



East Bay Chapter:Newsletter



May 2025



Poppy Season!

Chapter E-mail: Info@HearingLossEB.org

Chapter Address: PO Box 2266,
Alameda, CA 94501

May 18, 2025 Come join us for Walk4Hearing at Robert Crown Beach park in Alameda, 8th Street at Otis Drive, Alameda. See flyer on page 2. Donate and you may get a t-shirt or other item. Last year there were FREE snacks and Pizza after the event! Don't miss the fun!

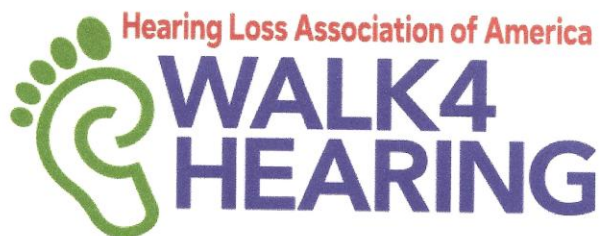
Questions? Info@HearingLossEB.org

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

Coming Soon:

- June: Dr. Erik Breitling, audiologist - how to read the audiogram
- July/August: No program. Have a great summer!
- September: Dr. Cohen, of Berkeley Audiology - music and hearing loss
- October - TBA
- November - TBA
- December: Dr. Susanah Storm – What's new with hearing loss
- January, 2025: Brooke Barry from the Spotify research group — sound and music

NOTE: If you have old hearing aids you no longer use, you may donate them. Drop them off at a meeting and we will make sure your hearing aids get new life for someone else.



Bay Area Walk4Hearing

Sunday, May 18, 2025

**Robert W. Crown Memorial
State Beach**

8th Street, Otis Drive
Alameda, CA

9:00 am - Registration

10:30 am - Stage presentation

10:45 am - Walk begins



**Scan to Register today
or visit walk4hearing.org**



 **Walk Manager: Ronnie Adler**

 **radler@hearingloss.org**

MEETING NOTES: *"Basics of Tinnitus: Source of the Tinnitus Perception; What Makes It So Bothersome; Management Options for People Living with Tinnitus"*

At our April 12, 2025 HLAA-EB Chapter meeting, our guest speakers were Senior Audiologists at UCSF Audiology Dept. Dr. Troy Cascia, AuD. and his colleague Dr. Gregory Hobbs, AuD. Based on their extensive background in audiology, Dr. Cascia and Dr. Hobbs gave an excellent presentation about "tinnitus" which included a description of the possible sources of the tinnitus perception, why tinnitus and its side effects are so bothersome to some individuals, as well as some of the management options available to individuals having to live their everyday lives with tinnitus.



Dr. Hobbs and Dr. Cascia

- **Our Speakers' Background:** The two presenters were introduced by a member of our HLAA-EB Ch. Leadership Team as follows:

Dr. Troy Cascia: Dr. Cascia earned his Doctorate of Audiology at Osborne College of Audiology in 2005. Before becoming an audiologist, he worked in education. Dr. Cascia is a senior audiologist with expertise in diagnostic hearing assessment, hearing aid fitting, aural rehabilitation (therapies and devices to address poor hearing), and vestibular diagnostics (identifying disorders of the inner ear). He is currently the lead audiologist and Director of UCSF's tinnitus program offering diagnostic assessment, counseling, and a variety of treatments and services provided in both English and Spanish. As past president of the California Academy of Audiology, Dr. Cascia continues to promote community awareness of the audiology profession and health care for better hearing. In his spare time, he enjoys traveling, hiking in the Bay Area, choral singing, and volunteering in both the local community and internationally.

Dr. Gregory Hobbs: Dr. Hobbs earned his Bachelor's Degree in communication disorders at Brigham Young University and then earned his Doctorate of Audiology through a joint program of San Diego State University and the University of California, San Diego. Dr. Hobbs is currently an audiologist who cares for both adults and children. He specializes in diagnostic audiology, rehabilitation and amplification services, vestibular assessment (to address problems with balance or dizziness), and tinnitus counseling. He prioritizes helping patients and their families better understand the nature and consequences of hearing loss, and enjoys assisting them in managing their conditions in order to optimize their quality of life.

- **What Is Tinnitus?** Initially, Dr. Cascia described tinnitus as sound perception in the head which is not emanating from an external source. Although tinnitus may manifest itself as many different sounds, it often seems like a ringing, buzzing, or other annoying sound in one's ears.
- **The Prevalence of Tinnitus:** Tinnitus is surprisingly common according to studies that indicate that about 30 million individuals (12%) of the United States population experience some degree of tinnitus. Studies have indicated that tinnitus is highly correlated with hearing loss and with age since approximately 27% of people with tinnitus are between 65 and 84 years old. While many people have tinnitus, only a small percentage find it to be problematic. Nevertheless, 20% of those individuals with tinnitus report it to be disabling.

