



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

WIRED FOR SOUND

This article was addressed to hearing care providers, but perhaps you can use this information to open a dialog with your provider about the advantages to them of supporting telecoils.

How ‘Public Access Ready’ Hearing Aids Could Offer a Competitive Edge — Part 1

*Thomas Kaufmann, MS
in the Hearing Review, Mar 2024¹*

Consider the full spectrum of experiences your clients encounter daily with their hearing aids. From quiet conversations at home to the bustling sounds of a city, their world is filled with auditory challenges. But there’s one aspect that’s often overlooked: “Public Access Ready” hearing aids—a term you might not be familiar with yet.

Hearing care professionals are navigating a changing landscape. Over-the-counter (OTC) hearing solutions haven’t taken over the market yet, but their presence is growing, subtly shifting the traditional model of hearing aid delivery. You’re up against a growing market of DIY solutions. Seeking convenience and affordability, all but one of the OTC options available today overlook a crucial aspect of hearing enhancement: true accessibility in public settings. And this is where you come in.

Two Clients, Two Experiences, One Critical Difference

Imagine one of your clients coming in for a follow-up visit. They’re beaming with joy and can’t wait to share what happened last weekend. “You



won’t believe it,” they begin excitedly, “I went to church, and for the first time in years, I could hear everything so clearly.”

A sign indicated the church was equipped with a hearing loop. Curious, they opened the smartphone app for their hearing aids, selected the “Public Access” program, and sat down. As the service started, they heard crystal-clear sound, capturing every word, every nuance of the sermon with remarkable clarity. The ambient noises that usually muddled their hearing were no longer a barrier. “I heard the pastor blow the candle out,” your client exclaims. Their story isn’t just a testament to the technology; it’s a moment of true connection, of feeling part of a community they felt distanced from for so long.

The next day, a new client walks into your doors. They already have hearing aids and are deeply engaged in local politics. “I need to be able to participate in city council meetings,” they explain, “but I’m struggling to hear clearly there.”

You listen as they recount their latest experience. There was a sign about an assistive listening system, so they asked a clerk for assistance. First they were handed a pair of headphones, but they had to explain that they can’t really wear headphones over their hearing aids. The clerk then provided a neckloop, ostensibly a hearing aid-compatible solution. But the problem only intensified.

¹ <https://hearingreview.com/hearing-products/amplification/assistive-devices/how-public-access-ready-hearing-aids-could-offer-a-competitive-edge> (to see the full article)

WIRED FOR SOUND

is published by the
HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER
Providing support and advocacy for
people with hearing loss

P. O. Box 36792,
Albuquerque, NM 87176
HLAAbq@gmail.com

Home page: hearinglossabq.org

[Hearing Loss Association of America](http://hearinglossabq.org)
– [Albuquerque chapter](http://hearinglossabq.org)



Mention of goods or services in articles or advertisements or meetings does not mean endorsement by Hearing Loss Association of America, Albuquerque Chapter, nor does exclusion suggest disapproval.

ABQ Chapter Board:

President:
VACANT

Treasurer: Bobbi Rodríguez
TreasurerHLAAbq@gmail.com

Editor: A. E. "Rod" Rodríguez
EditorHLAAbq@gmail.com

Membership & Web Master: Jim Dillow
catchJimmy@comcast.net

Acting VP Programs: Mary Clark
Mary@mandgclark.com

Publicity Chair:
VACANT

Hospitality Chair:
VACANT

Professional Advisor: Dr. Carol Clifford
CClifford@abqhearing.com

Past Pres./Advisor: Mary Clark
Mary@mandgclark.com

Past Pres./Advisor: Dr. Norm Dawson
DrNorm@gmail.com

**20 Apr Meeting** 10:00 AM To Noon—on Zoom**Discover InnoCaption**

In this presentation, Matt Goncalves, marketing director at [Innocaption](http://Innocaption.com), will explain what the InnoCaption app for the deaf and hard of hearing is and how its real-time captioning service for the cell phone works.

He will cover all the key features available to InnoCaption users in-depth, how InnoCaption keeps their users' privacy information confidential, and also share ways that you can stay in touch with the InnoCaption Team. Matt will answer all questions from the audience throughout the presentation and during the Q&A at the end.

Matt leads InnoCaption's direct marketing and outreach efforts. Matt joined InnoCaption in 2016 and since then has traveled all around the country, raising awareness of InnoCaption's service by attending conferences and presenting to local hearing loss association groups. Matt also



regularly hosts and attends virtual webinars to speak about their service with various resource providers and healthcare professionals. Matt is passionate about InnoCaption's mission and loves the frequent opportunities he has to meet with users in person and virtually, where he can answer their questions and see the difference InnoCaption can make in their lives.

The HLAA 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.

Your client tried to use the neckloop with their hearing aids. They opened their smartphone app, but all they found were “Default” and “Restaurant” settings. In the audience, they struggled with echoing voices, distorted by rustling papers and squeaking doors. The crucial discussions they came to follow were lost amidst a sea of ambient noise.

You realize the stark contrast to yesterday’s client. Two individuals, similar environments, yet vastly different experiences. Did you notice what the determining factor was?

Further reading: [How Hearing Loops and Induction Coils Improve SNR in Public Spaces](#)

ADA Compliance and Assistive Listening: Bridging the Gap

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) plays a pivotal role in ensuring accessibility for individuals with hearing loss in public venues. Both public venues and hearing care professionals must understand its mandates, but not all audiology patients are fully aware of the impact. Let’s see what the ADA says and what it means in practice.

