



Hearing Loss Association of Michigan

Opening the world of communication to people with loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.

Winter/Spring 2009 Newsletter

In This Issue

[Free Demo's!](#)

[ClarityLife C900 Cellphone](#)

[Convention News](#)

[Walk4Hearing update](#)

[New DODHH Director](#)

[Day at State Capitol](#)

[Are You Dizzy?](#)

[DTV](#)

Donations

[Oakland Audiology](#)

Nettie Kravitz

Marilyn Lewis

HLA-MI thanks you for your newsletter donation!

Mark your Calendars!

April 15, 2009
[Income tax deadline.](#)
[Did you use your deduction?](#)

Greetings to all of our readers!

Winter is over and it's time to get geared up for this year's exciting events: Walk4Hearing (one in the Spring and one in the Fall) and the Day at the State Capitol in May. Don't forget HLAA's 30-year anniversary celebration that will take place at our national convention in Nashville, TN in June. Please see the articles in this newsletter for more information.

The newsletter staff strives to provide you with the latest information related to hearing loss and Hearing Loss Association of America. Your comments are important to us. If you would like to see other information not included in this issue - we want to hear from you! You may send your comments or suggestions to newsletter@hearingloss-mi.org.

Caroline Caughell, Editor,
HLA-MI e-News

FREE! FREE! FREE DEMONSTRATIONS!

There is a wide range of hearing assistive technology (HAT) available for persons living with hearing loss. However, it can be confusing trying to determine which piece of equipment is right for you. That's where our trained volunteer Hearing Technology Resource Specialists (HTRS) can help. Each Specialist has a "kit" of hearing assistive technology that contains devices which can help you hear better in many every day life situations. You are able to try and compare devices to explore features which will help you the most.

HTRS volunteers are prepared to demonstrate equipment to individuals or groups. Our Specialists care about people with hearing loss. Most have experienced it first hand, having hearing loss themselves. They know how difficult it can be to function in a hearing world.

All presentations are completely free and there is no obligation to purchase anything. In fact, HTRS do not sell equipment!

April 19, 2009

[HLA-MI Board meeting in Lansing](#)

May 13, 2009

[Day at State Capitol event](#)

May 16, 2009

[SE MI Walks at Kensington Metro Park](#)

June 18-21, 2009

[HLAA Convention in Nashville, TN](#)

HLA-MI Chapters

Hearing Loss Association of Michigan currently has 14 chapters and 3 Cochlear Implant chapters. Becoming a chapter member gets you in touch with others who have hearing loss, learn more about coping strategies and assistive listening devices. Please see our [chapter list](#) for more information.

Ann Liming of Lansing makes the top walkers list for

Email us today to set up your free demo!

htrs@hearingloss-mi.org.

Hearing Assistive Technology Training

The Hearing Loss Association of Michigan (HLA-MI) will conduct a Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT) training event. The training will take place in Roscommon on May 2nd and 3rd, 2009.

Training participants will learn how to demonstrate several pieces of HAT equipment and will be required to conduct demonstrations to interested individuals or groups using equipment provided. The demos will focus on comparison of similar types of technology. Training participants will be given surveys for use after the demonstration, for gathering data about the completed demos.

All trainees are asked to commit to doing 5 comparison demonstrations and will need to turn in the completed surveys before September 30th, 2009. A few spots in the training are open at this time.

If you are interested in being part of this event or in learning more, please contact: htrs@hearingloss-mi.org.

The application can be found on our website at:

<http://www.hearingloss-mi.org/pdfs/HTRS2009.pdf>.

ARE YOU READY FOR THE TAX MAN?

Don't forget - you can use the Deaf, Blind or Disabled deduction on your State of Michigan 2008 tax return! This reduces your taxable income by \$2200!

You qualify for the deaf exemption if the primary way you receive messages is through a sense other than hearing, for example: lip reading or sign language.

See your tax preparer for more information.

CLARITYLIFE C900 - CELLPHONE FOR SENIORS

Walk4Hearing 2008!
Way to go Ann!

