

Auds and Endz

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Message from the President Judy Butera, AuD

Last year at this time, I wrote to you about the many advantages of networking and encouraged you each to attend the PAA Annual Convention. Unfortunately we were not able to meet last year. We now have some "catching up" to do in Pittsburgh on September 13 and 14. I encourage you to mark you calendars now for a very worthwhile meeting, and to also consider the pre-convention workshop offering featuring Dr. Jack Katz on September 12. Convention information has been mailed; registration information is posted on the PAA website

and in this newsletter.

You may also want to check the website for information regarding a legislative alert that was emailed to all members on July 12 concerning the proposed rulemaking for the Hearing Aid Registration Act (Act 153). There is a link from the website which will connect you to the full text of the proposed rules. We will also use the broadcast email to keep you advised of any important changes or deadlines. Diane Salerno, our lobbyist, will be available at the PAA convention in Pittsburgh to speak with you indi-



vidually about any of your legislative concerns.

Many of you returned Charlie Lindsay's questionnaire regard-

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SEE YOU IN PITTSBURGH...



PAA 9th Annual Convention
September 13-14th, 2002
Pre-convention seminar
September 12, 2002
Pittsburgh, PA

Details on page 3

Message from the President, cont

ing problems with insurance collections, particularly from the PA Access Program or one of its HMO counterparts. We will be talking about forming a multi-partner Task Force to address these problems and will be recruiting PAA members interested in participating. Be sure to plan on attending the convention's morning round-table with Charlie Lindsay and Jim Shafer to get the latest information on this important problem.

Of course, there are the new Act 89 (Universal Newborn/Infant Hearing Screening) details. The PAA Board of Directors nominated Dr. Lou Sieminski and Dr. Diane Sabo to serve on the Advisory Committee formed by that Act. Both nominations were approved. We will next be submitting the names of two more PAA members to serve on a subcommittee. At our Pittsburgh convention, you'll be updated on how this law may affect your practice.

And there is still the great opportunity to network with your colleagues from across the state.

Hope to see you in Pittsburgh!

**Successful
Spring Seminar
in
Pittsburgh, PA**

PAA Regional Seminar...*Managing a Successful Audiology Practice*

The Regional Seminar held on June 8th in Pittsburgh, PA was an outstanding success. Susan Parr, AuD; Virginia Grim, AuD and Douglas Callen, PhD shared their "secrets of success" with seminar attendees. This was one of our largest Regional Seminars with 33 attendees including several students from the University of Pittsburgh.



Susan Parr, AuD



Virginia Grim, AuD



Douglas Callen, PhD

PAA Annual Convention Update

Sherman Lord, VP Education

On behalf of the Executive Board of PAA, I invite you to attend our Ninth Annual Convention. This year, the convention is being held in Pittsburgh at the Radisson Green Tree Hotel on September 13-14. On September 12, a pre-convention seminar will be held there, as well.

A broad range of topics and issues will be presented and discussed during the 2½-day event commencing with Dr. Jack Katz's pre-convention seminar on CAPD testing. This special pre-convention seminar begins at 12:30 pm, Thursday, September 12 at the Radisson.

That evening PAA hosts an open house offering all in attendance the opportunity to greet old friends and colleagues in a relaxed atmosphere. The location will be announced and posted at the hotel.

The convention kicks off on Friday, September 13 with registration and continental breakfast starting at 7:30 am. Dr. Gus Mueller is our keynote speaker on Friday and will present **Troubleshooting Patient Compliance with Modern Hearing Aids**. Dr. Mueller is known for his informative, entertaining presentations and I am sure this one will be no different.

The afternoon session includes presentations on the following topics:

- **Advances in Clinical Applications of Auditory Evoked Potentials for the Audiologist** by Diane Sabo and John Durrant
- **Recipes for Success: Choosing More Than One Option in Deafness** by Judy Curtin

- **The Role of the Primary Care Physician in Newborn Hearing Screening** by Robert Cicco, M.D.
- **Middle Ear Implants for SNHL** by Kenneth Cox

The day ends with Happy Hour followed by our Annual Banquet and the ever-exciting Trivia Bowl. Gus Mueller and Brad Stach are preparing a team of non-Pennsylvanians to challenge for the title. It should be fun!

Saturday begins with a breakfast **Roundtable Discussion** with PAA's VP's of Governmental Affairs (Jim Shafer) and Professional Issues (Charles Lindsay). In addition, Diane Salerno, PAA's lobbyist will also be there to provide timely information about what is happening in Harrisburg as well as to answer your questions about various issues currently facing audiologists in Pennsylvania. This was a very popular meeting two years ago and we expect an increase in attendance this year.

