

November 2022 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 the back page to sign up and support National HLAA.

At the November 12 meeting, we will present: Appreciating and Making Music: Strategies for Individuals with Hearing Loss. To embark on a hearing loss journey also means your relationship with aural music will change. Wendy Cheng will share strategies and ideas on how to appreciate or make music with a hearing loss. She will also discuss her nonprofit, the Association of Adult Musicians with Hearing Loss, and talk about what this nonprofit can offer musicians who have embarked on a hearing loss journey. Wendy Cheng is a bilateral cochlear implant recipient who is also a passionate amateur musician. When she is not practicing her viola, directing her community handbell choir, or studying music theory, she can be found planning events for her nonprofit, the [Association of Adult Musicians with Hearing Loss](#). **Social time: 9:30 a.m. Meeting begins: 10 a.m.**

Register for these free events [HERE](#). Or use this link if you are getting a hard copy of the newsletter: <https://www.hearinglosseb.org/monthly-meetings-1>. 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 posts our newsletters to the California State Association webpage and a link on our website. **VOLUNTEER! Contact us to let us know you are available!** Check out our website at: <http://www.hearinglosseb.org/> Contact us at: info@hearinglosseb.org

MEETING NOTES: *“Aural Rehabilitation Using The Digital Therapeutic (DTx) Amptify”*

At our October 8, 2022 HLAA-EB Chapter meeting, our guest speaker was Dr. Julia Ahlquist, AuD. She is the Director of Strategic Partnerships for *Amptify*, a digital therapeutic (DTx) program for hearing loss. She is a Doctor of Audiology who has a special interest in aural rehabilitation. Dr. Ahlquist also serves patients remotely via telehealth and virtual visits at her private practice in Denver, Colorado.



Amptify: Who We Are: Initially, Dr. Ahlquist introduced Amptify as an aural rehabilitation program founded in 2015 by Dr. Nancy Tye-Murray, Ph.D., and her aural rehabilitation research team at Washington University in the St. Louis School of Medicine. Amptify DTx is an app-based program to help strengthen the cognitive skills that are needed for listening through auditory brain training, interactive activities and science-based video games.

Dr. Ahlquist then proceeded to review the pillars of hearing healthcare, the challenges commonly associated with untreated hearing loss and how certain digital therapeutics (DTx), such as *Amptify*, are changing the face of today's hearing healthcare.

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

- *Diagnosis* – Patient suspects hearing loss & receives a formal diagnosis by a healthcare professional.
- *Treatment* – Patient receives appropriate amplification & assistive device technology (e.g., Hearing Aids (HA's) & Cochlear Implants (CI's)).
- *Rehabilitation* – Patient 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 breakdowns

Comorbidities Associated with HL:

- Social isolation & loneliness impacting 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): 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., HA's). There are many examples of existing DTx use cases, including: Type 1 & 2 Diabetes; Asthma & COPD; Hypertension; Smoking Cessation; ADHD; Panic Attacks & PTSD.

Amptify: Hearing Health DTx: Dr. Ahlquist described the company product *Amptify* as a comprehensive tech-enabled hearing health DTx designed to treat hearing loss and its downstream effects. She also explained each of the main components and provided some examples included in the *Amptify* journey:

- ✓ *Hearing Health Coach:* Trained, certified coaches provide regular 1-on-1 support & encouragement to participants. They track weekly training progress and 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, exercises and 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 Example: *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 is intended to help participants maximize their residual hearing and improve several skills:

auditory working memory, auditory sequencing, auditory attention, discourse comprehension, speech perception, phoneme discrimination, word identification, bound morpheme identification, noise tolerance, auditory processing speed, & listening confidence. Examples: *Defend EAR*; *Match EAR*; *Deep-Dive*.

- ✓ *Hearing Health Community*: The peer-support community provides participants with an opportunity to share experiences and strategies for handling challenging HL and listening situations. It is also intended to help participants counter-act social isolation, while offering HL understanding and acceptance. Example: *Guided Group Chats*.

Ways to Join Amptify: If you are interested, there are two ways to join the digital therapeutic *Amptify*:

- ❖ Ask your audiologist or hearing health provider (HHP) if they offer *Amptify*, and if so, join through them.
- ❖ Go to <https://amptify.com>, and sign up as an individual participant.

Wrap-Up: In conclusion, Dr. Julia Ahlquist reminded us that the benefits of digital therapeutics (DTx) and auditory brain training, such as *Amptify*, have been well-supported in several clinical research studies and peer-reviewed publications, as well as personal testimonials by past and current participants.