- **Source of the Problem & Side Effects:** Tinnitus itself is not the real problem. Rather, the real problem is how the brain reacts to the tinnitus, resulting in many bothersome side effects such as the following: anxiety, depression, insomnia, increased stress, irritability, decreased productivity, and interpersonal conflicts. The actual source or cause of tinnitus is not clear in most cases, but is often linked to hearing loss and perhaps caused or increased by the brain's response to auditory deprivation.

The amygdala seems to play a role in how bothersome tinnitus becomes for an individual. The amygdala is a brain region crucial for emotional processing and is often implicated in the emotional distress associated with tinnitus. Some studies have suggested that the amygdala may become hyperactive in individuals with tinnitus, especially in response to sounds that evoke strong emotional reactions. This heightened amygdala activity may contribute to the negative emotional experiences associated with tinnitus, such as fear, anxiety, and frustration.

- **The Effect of Medications on Tinnitus:** Typically, medications have little or no effect on tinnitus. In fact, certain medications can cause or worsen tinnitus. Examples of some of these medications that may have this negative effect on tinnitus include aminoglycoside antibiotics, chemotherapeutic agents, aspirin & NSAIDs, loop diuretics, tricyclic antidepressants, and benzodiazepines.
- **How Is Tinnitus Treated:** Before proceeding further, the speakers clarified that to date there is no cure for tinnitus. However, there are now treatment options available that may help those living with tinnitus to improve their day-to-day lives. Before getting into these treatment options, they wished to refer us to some Powerpoint slides and briefly review how hearing works, how the brain works with hearing, the limbic system in the brain, how to read one's audiogram, and how habituation works.
- **Treatment Options:** The treatment options currently available for those living with tinnitus can be divided into two main categories: Tinnitus Retraining Therapy and Neuromodulation.

- ✓ **Tinnitus Retraining Therapy** has Psychological Therapy and Sound Therapy components:

Psychological Therapy includes: cognitive behavioral therapy; mindfulness therapy. Psychological therapy may be delivered as either in-person or remote counseling, literature resources, or hearing aid programming (each which has pros and cons).

Sound Therapy includes: home-based noise generators; ear-level noise generators; hearing aids; notched sound therapy. Sound therapy may be delivered as personalized soundscapes through headphones which can help mask or make the tinnitus less noticeable.

- ✓ **Neuromodulation** is another possible treatment option for those experiencing tinnitus.

Bimodal Neuromodulation includes vagal or trigeminal nerve stimulation and deep brain stimulation of the caudate nucleus.

Lenire by Neuromod is a new, bimodal neuromodulation device designed to help minimize awareness of tinnitus. It has been available in several European countries since 2021, and was approved by the FDA in the United States in 2023. UCSF is one of 10 locations in the San Francisco Bay Area currently dispensing Lenire. To help minimize awareness of tinnitus, Lenire's bimodal modulation uses two sensory inputs to drive brain changes: Auditory stimulus through wireless headphones, and electrical stimulus through wired tongue tip device. Although Lenire does not make tinnitus go away or get quieter, it is intended to help speed up habituation so individuals think about the tinnitus less often. The use of Lenire requires active participation and mindful relaxation during the sessions. Counseling is also required prior to the device's use in order to determine whether Lenire is an appropriate tinnitus treatment and whether there exists any of several possible contraindications that make Lenire unsuitable for that individual.

➤ **Tips for Managing Tinnitus:** Our speakers emphasized that there is no cure for tinnitus at this time, but they provided some tips for managing tinnitus and any bothersome side effects.

- **Decrease stress:** Practice stress reduction to manage tinnitus symptoms.
- **Maintain a sound-rich environment:** Try to avoid prolonged periods of silence.
- **Avoid very loud noise:** Use hearing protection if in settings with very loud noise.
- **Limit sodium, caffeine, and alcohol consumption:** Avoid or reduce consumption of these items.
- **Review current medications:** Consult with your prescribing provider about tinnitus effects.
- **Consider using sound therapy:** Use white noise or nature sounds to manage tinnitus.
- **Obtain individualized tinnitus counseling:** See a psychologist specializing in tinnitus counseling.
- **Activate built-in noise generator features:** See an audiologist to activate these HA features.
- **Consider Lenire treatment:** Consult with a Lenire specialist about eligibility & potential benefits.

