



March 2019

Call to renew your membership! Only \$15 for a year to join our local chapter! Please also support the National HLAA with a membership: individual \$35 or family \$45. National HLAA advocates on your behalf for cheaper hearing aids, more hearing access in venues, and much more. See end of this newsletter for details on how to join.

MEETING INFORMATION FOR SATURDAY, March 9, 2019

Topic and Speaker: Michael Gavin, Community Resources for Independent Living (CRIL), will present and demonstrate adaptive equipment for independent living with a focus on hearing loss.

Schedule:

9:00 a.m. - Set up: We always love to have you come early to help!

9:30 a.m. – Refreshments, coffee and tea will be served.

10:00 a.m. - Meeting starts: Introductions, Announcements, speaker.

NOTE: Meeting is captioned, and the room is looped. You won't miss a word! Use the hearing-loop system by turning your hearing aid(s) to the Telecoil (T-coil) setting. Thanks to Peter Townsend, Steve Ulrich and the team for setting up our room, the audiovisual, and the captioning.

11:30 a.m. - Meeting adjourns.

How to find us: Come to the Fabiola building, 3801 Howe Street, Oakland. Free parking is available across the street, in the Kaiser parking structure. From the garage, walk across Howe Street and go into the Fabiola building. Take the elevator down to the ground floor and go to Room G26. For directions to Kaiser, call 510-752-1000.

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: *The Earlens Contact Hearing Aid - A New Way to Hear Better*

At our Feb. 9, 2019 meeting, our guest speaker was Dr. Pragati Mandikal Vasuki, Ph.D., a research scientist at Earlens, a hearing device company headquartered in Menlo Park, California. Dr. Vasuki first talked about the prevalence of hearing loss, as well as the limitations of currently available conventional hearing aids. She then introduced us to the Earlens Contact Hearing Aid, an innovative device that presents a new way to hear better.



Prevalence of Hearing Loss:

Dr. Vasuki offered some startling statistics on the growing number of individuals with hearing loss. For example:

- 23% of persons over age 12 have hearing loss.
- 44% of persons by age 60 have hearing loss.
- 90% of persons by age 80 have hearing loss.
- The most common health problem in the world is *not* diabetes, high blood pressure or obesity, but hearing loss.

How Hearing Works & Measuring Hearing Loss:

Referring to a video that was concurrently showing, Dr. Vasuki explained that a normal hearing ear has three parts: 1) The external ear that you see outside; 2) The middle ear which has three tiny bones; and 3) The inner ear which actually houses the organ of hearing. The sound waves come in through the outer ear, go to the three tiny bones, and finally, go into the snail-shaped structure called the cochlea, which has tiny hair cells. It is these hair cells which generate nerve impulses that move the sound to your brain, which then interprets the sound signals and helps you understand the sound. Individuals with normal hearing have a bandwidth of sound ranging from 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz. However, as the tiny hair cells become damaged or are destroyed, hearing loss may set in, reducing sound quality while limiting the spectrum of sound, as well as the ability to understand speech in noise.

When a person has a hearing test, an audiogram is used to measure and demonstrate one's current level of hearing or loss in each ear. Typically, hearing of high pitches goes sooner than hearing of low pitches, as an individual's hearing loss progresses. As we age and hearing loss increases, we may more often mishear high frequency words and misunderstand what is being said. Constantly trying to tune in on "What is he/she saying?" can be frustrating and stressful, as well as lead to fatigue, anxiety, irritability, isolation, depression and even cognitive decline. In sum, these associated factors of hearing loss often manifest as a reduced quality of life.

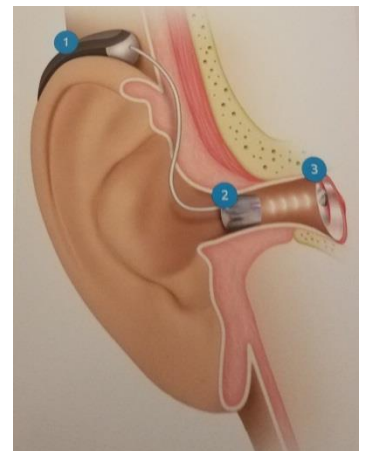
Conventional Hearing Aids (H/A's) & Their Limitations:

Despite the growing prevalence of hearing loss, only 20% of individuals who could benefit from hearing aids actually end up regularly using them, due to the limitations of some conventional acoustic hearing aids noted by users:

- ✓ The tinny/unnatural sound quality bearing little resemblance to the rich, vibrant sound before hearing loss.
- ✓ The limited range of high and low sound frequencies (500 Hz to 5,000 Hz) of conventional H/A's.
- ✓ The annoying whistling or feedback sound emanating from some conventional H/A's.

The Earlens Contact Hearing Aid:

Dr. Vasuki proceeded to describe the Earlens Contact Hearing Aid and its innovative technology. The Earlens Contact Hearing Aid consists of three parts: **1)** A behind-the-ear processor, **2)** An ear tip that is similar to an earmold, and **3)** The tympanic lens, which sits directly on the eardrum. As the tympanic lens is in contact with the eardrum, it directly drives/vibrates the eardrum, allowing a broad range of sound frequencies to be delivered to the ear. The way that Earlens works is that sound energy is converted to electromagnetic energy, which is transformed to mechanical energy that generates the direct vibration of the individual's eardrum. Thereby, the



Earlens Hearing Aid overcomes some of the limitations of conventional hearing aids.