HLAA Launches New
Initiative for Young
Adults (Ages 18-35)

HLAA Member Patrick
Holkins moderates the
discussions for young
adults.

Go to
[HearingLossNation](#)

Quick Links

[Hearing Loss
Association of
America](#)

[Hearing Loss
Association of
Michigan](#)

Join Our List

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Cellphone designed specifically for senior citizens: the ClarityLife C900. It's the first cellphone from Clarity ([clarityproducts.com](#)), a division of Plantronics Inc. that specializes in telephony (landlines and other products) for people with hearing loss. The cellphone incorporates features that are useful for someone who may be hard of hearing or using a hearing aid.

See the article from the [Wall Street Journal](#) for more information on the ClarityLife C900 mobile phone.

2009 HLAA NAT'I CONVENTION IN NASHVILLE, TN

Registration already ahead of last year! There are more people registered for Convention 2009 today than there were back in April 2008 for the HLAA Convention in Reno. Join the excitement in anticipation of this memorable event!

[Register Today!](#)



HLA-MICHIGAN SPONSORS WALK4HEARING



The Hearing Loss Association of Michigan is planning the 3rd annual Southeast Michigan Walk4Hearing.

This event will take place on Saturday, May 16 at Kensington Metro Park. Registration begins near the East Boat Dock at 9:00, the 5k walk begins at 10:00. The public is welcome. A donation of \$10 is suggested if walkers elect to not raise money but it is not required. Those who do raise money are not required to walk. There will be light refreshments, "door" prizes, entertainment and information about hearing loss and the

Hearing Loss Association of America. Sponsorship opportunities are available at any time, with a March 1 deadline for full recognition. We are hoping that people will form walk teams with friends, co-workers, and family members, some of whom will walk together. Other team members may contribute to walkers' efforts financially or in another way. Teams are encouraged to create team T-shirts. Walk T-shirts will be given to walkers who raise \$100 or more.

Money earned from the Walk will be used to support programs of the Hearing Loss Association of America, the Michigan affiliate, and local chapters all of which provide information, education, advocacy, and support. Their purpose is to open the world of communication to hard of hearing people. Services offered include local chapter meetings, newsletters, websites, a national magazine, a national conference, a state expo, representation on government, nongovernmental and business panels, contributions to legislative and regulatory efforts, hearing technology resource specialists who are available to give free presentations.

For more information or to offer your support, please go to www.walk4hearing.org or contact Janet Haines at jhaines@hearingloss-mi.org.

NEW DIRECTOR AT DODHH

Sheryl D. Emery Named Director of DLEG's
Division on Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Sheryl D. Emery, M.A., has been named as director of the Division on Deaf & Hard of Hearing (DODHH). She will also serve as assistant director of the Commission on Disability Concerns and senior staff liaison to the DODHH governor-appointed advisory council.

Read more at [DODHH website](#).

SAVE THE DATE!

11:00 am - 2:00 pm Wednesday, May 13, 2009

Join deaf and hard of hearing people, family members and friends for the 4th Annual

Day at the State Capitol

in Lansing.

This annual event fosters better understanding and communication between attendees and legislators on issues important to Michigan's citizens with hearing loss like hearing aid tax credits and insurance coverage.

Please register for this informative and educational event. The registration form can be found on our website at:
<http://www.hearingloss-mi.org/pdfs/DASC2009.pdf>.

YOUR EARS AND DIZZINESS

Have you ever felt dizzy, off balance, or light-headed? Have you ever stumbled or fallen but were not sure why? There are many reasons for lightheadedness, dizziness and difficulties with balance. One of these reasons could be a problem with a part of your ear. How, you might ask, does my ear control "dizziness" or balance? There is an important balance system in your ear called the Vestibular System.

The Vestibular System is our body's main balance system and is located in the inner ear near the cochlea, which allows us to hear. The hearing system and the balance system share roadways of nerves that carry messages to the brain. Both systems also share a blood supply. Because of these close connections, conditions or diseases that affect hearing may also have an effect on the balance system and vice versa. Sometimes treatments or procedures designed to help one system may help the other. However, sometimes treatments or procedures designed to help one system may have an adverse affect on the other as well. For example, labyrinthitis is an inflammation in the ear and may cause both hearing loss and balance problems. Another example is cochlear implants that are designed to improve hearing but may cause some balance problems, at least temporarily.