Wrap-Up: In wrapping up their excellent overview of tinnitus, our two UCSF senior audiologist speakers, Dr. Troy Cascia and Dr. Gregory Hobbs, offered us an encouraging look into the research that is being conducted on tinnitus: *"It's not true that there's nothing we can do about tinnitus. Although we can't make tinnitus go away, it can be managed. Tinnitus may be bothersome now, but it won't be a problem forever. There is hope for a return to a normal life."*

Finally, the two tinnitus specialists thanked us for the opportunity to share their expertise and on-going research on tinnitus. They also invited audience members to reach out to them via the contact sources cited below for more information or questions about tinnitus, or to contact the UCSF Audiology Clinic Patient Coordinator Stella Lee to set up an appointment at the Audiology Clinic. They also clarified that they were not recommending or endorsing any specific tinnitus management strategy, technique or product for any particular individual. Likewise, the HLAA-EB Chapter leadership reminded everyone that the policy of the Chapter is to not endorse any service, product or person that may have been mentioned or discussed during the current presentation, discussion or follow-up Q & A session.

For More Information/Questions: Visit: [ucsfhealth.org](https://www.ucsfhealth.org) Call: 415-353-2101 2330 Post St., Suite #270; San Francisco, CA 94115; Email: Troy.Cascia@ucsf.edu; Email: Gregory.Hobbs@ucsf.edu Email: Stella.Lee2@ucsf.edu

~ Kathy Fairbanks

HLAA 2025 Convention

Still not too late to join the HLAA's 40th annual convention, June 11-14, 2025, in Indianapolis, Indiana. Our annual event brings together hundreds of people with hearing loss from around the U.S. to learn, discover and connect. Check out the latest technology and hear from health and industry experts during a series of empowering events designed to help you live your best life with hearing loss. Reserve your spot today! To sign up, go [here](#). Then click on "Learn More and Register".

Convention Highlights

- Hear an inspiring keynote speaker during the General Session
- Attend our Research Symposium exploring "Stigma: Making the Invisible Actionable"
- Celebrate and connect at the Welcome Back event and other social functions
- Learn from our exciting educational workshops on a wide range of topics
- See product demonstrations of the latest technology for people with hearing loss
- Walk through the Exhibit Hall featuring cutting-edge tech and hearing health industry advances. Free Exhibit Hall-only passes available
- Training: Parent's Education Track: Learn about what you can do to help your child with hearing loss.
- Indy Walk4Hearing: Saturday, June 14, morning!
- Closing Activity: Indianapolis Indians baseball game at Victory Field!



If interested in finding out more impressions, you can talk to Linda Gee, Connie Gee or Verna Dow, who all went to the 2024 Convention.

We need your help! Can you volunteer? Contact us at: info@hearinglosseb.org

Here is a list of volunteer positions we are seeking to fill:

- **Zoom Assistant** - Assist George Chin, Sr. to run Zoom, cameras, and PA/Audio Loop during in person/hybrid meetings.
- **Camera Operator** - Use a remote control to operate our 2 cameras for in-person Zoom meetings.
- **Volunteer Coordinator**: Contact people who said they could volunteer and tell them about volunteer needs. Recruit for those positions.
- **Outreach Coordinator**: Organize a table for our chapter at various street fairs and other venues. Set up the table. Recruit volunteers to help with the events. Reach out to people who participate in our meetings. Let people know about our chapter.
- **Just want to help?** All of our committees need helpers! All volunteers are welcome! Contact us and we'll help you figure out what would be a good fit for you.

HLAA SF/East Bay Leaders

To contact our Steering Committee: info@hearinglosseb.org

Leader: Len Bridges

Outreach National Chapter Coordinator/Liaison: Linda Gee

Treasurer: Len Bridges

Programs: Robin Miller, Verna Dow

Technology: George Chin, Sr.

Membership: Connie Gee, Marlene Muir

Volunteer Coordinator: Linda Gee

Newsletter Editors: Nancy Asmundson, Kathy Fairbanks

Publicity: Marlene Muir, George Chin, Sr.

Technical/Audio Loop: Peter G. Townsend

Website updates: George Chin, Sr., Peter G. Townsend

Consulting Legal Counsel: Gerald Niesar

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services: Audrey Spinka,

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

hearingloss.org Membership is now open to all of our valued supporters who help fuel our mission and change the lives of people with hearing loss. **Everyone who gives is now an HLAA member, helping to amplify our HLAA voice, and fulfill our important mission—together!**

COST OF MEMBERSHIP: The HLAA national office had consolidated the donation and membership processes. Presently, anyone who donates as little as \$1 would become a member of the national HLAA. Additionally, with a donation of \$45 annually, individuals have the option to receive a hard copy of the Hearing Life magazine from the national office.