



April 2021 Newsletter

Renew your membership in our local chapter for only \$15 a year! Ways to renew: pay at our website on the “Donate” button in the upper right-hand corner; mail your renewal with your name, address, phone number, and e-mail to: East Bay Chapter, HLAA, P.O. Box 12484, Oakland, CA 94604-2484. See back

page to sign up and support National HLAA.

April 10, 2021, Meeting by Zoom! Zoom in and see your friends from HLAA-EBC.

Schedule: 9:30 a.m. Meet and Greet; Program: *Steven L. Derby*, Attorney, has been trying civil cases in state and federal court for over 27 years. Before specializing in disability rights law, he was already a highly-reputed personal injury lawyer. His presentation will be Called “The Covid Factor” He will discuss how COVID regulations have affected access for disabled persons, how employers and businesses are using COVID as an excuse to avoid their access obligations and what can be done to stop them.



Register for this free event here: www.hearinglosseb.org After you register, you’ll be sent the link to join the meeting.

Consider staying after the meeting for AfterWords – a chance to ask more in-depth questions, as well as discuss anything you want with fellow members!

HLAA-EB will post to the California State Association webpage and our website.

Check out our website: <http://www.hearinglosseb.org/> Contact us: info@hearinglosseb.org

MEETING NOTES:

Conditions Associated with Untreated Hearing Loss & The Use of Digital Therapeutics (DTx)

At our March 13, 2021 HLAA-EB Chapter meeting, our guest speaker was Dr. Nancy Tye-Murray, Ph.D. She is a professor of Otolaryngology -- Head & Neck Surgery at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri, where she is also the Director of the Audiovisual Speech Perception Laboratory. In addition, Dr. Tye-Murray is the CEO & Founder of *cLEAR (Customized Learning Exercises for Aural Rehabilitation)*, a company that created *Amplify*, which is a category-defining digital therapeutic for hearing loss (HL). She is also the Principal Investigator of a NIH grant supporting her research.

In her presentation, Dr. Tye-Murray first reviewed the conditions commonly associated with untreated hearing loss and then proceeded to describe how digital therapeutics (DTx) are changing the face of today’s healthcare. In particular, she provided several examples, including *Amplify*, of how DTx may be used to treat hearing loss and related comorbidities.

The 3 Pillars of Hearing Healthcare: There are 3 major elements of hearing healthcare, including:



- 1) *Diagnosis* – Suspects hearing loss & receives a formal diagnosis by a healthcare professional.
- 2) *Treatment* – Receives appropriate amplification & assistive device technology (e.g., HA's & CI's).
- 3) *Rehabilitation* – Learns to manage listening technology & engages in ongoing aural rehabilitation.

Hearing Loss Challenges: The many challenges of hearing loss & its comorbidities are well-documented:

Specific HL Problems:

- Impaired sound challenges
- Reduced speech discrimination
- Poor sound localization
- Increased perceptual effort
- Stinted conversations
- Increased communication

Comorbidities Associated with HL:

- * Social isolation & loneliness may impact quality of one's life
- * Depression incidence increases with increase in HL severity
- * Cognitive decline & risk of dementia correlates to HL severity
- * Higher risk of cardiovascular disease, strokes & even death
- * Higher prevalence of diabetes & related problems
- * Number of reported falls goes up as HL severity increases

Digital Therapeutics (DTx): DTx was defined & some examples of DTx use in healthcare were described.

According to Dr. Tye-Murray, “. . . a digital therapeutic (DTx) is a software-based intervention for a disease and/or disorder that is clinically validated to drive a positive outcome, which is often used in combination with a drug intervention or a medical device (e.g., hearing aids).” She then provided the following examples of existing DTx use cases in healthcare, including: Type 1 & 2 Diabetes; Asthma & COPD; Hypertension; Smoking Cessation; ADHD; Panic Attacks & PTSD.

More recently, some types of DTx, such as gamify auditory brain training, have benefitted persons with HL. Although some brain cells during HL shut down & are co-opted by other brain parts, the brain has neural plasticity. Entertaining video game play seems to cause the release of the neural-transmitter dopamine, creating more brain plasticity & more auditory brain regions, resulting in auditory learning of better hearing & listening skills.

Amplify: An Example of Hearing Health DTx: Dr. Tye-Murray defined her company product *Amplify* as “. . . a comprehensive tech-enabled hearing health DTx designed to treat hearing loss & its downstream effects.” She also described in detail its main components & referred to several examples included in the *Amplify* journey:

- ✓ *Hearing Health Coach:* Trained, certified coaches provide regular 1-on-1 support & encouragement to participants. They track weekly training progress & offer personalized guidance on reaching their hearing goals. Weekly Topic Examples: *Discover Effective Listening; Plan for Reading Lips.*
- ✓ *Interactive Hearing Health Lessons:* Participants receive daily motivational, educational & interactive content & tools which are intended to help them learn to take charge of their hearing problems. Mini-quizzes are used to reinforce hearing health learning. Lesson Examples: *Control Your Listening Experience; Manage Communication Breakdowns.*
- ✓ *Auditory Brain Training Games:* Entertaining video games are designed to engage participants while teaching listening & cognitive skills through interactive game play. Auditory brain training can help them maximize residual hearing & improve their auditory processing speed, word discrimination, auditory memory, auditory attention, & listening confidence. Examples: *Defend EAR; Match EAR; Deep-Dive.*
- ✓ *Hearing Health Community:* The peer-support community provides participants with an opportunity to share experiences & strategies for handling challenging HL & listening situations. It is also intended to help participants counter-act social isolation, while offering HL understanding & acceptance. Examples: *Guided Conversations; Group Chats.*

Wrap-Up: In conclusion, Dr. Nancy Tye-Murray reminded us that the benefits of digital therapeutics (DTx) & auditory brain training in helping persons with hearing loss and related comorbidities have been well-supported in several clinical research studies & presented in peer-reviewed publications.