Our keynote speaker on Saturday is Dr. Brad Stach, President-elect of the American Academy of Audiology. His presentation is titled **An Update in Clinical Audiology**.

The **PAA Business Meeting and Luncheon** begin at 12:00 noon. At this time, recognition awards will be presented to outgoing members of the Executive Board. The Dan F. Konkle Award, PAA's highest honor, will be presented this year to G. Donald Miller, Ph.D., owner of ACE Hearing Center in Bloomsburg, PA, and retired Professor of Audiology at Bloomsburg University. Don

was scheduled to receive this award at last year's convention. We are all looking forward to presenting this award to Don.

Dr. Stach will also speak on issues he will be facing when he begins his term as President of AAA.

Finally, the Saturday afternoon session includes the following:

- **Positioning for the Future: Implementing Patient Satisfaction Measures** by Mary Wilson
- **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996: What Audiologist Need to Know** by Aaron Parr
- **Clinical Application of Multi-Frequency Immittance Testing** by Barbara Vento

We hope you find the program interesting, exciting and enticing and hope that you can find the time to attend what we hope will be our best convention to date.

If you attend both the pre-convention seminar and the convention in its entirety, you will have earned 85% of the CEUs necessary when you apply for your license renewal in 2004.

You can review the agenda and register on line at www.paaudiology.org.

Please join us. It will be well worth it.

**Start
earning PA
CEUs at the
PAA Annual
Convention**

The Pennsylvania Academy of Audiology sincerely thanks the Sonus Network for their donation to our organization to help offset unexpected financial losses from September 11, 2001.



Task Force Creation And Membership News

Medical Assistance/Audiology Reimbursement Task Force

Joan D'Allessandro, Secretary PAA

On a recent survey of PAA members, many indicated their frustration concerning the PA Medicaid system and the difficulties of reimbursement to audiologists for services rendered on behalf of hearing impaired minors in the Commonwealth. One PAA member in a letter to the Board noted this was a most difficult area and urged the Board to help with streamlining the communication with the Medical Assistance program. **Well, here's your chance!**

Your Board has voted to initiate a Task Force on Medical Assistance/Audiology reimbursement. The Board wants to approach other organizations within the state who also have a stake in this issue such as parents of hearing-impaired children and the PA SHHH. However, we need committed people to help coordinate the audiology front. This is a difficult matter and one that needs concerted effort from a variety of fronts.

Please consider devoting some of your time to this Task Force. If you know of a parent or other organization who may be interested in joining the cause, please let me know. As one PAA member wrote, "If PAA were able to settle only one item in the next year, this would be the one I would put at the top of the list."

Contact me with your questions, and your spirited response via e-mail at phonjoan@aol.com

PAA Membership Update

Linda Gonya-Hartmann, VP Membership

This year we still hover around 205 members in PAA. We gained quite a few and lost a few due to relocations and retirements. But we are glad you are all here! If you ever want to update your office or contact information, you may do so directly on the website. Use your user ID and password to enter the "Members Only" section and you can update your information as needed. You can also change your password to something that is more easy to remember. If

you don't remember your password or user ID, please email Linda at lghartman@nbn.net or contact us through the website. The 2002 directory is scheduled for mailing July 25th. If you do not receive yours by August 15th (to allow for address corrections on those returned) please contact Linda for additional mailings.

We are still looking for a few good people to join the membership committee for recruiting new members to PAA. We would like to increase the

membership to include as many audiologists as possible. If you know a colleague who hasn't joined yet, encourage them on the benefits of belonging to PAA. Our goal is to become networked across the state so that we have good friendly contacts to move our profession toward the place that we need to be. Remember, PAA is only as good as **you** make it to be!

Third Party Payments...Good News and Bad

Jeanne Singer, President-Elect PAA

Good news...

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation has increased its fee schedule for many of the audiometric test and the mark up allowed over invoice for hearing aids. If your office is an OVR testing facility it might be of interest for you to get the complete list of fee increases as there are over 85 different test that are coded under speech and hearing services. The fee increases that will affect most participating audiologist are:

CODE	TEST DESCRIPTION	OLD FEE	NEW FEE
92557	Basic Comprehensive, W/ Discrimination	\$ 50.00	\$ 65.00
92566	Impedance Testing	\$ 30.00	\$ 40.00
92590	Hearing Aid Examination and Selection (mon)	\$ 50.00	\$ 70.00
92591	Hearing Aid Examination and Selection (bin)	\$ 50.00	\$ 70.00
92592	Hearing Aid Check out and Delivery	\$ 30.00	\$ 60.00
V5050	Hearing Aid Monaural Manufact Invoice +	\$200.00	\$300.00
V5130	Hearing Aid Binaural Manufact Invoice +	\$275.00	\$400.00
V5170	Ear Mold	\$ 35.00	\$ 60.00

Thank you OVR!!!!

