably know that it can happen as you age or if you spend too much time around loud noises. You may not know that having diabetes puts you at risk for hearing loss.



[Managing your blood sugar](#)

is a critical part of your diabetes care. It can also help protect your hearing.

Diabetes can lead to [nerve damage](#) that affects many parts of the body, including your hands, feet, eyes and kidneys. Over time, high blood sugar levels can damage small blood vessels and nerves in the inner ear. Low blood sugar over time can damage how the nerve signals travel from the inner ear to your brain. Both types of nerve damage can lead to hearing loss.

Hearing loss is twice as common in people who have diabetes as it is in people of the same age who don't. Even people with [prediabetes](#) (blood sugar levels higher than normal but not high enough yet to have type 2 diabetes) have a 30% higher rate of hearing loss than people with normal blood sugar levels.

Dr. Dawson, a retired chiropractor of 24 years, and now a community health educator, will provide invaluable information about diabetes and hearing loss. The HLA ABQ Chapter looks forward to this presentation and hopes you will join us this month on Zoom.

The HLA ABQ Chapter could use some help to resume hybrid meetings (for example, with hospitality), as well as some new blood. You already know our dedication to providing the best information, advocacy, education and support for people with hearing loss. 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.

something they could apply to make their lives with hearing loss better.

So, to help you decide what commitment you are willing to make, here is a preview of upcoming topics our Programs VP is working on beyond September:

- a) Hearing Loss in Healthcare Settings
- b) Ototoxicity and How Medications Affect our Hearing Loss
- c) Smart Phone Apps

d) Hearing Aid Features (e.g., T. Coil, white noise suppression, AI and its role)

e) Lip Reading

f) Captioned Phones

Are you interested in other topics? Suggest a program to Olivia at ofadul@unm.edu

If you want in-person meetings to resume, help us spread the word to your friends and acquaintances. Then let us know you're committed to coming and how many friends you can bring along.

National News and Info

Communications, Video and Technology Accessibility Act

On July 25, 2023, Senator Edward Markey and Representative Anna Eshoo reintroduced the **Communications, Video and Technology Accessibility Act** (CVTA) bill, with a focus on digital accessibility. HLAA supports this important modernization of the original 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA), which passed in 2010.

HLAA encourages you, your family, friends and the entire hearing loss community to write to your federal representatives urging them to co-sponsor and support CVTA today! See their Action Alert Guide for more information and a sample letter template:

[Action Alert CVTA](#)

FCC Requires Videoconferencing Accessibility

Understanding online conversations with your doctor, at business meetings or during family chats is essential to your health and well-being. New action by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) should soon make it easier. Videoconferencing platforms, like Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Webex—used by millions of people at work, school and tele-health appointments—will have to comply with accessibility rules by September 3,

Smith's Community Rewards Shop at Smith's with their Rewards card, and Smith's will make a donation to HLAA Albuquerque chapter. You get your usual rewards points.

1-800-444-8081, opt. 3 to sign up or re-enroll.

The HLAAAbq NPO number for Smith's is **NC419**.

2024. This includes captions and additional functions, which many people with hearing loss and other disabilities depend upon for full inclusion. You can help by urging your tele-health providers, employers and everyone to make videoconferences accessible NOW!

From Hearing Life Magazine Summer Issue

Back to School

Heading back to school can bring added stress for kids and teens with hearing loss. Get strategies for success from an expert and tips from students and parents, too.

[Read the article](#)

The healing power of community

Hearing loss can be isolating and a lonely existence. That's why having the community of support that HLAA offers—in online forums, chapters, educational events and convention—is so important to living with hearing loss.

[Read the article](#) by HLAA Executive Director Barbara Kelley.

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

A Guide to Hearing Helpers

The differences among hearing devices can be subtle. Here's what to know about the categories.

There are several useful related links, including one to an article rating several Over-The-Counter hearing aid brands.

[From Consumer Reports](#)

Our sister Chapter in Santa Fe is sponsoring an in-person meeting in September at the same time as our Zoom meeting. This may be an alternative for you, if you don't mind the drive.

Educating Your Smartphone

Stephen Frazier, a Hearing Loss Support Specialist, will be presenting on some of the many apps (most of them free) that you can download into your Smartphone to help you hear better at those times when hearing aids alone just can't cut the mustard.

Santa Fe Chapter

Hearing Loss Association of America

Saturday, September 16th – 10 Am

**Santa Fe Association of Realtors,
510 N. Guadalupe St.**

*(just up from Jinja Bistro north of
DeVargas Mall)*



***We have ASL interpreters
as well as a hearing loop.
All meetings are free and
no reservations are
needed.***



More information: John Hooper

johnhooper.ref@gmail.com, 505-603-2994

One evening, a man who is HoH and his wife are watching television. She turns to him and says something that surprises him. They've been married for 45 years, and it's been a long time since she's made such a request. He gets up, walks over to her, and gives her a big kiss. Now it's her turn to be surprised.

"What was that for?" she asks.
He says, "Didn't you say 'I want to kiss you?'"
"No, no!" she replies. "I said I wanted a tissue."



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Support the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). Become a member TODAY!

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 by annual dues, which are separate from the annual Chapter fee paid to your local chapter. National membership includes a subscription to the bi-monthly publication Hearing Life.



Albuquerque Chapter Membership

- New
- Renew

Name: Date:

Address: Please mail Newsletter rather than email.

City: State: Zip:

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voice? text? VP? caption?

Mail to: HLAAAbq Treasurer, P. O. Box36792, Albuquerque, NM 87176

Payment: Membership amount: \$..... Donation: \$..... Total: \$.....

Dues: \$15 per household per calendar year (Includes newsletter subscription)

Online: <https://www.hearinglossabq.org/electronic-pay>

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