For More Information: Visit: <https://www.clearworks4ears.com> or www.amplify.com Email: nmurray@wustl.edu

~ Kathy Fairbanks

PATIENT-FOCUSED DRUG DEVELOPMENT (PFDD) MEETING

HLAA will convene and host a **Patient-Focused Drug Development (PFDD)** meeting with permission from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on sensorineural hearing loss and its impact on daily life. **All are welcome to attend. This session will be free and open to all.** Look for more information to come. HLAA will also hold an **HLAA webinar** on **Thursday, April 8, 2021, 2-3 p.m. ET** to let you know what to expect and how to participate in the PFDD meeting in May.

Patient-Focused Drug Development (PFDD) meetings were first started by the FDA to try and find a better way to hear directly from patients, their caregivers and families. The meetings explore what symptoms matter most to them, the impacts on patients' daily lives, and patients' experiences with currently available treatments. This information helps the FDA both during drug development as well as during review of marketing applications for new drugs.

It is exciting that HLAA can lead the charge here with the FDA who will attend and listen. The hope is that patient engagement through PFDD will go a long way in shaping future hearing loss treatments and creating a deeper understanding of the impact of hearing loss on individuals, their quality of life and associated comorbidities.

JOIN A WEBINAR – ANYWHERE IN THE COUNTRY!

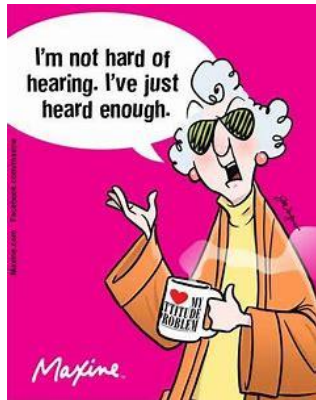
One of the advantages of the COVID-19 pandemic is that all meetings throughout the country (USA) are being held by Zoom! To find out what is coming up, go to the National Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) website at hearingloss.org. Click on "PROGRAMS AND EVENTS" on the top bar. In that section, click on "Calendar" in the lower right-hand corner, and you can bring up this month's calendar, or you can move to another month to see what webinars are coming up. If you click on the title of the event, more details will come up. If you move your cursor into the event rectangle and click on the title, you'll find out how to get in touch with someone who is sponsoring that event so you can join! There is also a link to put it on your calendar if you keep an electronic calendar. Have fun with it and check out what's happening with HLAA around the country!

2021 BAY AREA WALK4HEARING IS COMING!

The Bay Area Walk4Hearing will be held Saturday, June 12, 2021. More details will be coming out, but you can put it on your calendar now! You can also sign up and start building a team to walk with you. What's a team? It could be your co-workers, your extended family (spouse, sons, daughters, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, etc.), your church group, friends, and many more options! Let your imagination run (or in this case, walk) wild! You can register now [here](#) or by going to hearingloss.org, click on "PROGRAMS AND EVENTS", then on Walk4Hearing. This is one of the biggest fundraisers of the year, and you'll want to start reaching out to your contacts to see if they can donate or join your team!

Here's some information about **Why We Walk**: Walk4Hearing is the only nationwide event bringing attention to hearing loss and promoting the importance of hearing health. Funds raised support HLAA's national awareness and education programs, HLAA Chapters and State Associations, and alliance organizations who help extend HLAA's mission into local communities. Since 2006, the Walk4Hearing has raised \$16 million to fund programs from more than 1,750 alliance organizations. We've welcomed 107,000 people at 285 Walks with participation from over 750 HLAA Chapter and State Associations.

JOKE CORNER: Laugh With Us As We Live Life With Hearing Loss!



VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!! Specifically, we need a Publicity Chair, but other volunteers are needed as well. Please contact Dale Davis, our EB Chapter leader, to discuss the possibilities! Contact: daledavis94605@gmail.com. Leave your number so she can call you. THANK YOU!

HEARING AID BATTERIES! Only 17 cents apiece at Costco.

HLAA members can join the hearOclub to have batteries delivered to your home! Use the coupon code **HLAAMember** online at hearclub.com or by calling 833.LISTEN-2 (833.547.8362).

East Bay Leadership Team

The chapter is run by a Steering Committee, Leader Dale Davis, ddavis94605@gmail.com, who also oversees the Membership Database.

Outreach, Walk4Hearing Chair, National Chapter Coordinator/Liaison: Susan Jeffries Fitzgerald, susanlj29@gmail.com

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JOIN THE NATIONAL HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION – THEY ARE ADVOCATING FOR YOU!

Go to this URL to join today: <https://www.hearingloss.org/make-an-impact/become-a-memberrenew/>

OR, if you prefer to pay by check or card through the mail, Nancy Asmundson has membership forms to send to you or you can contact HLAA at 301-657-2248 or e-mail membership@hearingloss.org.

Your membership form will go along with your payment to 6116 Executive Blvd., Suite 320, Rockville, MD 20852. Call 301-657-2248 or e-mail membership@hearingloss.org.

COSTS:

Regular Membership/year (will receive *Hearing Life* magazine in print and digital format): Individual - \$45; Couple/Family - \$55; Professional - \$80; Nonprofit - \$80;

Online Membership (receives *Hearing Life* mag. in digital format only): Individual - \$35; Student - \$25

Veteran Membership: Complimentary one-year Regular Membership & Lifetime Online Membership.