Other good news is Blue Shield has increased its fee schedule for hearing aid goods and related services. This is the amount that they consider the maximum allowable fee that the patient can be billed. For example, if a patient has Security Blue Keystone Health Plan West and purchases a digital hearing aid, Security Blue KHPW will pay \$500 and the patient can be bill the remaining amount up to \$1,780.

CODE	TEST DESCRIPTION	FEE
V5050	Hearing Aid Monaural ITE or BTE (Analog)	\$ 807.50
V5050	Hearing Aid Monaural ITE or BTE (Programmable)	\$1520.00
V5050	Hearing Aid Monaural ITE or BTE (Digital)	\$2280.00
V5130	Hearing Aid Binaural ITE or BTE (Analog)	\$1615.00
V5130	Hearing Aid Binaural ITE or BTE (Programmable)	\$3040.00
V5130	Hearing Aid Binaural ITE or BTE (Digital)	\$4560.00

Bad News...

As of January, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield KHPW has reinstated hearing aid specialists to the hearing health care provider network. Hearing Aid specialist are now the only providers listed under the category of Hearing Aids in the 2002 provider directory which is distributed to all of their enrollees. Audiologists are only listed under the professional category of Audiologist. The Audiologist (providers) who also dispense hearing aids have an * after their listing indicating that they also dispense hearing aids. Enrollees of the plan who wish to purchase hearing aids would most likely look under the Hearing Aid category when trying to locate a provider at which they could use their benefit. Unfortunately, the books will not be reprinted until 2003. We have contacted the appropriate people to try to remedy this situation in the new books and have Audiologist who dispense hearing aids, listed under both categories of Audiologist and Hearing Aids.

If there are other changes in the Third party reimbursement issues in your part of the State that you are aware of please share them with your fellow PAA members. We hope to have a regular column in Auds and Ends addressing Third party payments.

Please send information to:

Jeanne Violon Singer
501 Howard Ave.
D203
Altoona, PA. 16601.

**Third Party
Payment...
Things you
need to
know**

**Governmental
Affairs**
**Join the PAC for
PAA**
**What's new in
Harrisburg**

Political Action Committee

James Shaffer, VP Governmental Affairs

This is to announce the development of the PAA Political Action Committee (PAC). The PAA, is looking for volunteers that can regionally support the needs of the PAC. In addition we will need funding for the PAC in order for it to be beneficial to all Audiologists of Pa. We will be raising money in a variety of ways but will be looking for donations from individuals to get the PAC started.

The use of the funds and the goals of the PAC will be discussed in greater detail at the round table forum at the Annual Convention in Pittsburgh. We look forward to your input at this forum and hope you will, join the committee. Of course, your generous donations will be appreciated.

Please email James Shaffer to find out how you can help the future of audiology in Pa., audcon@netrax.net.

From our Lobbyist...

Diane Solerno

The PAA continues to be very busy at the governmental affairs level. We continue to build our reputation and establish our image not only as health care professionals, but also as a source of information albeit in the legislative or administrative branches of state government.

The State Board of Speech Pathologists and Hearing Examiners, herein referred to as the State Board, continues its WORK SESSIONS, which are separate from the regular board meetings, re the practice act. This is a work in progress and there is nothing definitively or legally decided to open the Practice Act. The state board addressed all submitted comments and questions, some at great length, and reached what appears to be palatable agreement.

The intention of the State Board is to seriously consider opening the Practice Act to that the Act may be updated and currently reflect terminology, continuing education and licensure application and renewal.

The State Board offered many assurances that it will NOT OPEN THE ACT until they have heard from all the interested parties. Then, a legislator would be located to introduce the measure. Again, this is a LEGISLATIVE, NOT REGULATORY, PROCESS.

The 2001-2002 legislative session ends at midnight on November 30, 2002; therefore, the clock is quickly ticking away for any legislative initiatives. I will continue to keep PAA members apprised of any new developments.

The Department of Health (DOH) has offered proposed regulations regarding hearing aid dealers and fitters specifically in the areas of CEUs and some fine-tuning re medical waivers. The PAA President has solicited comments and the PAA Board will make a determination re response to the proposed regulations.