Essentially any space with loudspeakers used for more than paging or background music must offer assistive listening, including headset receivers and neckloops to interface with telecoils. This applies equally to permanent venues and temporary events, such as conferences, public lectures, cultural events, or outdoor movies. Essentially, if a space relies on amplified sound for communication or entertainment, it needs to facilitate assistive listening. Courtrooms need to provide assistive listening even when no loudspeakers are in use.

For a venue or temporary event to meet these requirements, three technology options are avail-

At the March meeting...

...Sean Sinderholm with the NM Commission for Deaf & Hard of Hearing mentioned that they have technology items that help. They are free (for people meeting income limits). He provided his contact information as follows:

able: hearing loop systems, FM systems, and infrared systems. A hearing loop transmits sound directly from the sound system to hearing aids and cochlear implants equipped with telecoils, offering complete independence for the user. Users switch their hearing devices to the telecoil or hearing loop setting to connect seamlessly with the system. There’s no need to seek out special equipment or to wear a conspicuous headset. With a simple button push, listeners enjoy customized sound through their own hearing devices.

FM systems use radio frequencies, and infrared systems use light to transmit sound. Both require listeners to borrow receivers from the venue. Users need a neckloop connected to the receiver if they have a telecoil in their hearing aids. Without a telecoil, they must use the provided headphones, either on top of or instead of their hearing aids, neither of which provides an adequate solution.

In theory, the ADA’s requirements should guarantee equal access to auditory information in public spaces. In practice, however, the reality hinges on two key factors: the type of assistive listening technology provided by the venue and the compatibility of the listener’s hearing device.

In all the above scenarios, from churches with hearing loops to council meetings with FM systems, there’s a common thread that determines whether your clients can fully engage with their environment: a telecoil is required for the listener to fully access the assistive listening system.

Further reading: [Helping Children and Teens Benefit from Assistive Listening Technology](#)

Stay tuned for Part 2

Sean Sinderholm

Technology Coordinator

New Mexico Commission for Deaf & Hard of Hearing

505 Marquette Ave. NW, Suite 1550

Albuquerque, NM 87102

Sean.sinderholm@cdhb.nm.gov

V/VP: 505-435-9211

www.cdhb.nm.gov

Loop People, Loop Places

Ginevra Ralph

Taking control at the hospital

Harry, who has significant hearing loss, is a newer member of our Loop Oregon committee. He zooms in to our meetings from Lincoln NE, and it appears he is single-handedly working to change the assistive listening culture and awareness in his world. I will have a few stories to share about him and am subtitled them: Loop Harry, Loop Nebraska!



Most recently he was in the hospital overnight for some planned surgery. He pre-requested assistive listening support. He was told that an ASL interpreter might be available or “other communication aids like picture, letter and number sheets”. Well, Harry doesn’t sign. He talks and hears with assistance. He ended up taking his own portable loop in with him after the hospital provided no assistive equipment. The law is in place, but Harry needed to look after himself first and foremost! And he taught them about loops. There’s no help for the sandwich, though.

Santa Fe Chapter

Understanding Tinnitus

Cathrine Worth, Capital Hearing Care
Saturday, April 20, 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



Health Plan Hearing Aid Coverage

Melissa Kruse, Chapter Engagement Manager
Hearing Loss Association of America

In Washington state, a new law now requires certain large group health plans to cover the cost of hearing aids and services. And some Kaiser members may qualify to be reimbursed for their Hearing Aids under a recent class action lawsuit settlement by acting before April 2, 2024.

Read more about these recent efforts by our HLA community of local advocates to spur change, and how they may influence similar progress nationwide: <https://www.hearingloss.org/new-hearing-aid-coverage-and-class-action-lawsuit-in-washington-state/>

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

1-800-444-8081, opt. 3 to sign up or re-enroll.
The HLA Albuquerque NPO number for Smith’s is **NC419**.

Thanks to those listed below for their generous donations.

Platinum \$400+

Ginevra Ralph
Jim & Karen Twohig
Donald Thurn
Adelaide Zabriskie

Gold \$200 - \$399

Rosalin Cohen
John Simmons

Silver \$100 - \$199

Barbara Armstrong
Gloria Inlow
Mike Langner
Michael Lieberman

Bronze \$50 - \$99

Barbara Fix
Patricia Gonzáles
Kim Granzow
Bette Jean Ingui
Don Johnson
James & Sharen Koch
Fran Neil
Yukie Ebara Pfeuffer
Rod & Roberta Rodríguez
Marge Weitzel

Friends - up to \$49

Gail S. Anastasio
Geraldine Boden

Margie Collins
Norm Dawson
Don Degasper
Judy Elder
Elisabeth Endean
Shirley Furen
Andrew "Bo" Gamboa
Rita Garcia
Roy & Helen Johnson
Richard Johnson
Ralph & Barbara Kaplan
Richard & Pushpa Knottenbelt
Dirk & Arlene Knowles
Victoria L. Magown

Deanna & Bob McMain
Barbara Pierce
Mary J. Rajé
Lindasue Romero
Mara Saubers
Carol Sliney
Harriet S. Smith
Steve Smith
Tan Va
Tim Taylor
Richard Tuschhoff

**Special
Smith's
Community
Rewards**

NM HLAA chapters are 501(c)3 nonprofits and all donations are tax deductible.

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 bimonthly publication Hearing Life.



Albuquerque Chapter Membership

- New
- Renew

Name:

Date:

Address: Please mail Newsletter rather than email.

City:

State:

Zip:

Email:

Phone(s):
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>

Wired For Sound