A problem in the Vestibular System can cause various

symptoms. These symptoms may include "dizziness" or the sense that the world or the person is moving when in reality they are not. Lightheadedness is another symptom that is frequently described by people with vestibular problems. The third major complaint that may indicate a vestibular problem is difficulty walking or balance problems. There are many other less frequent symptoms and may include headaches, nausea, difficulty with vision, problems focusing and anxiety.

When there is a problem in the Vestibular system, wrong information is sent to the brain and the various symptoms may occur. Typically the sensation of dizziness comes from mis-information that the ears are sending to the brain. Sometimes they will send the message to the brain that we are moving. Yet we can see with our eyes and feel with our feet that we are not. This conflict of information to the brain causes "dizziness". Likewise, when the brain receives wrong information about where our body is, the result can be taking too short or too large of a step and a stumble or fall may result. Luckily, this system is very adaptable and is supported by other systems. Therefore, people can often recover or compensate fully from a Vestibular problem.

Because the symptoms from a vestibular problem are similar to problems with other systems in the body, the first step in recovering from a Vestibular problem is to see a physician. An Ears-Nose-Throat (ENT) doctor or an Otolaryngologist specializes in this area. They can test and specifically diagnosis Vestibular problems so that treatment can be effective. Depending on the diagnosis and the symptoms, the doctor may recommend a variety of treatments such as rest, medication, or exercise. Studies show that intervention programs are very successful in improving balance and that certain kinds of dizziness respond well to exercise. Specific exercise routines are a part of an area of Physical Therapy, known as Vestibular Rehabilitation.

The goal of Vestibular Rehabilitation is to retrain the brain to listen to the information from the ears and coordinate it with the information from the other systems (mainly the eyes and the feet). In essence, we are teaching the brain a new "ear language". This will often improve balance and decrease the sensations of dizziness. Vestibular Rehabilitation should be an

individualized program and may contain different techniques, including exercises to decrease the body's response to movement, develop the right compensation techniques and improve balance reactions. The Physical Therapist will initially work with you one on one to provide a safe environment for exercising. As you progress, you will be given homework to do on your own. It is important to make sure the Physical Therapist you are seeing is experienced in Vestibular Rehabilitation to ensure the best possible outcome.

Dizziness and balance problems may not be something that you have to live with. There are teams of doctors and physical therapists who are specialists in this area and will evaluate your symptoms and recommend interventions. The first step towards a balanced, steady life is yours.

Submitted by
Karin Crute, PT
Certified Vestibular Therapist
Department of Rehabilitation
Beaumont Hospital Troy
248-293-0888
Kcrute@beaumont-hospitals.com

Digital TV - Are you ready?

FREE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Digital TV Transition

Wednesday, April 15, 2009

7:00 pm-8:30 pm

Farmington Community Library Auditorium
32737 W. 12 Mile Road/Farmington Hills, MI 48334

What is the digital television transition?

Between now and June 12, 2009, all full-power television stations in the United States will stop broadcasting in analog and switch to 100% digital broadcasting. Digital broadcasting promises to provide a clearer picture and more programming options and will free up airwaves for use by emergency responders.

What is the TV Converter Box Coupon Program?

Congress created the TV Converter Box Coupon Program for households wishing to keep using their analog TV sets after broadcasters stop analog broadcasting. The Program allows U.S.

households to obtain up to two coupons, each worth \$40 and can be applied toward the cost of eligible converter boxes.

**Sponsored by: Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
education Fund (LCCREF) &
Deaf Community Advocacy Network**

Presentation will be interpreted into
American Sign Language &
CART will be provided by Screenline

Learn how to connect the DTV box to your TV. Go to
www.oicmovies.com and watch the sign language video titled:
Digital TV - What's up? (Update).