For example:

- ❖ Crisp/natural sound quality over an extended range of high and low frequencies (100 Hz to 10,000 Hz).
- ❖ Sound localization improves with the wider frequency of energy being delivered to the ear. Elimination of whistling or feedback, resulting in better understanding of speech in noisy environments.

*****Disclaimer: The Hearing Loss Association of America, East Bay Chapter does not endorse any particular hearing aid. Each individual's needs are different and each individual has to find the hearing aid that is right for them. The Earlens Contact Hearing Aid is in Beta test and is still being refined. Also, the Earlens Hearing Aid is dependent on an Apple iPhone (not an Android phone – i.e. a Samsung Galaxy).**

The Earlens Research Program, Studies & Publications:

Earlens has a thriving research program that allows hearing-impaired listeners to experience the Earlens Contact Hearing Aid and give feedback on the device. Their on-going research studies are summarized in several publications. For further information and questions, or to join the Earlens research program, contact Dr. Vasuki at pragati.mandikal@earlen.com. To learn more about the Earlens device, you can attend their next monthly seminar on Thurs., March 14th at 11:00 am (RSVP to Cheryl.Medina@PerkinsClinic.com).

~ Kathy Fairbanks

The **HLAA National Convention for 2019** will take place in Rochester, NY, June 20 – 23, 2019.

Some events to look forward to:

Exhibit Hall – many vendors will be on site to show you the latest in hearing loss aids

Keynote Speaker: Rebecca Alexander, psychotherapist, disability rights advocate, group fitness instructor, and extreme athlete. She is also the author of *Not Fade Away: A Memoir of Senses Lost and Found*.

Workshops: Hearing Assistive Technology, Genetics and Hearing Loss, and more

Research Symposium: The Latest on Genetics and Hearing Loss

Outings: A Night at the George Eastman Museum, a visit to Niagara Falls

Banquet: Cheers to 40 Years! HLAA Anniversary Celebration and Awards Gala

Click [here](#) for more details. Or use this URL: www.hearingloss.org/programs-events/convention.

Registration is open now. **Early Bird registration goes up after March 1st so register early!**

Reservations for rooms are open [here](#) at the Hyatt Regency Rochester. (or use this URL: www.hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/new-york/hyatt-regency-rochester/roche?corp_id=G-AMHL) Use promo code: G-AMHL.

New HLAA Membership Benefit (U.S. memberships only)

hearOclub is a hearing aid and cochlear implant battery subscription service which delivers DieHard brand batteries on a set schedule (with free shipping!). Sign up for a hearOclub subscription and receive **\$30 worth of free batteries plus a battery tester keychain - a \$40 value**, exclusive to HLAA members! Use the coupon code **HLAAmember** online at hearoclub.com or by calling 833.LISTEN-2 (833.547.8362).

HEARING AID BATTERIES!

Gerry Niesar or another Costco member can get them at 17 cents apiece! Your old batteries can be recycled by putting them in a plastic ziplock bag and placing on top of your recycling waste container on your trash pick-up day. Batteries are considered hazardous waste and may not be thrown in the regular trash.

DONATE USED HEARING AIDS and/or HEARING EQUIPMENT! To donate, place them in a ziplock baggie and give to the person at the reception desk at the next meeting. These items will benefit low income persons through the Lions Club "Ear of the Lion" program which refurbishes them. For more information, talk to Dale Davis at a meeting or ddavis94605@gmail.com.

East Bay Leadership Team

The chapter is run by a Steering Committee, Leader Dale Davis, ddavis94605@gmail.com

Advocacy: Gerald Niesar, gniesar@nvlawllp.com

Outreach: Susan Jeffries, susanlj29@gmail.com

Recording Secretary: Rotation (Volunteers)

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

Treasurer: Len Bridges, lenbridges3993-hlaa@outlook.com

Committees

Programs: Susan Jeffries, susanlj29@gmail.com and George Fitzgerald, revcgf@gmail.com

Technology and AfterWords Small Group: George Chin, Sr., 352-1569, georgechinsr@gmail.com

Membership: Connie Gee, cbgee2014@yahoo.com ; Derek Daniels, d.c.daniels262@gmail.com; and Marlene Muir, muircmc@comcast.net

Newsletter Editors: Nancy Asmundson, nasmundson@comcast.net ; Kathy Fairbanks, mkathyfairbanks@att.net

Publicity: Kay Athos, 886-4717, athos.artist@att.net

Refreshments: Betty Thomas, Coordinator, and Marie Rhein, Assistant

Membership Database: Dale Davis, ddavis94605@gmail.com

Technical/Audio Loop: Peter G. Townsend, peterg.townsend@gmail.com, Steven Ulrich

Yes, I want to join or renew membership in the East Bay Chapter of HLA A and the benefits it entails! Only \$15/person.

Join Renewal (due by 1/31/19)

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Send newsletter by mail: ___ or e-mail: ___

Annual Dues (\$15) _____

Donation: _____

Total: _____

Contact me to help volunteer: _____

Mail to: East Bay Chapter, HLA A, P.O. Box 12484
Oakland, CA 94604-12484

HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

YES! I want to join or renew membership in National HLA A, entitling me to the magazine *Hearing Loss*, and a number of discounts. Membership also means I'm supporting advocacy for people with hearing loss nationwide.

Individual \$35 Family \$45

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Send to: National HLA A
 7910 Woodmont Ave., Suite 1200
 Bethesda, MD 20814

Or join online at www.hearingloss.org/content/join