DOH also requested the PAA provide two names or individuals to serve on DOH subcommittees. The PAA Board is in the process of doing so and the

names will be announced at a later date.

Rep. Dailey's bill, HB 1845, continues to be mired in the House Health and Human Services Committee due to a few members who chose to link this bill with the nursing shortage crisis - I fail to see the connection as so many others. Rep. Dailey's office contacted me recently re arranging a meeting of the stakeholders over the summer to strategize before the legislature reconvenes in the Fall.

Rep. Cruz' bill, HB 959, which allows for MA payments for hearing aids for those over 21 years of age, continues to linger in the House Appropriations Committee. Due to state budgetary constraints, the chances of this occurring appear very dim.

The legislature will reconvene around the third week of September; so, no votes are being taken at this time. Bills continue to be introduced, committee meetings and public hearing continue to be held,

Diane Solerno cont

but not votes are taken by the full House or Senate.

I have attended all relevant legislative and executive meetings and continued to represent the PAA before the General Assembly. I have attended two State Board meetings and reported outcomes to the PAA. In April, I substituted for Rep. Dailey as the keynote speaker for the AAA National Convention in Philadelphia.

Medicare Reaffirms the definition of an Audiologist

Charles Lindsay, VP-Professional Affairs

The Academy of Dispensing Audiologists announced that on June 7, 2002, Medicare responded to the Audiology community's concerns by reaffirming that audiologists must be defined by State licensure or State regulation and NOT by CCCs from ASHA. Medicare has further advised carriers to "obtain a current listing of audiologists holding the required credentials in the State."

In the early 1990's, Congress enacted an updated definition of an audiologist that directed carriers to rely on State licensure or registration requirements. Three states had no regulations. A generic definition was employed establishing minimum criteria.

In several geographic areas, Medicare and private carriers misinterpreted the Medicare statute and inappropriately required the ASHA CCCs. The

profession immediately recognized the problem and met with Medicare officials concerning this matter. The result was that in April 2001, Medicare issued Transmittal B-01-34 which reaffirmed that the current statute did not require CCCs. Unfortunately, at the end of the notice was the misleading advice stating that "a source for determining an audiologist's professional qualifications is the American Speech Language and Hearing Association's national directory."

Medicare's Transmittal AB-02-080 represents a tremendous victory for the profession of Audiology. It is apparent that Medicare is beginning to view our profession and the services we provide with a renewed interest. Hopefully, we will be able to use the new interest to advance our goal of direct access for older Americans.

Medicare defines Audiologist

Attention PAA Convention Attendees
The University of Pittsburgh
Dept of Communication Science & Disorders &
The Center for Audiology
Cordially Invites you to attend:

Update on Otoacoustic Emissions and Their Applications

Jacek Smurzynski, PhD

September 12, 2002

8:30-11:00 AM

LHAS Auditorium 7th Floor Montefiore Hospital

RSVP : Tim Lucas
412 383-6542
No registration fee

The Mission of the Pennsylvania Academy of Audiology

The Pennsylvania Academy of Audiology represents the "Voice of Audiology" within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The academy is the only state organization that is truly dedicated to meet the need of audiologists. The academy was started in 1991 by ten audiologists from all parts of the Commonwealth and now has a membership of over 200 audiologists.

The Academy is a professional organization of university-trained audiologists practicing in a variety of settings within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and adjacent states. PAA audiologists are dedicated to serving all people with hearing problems. The Academy promotes the profession of audiology as an autonomous profession to serve the hearing health care needs of all people. Further, the Academy fosters the ability of our members to achieve their career and professional objectives, provides quality continuing educational experiences, promotes public and consumer awareness of hearing problems and solutions to improve hearing, and advocates the profession of audiology to regulatory agencies and legislatures in the Pennsylvania general assembly.

The Goals of the Pennsylvania Academy of Audiology

- To improve and promote the evaluation and professional services provided to all people with hearing impairment.
- To improve and promote public and consumer awareness of hearing disorders, their prevention, and their solutions.
- To advocate the rights and protection of all consumers who seek audiological services and hearing health care products to improve their hearing.
- To provide leadership for upgrading professional standards by offering quality continuing education and by advocating the profession of audiology to regulatory and legislative bodies.

To advocate that audiologists are the primary providers of hearing health care.

Barbara A. Vento, PhD
University of Pittsburgh
4033 Forbes Tower
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

**Check our website:
www.paaudiology.org**