According to Dr. Ahlquist, “. . . our mission is to inspire and enable those with hearing loss to live a happier and more confident life . . . to Amptify life.”

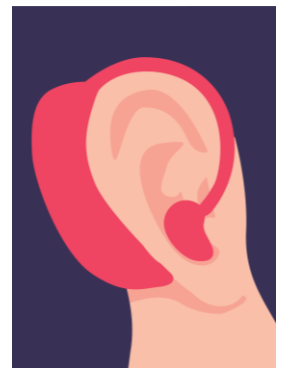
For More Information & Questions: Visit: <https://www.amptify.com> Email: julia@amptify.com

~ **Kathy Fairbanks**

Considering Over the Counter (OTC) Hearing Aids? HLAA’s OTC Tip Sheet Can Help

What is “mild to moderate” hearing loss? You may have mild to moderate hearing loss if . . .

- You have trouble understanding conversations in groups, with background noise, or when you can’t see who is talking.
- You have trouble hearing on the telephone.
- You need to turn up the volume of television, or radio loud enough for others to complain.
- Your friends or family complain that you don’t understand speech, and ask them to repeat often.



OTC may NOT help you if...

- You also have trouble hearing conversations in quiet environments.
- You also have trouble hearing loud sounds like power tools, or motor vehicles.

If you experience these, you should see a hearing care professional. Important questions to ask about OTC hearing aids:

- Is there a free trial period, or money back return policy?
- Does it need a smartphone, app, or computer to install, operate, or customize to my needs?
- Is it compatible with cellphones, or smartphones?
- Does it have connectivity via Bluetooth, or telecoil to a smartphone, computer, or listening system?
- Can the hearing aid's amplification be adjusted?
- Is it water/sweat resistant?
- How does it control, reduce, or block out background, or wind noise?
- How long is the battery life? Can it be recharged?

Other considerations

- Pay attention to package warnings. If you have pain, sudden hearing changes, or dizziness, see a doctor.
- It may take time to adjust to hearing devices.
- If the first hearing aid doesn't work, keep trying, and you may want to seek the help of a hearing care professional to advise you.

Read more at hearingloss.org/OTC.

You're not alone! Millions of people have hearing loss, and you're taking an important first step to address yours. HLAA's community of support is here to help. **Join us! Hearing Loss Association of America, East Bay Chapter: www.hearinglosseb.org. You can also e-mail us at info@hearinglosseb.org**

You may also visit hearingloss.org, our national site, for more information.

HearingLife helps Alzheimer's Association

HearingLife is a national hearing care company which operates nearly 700 hearing care centers across 42 states. The company is committed to help more people hear better through life-changing hearing health delivered by the best personalized care.

Emerging evidence shows hearing loss may contribute to a person's risk of cognitive decline and possibly dementia. By generating awareness of the Alzheimer's cause and Alzheimer's Association care and support resources, HearingLife encourages customers to take proactive steps in caring for their hearing health for themselves and their loved ones. If you know someone with Alzheimer's disease, you know what an insidious disease it is. The once vibrant human being becomes befuddled and eventually not able to care for themselves.

The company supports the Alzheimer's Association through a \$100,000 corporate donation, sharing valuable information and resources, and offering customers the opportunity to make donations.

JOKE CORNER



Just announced! HLAA2023 Convention will be in New Orleans, Louisiana!!! Any interest in attending? More information at hearingloss.org. Our chapter may have some funds available to subsidize your trip!

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

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

Programs: Robin Miller, robin@robinmillerlaw.com

Technology and AfterWords Small Group: George Chin, Sr., (510) 352-1569, georgechinsr@gmail.com

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

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

Publicity: Andrea Doehrman, andreadoehrman@gmail.com; George Chin, Sr., georgechinsr@gmail.com

Refreshments: Marie Rhein, Coordinator

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

JOIN HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (HLAA) – THEY ADVOCATE FOR YOU!

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

OR, if you prefer to pay by check or card thru the mail, Nancy Asmundson has membership forms to send to you, or contact HLAA at 301-657-2248 or e-mail membership@hearingloss.org. Your membership form & payment go to HLAA, 6116 Executive Blvd., Suite 320, Rockville, MD 20852.

COSTS: Regular Membership/year (will receive *Hearing Life* magazine in print and digital format):

Individual - \$45; Couple/Family - \$55; Professional - \$80; Nonprofit - \$80;

Veteran Membership: Complimentary 1-Year Regular Membership & Lifetime Online Membership.