



April 2013

Hearing Loss Association of America

North Shore Chapter of Long Island

Meeting Location

Long Island Jewish Hearing & Speech Center is located on the grounds of the Long Island Jewish Medical Center.

Enter the grounds from LAKEVILLE ROAD and it is the first building on your left. Free parking is available behind the hearing and speech building: first entrance to parking lot after building. DO NOT go into the main parking building. Go to the Conference room on the Lower Level
270-05 76th Avenue
New Hyde Park, NY
11040.

If you are in doubt as to whether there is a meeting, or if you'd like further information, please call Sal: 718-479-1098.

FYI

Assistive Listening Devices (ALD) are provided at our meetings. Headphones are available in the back. This room is Looped, so those who have hearing aids/cochlear implants can put on their T-coil switch.

Meeting News

April 17, 2013

Refreshments and Social Time begins 6:30pm

Meeting begins 7:00pm

Topic: "Meet The Experts"

Our April meeting is one you should not miss! We are always trying to get the most educated and dynamic speakers for our meetings, and this month, we will have a room full of experts on hearing loss. They will be there to exchange ideas and thoughts with you: how to cope with hearing loss, the technologies they use in everyday life, the strategies that are necessary to get through the day, and much more! Come listen, learn, and exchange knowledge.





Hearing Loss Association of America

North Shore Chapter of Long Island

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speakers, goods & services.*

Our Chapter

Our March meeting was a very lively one. Dr. Joel Ziev, our speaker, led the meeting in many fascinating directions. The focus of his talk was on support services and finding help for people with disabilities.

We learned that there are senior centers and state, city and county agencies which offer services for us. From 911 to 311, he explained how to use these services to get the desired results.

There was a great deal of questions and answers during the meeting. Everyone who was there came away with usable knowledge that works in everyday life.

It is really a great experience when we have a wonderful speaker like Dr. Ziev. The only way to gain knowledge and participate in an open dialogue is to attend meetings. I hope I can make you understand how important it is for you to attend meetings and experience all this first hand.

Our next meeting in April is something you should not miss. We are always trying to get the most educated and dynamic speakers for our meetings. In April we will have a room full of experts on hearing loss. They will be there to exchange ideas and thoughts with you, with discussions ranging from how to cope with hearing loss to the technologies the experts use in everyday life.

Don't miss it!

Sal Sturiale

Hearing Loss An 'Invisible,' And Widely Uninsured, Problem

By Jen Christensen , CNN

(CNN)—If you lose a leg, insurance will likely cover the cost of your prosthesis. If you lose your arm, it's the same. Even if you lose your ability to perform sexually, more than likely your Viagra is covered.

But if you start to lose your hearing, far too often you are on your own.

If hearing loss were officially considered a disability, it would rank as the largest disability class in the country. Some 37 million people suffer from hearing loss, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and that number will only grow as the population ages.

Yet most private medical insurance doesn't cover the cost of hearing aids. While the Department of Veterans Affairs often pays for them, in most cases Medicare, which covers many more people, does not.

The Affordable Care Act expanded coverage to include newborn hearing screenings when it passed in 2010, but that was the single preventive-care expansion related to hearing problems. It would take an actual act of Congress to change it further.

Only 19 states require that health benefits plans in their states pay for hearing aids; most cover children only, according to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Only three states require coverage for both children and adults.

When private insurance does pay, it typically covers the cost of an exam to assess hearing loss, and that's about it.

The devices are expensive, sometimes costing in the \$1,000 to \$6,000 range—and that's per ear. Perhaps this explains, at least in part, why 75% to 80% of adults with hearing loss do not get hearing aids, according to a recent study done by Virginia Ramachandran, a senior staff audiologist in the Division of Audiology of the Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. Her study showed the only group that consistently got hearing aids had insurance that paid for them in full.

Hearing aids are considered elective, much like plastic surgery or liposuction. But unlike those cosmetic procedures, life without hearing can have devastating effects. It can leave people feeling isolated or depressed and may even lead to serious illnesses like dementia. It can put their safety at risk.

"It's really an invisible disability," said Laura Hansen, owner of Assist2Hear, a Littleton, Colorado-based hearing assistance company. She got involved in the profession after seeing her father struggle when he started losing his hearing. No one was there to really advocate for him, she said.

"You know, I think it stays invisible in part because of our culture," she said. "My parents' generation kind of accepted their hearing loss as just a way of life, and they didn't want to fuss with the technology, but ultimately they ended up isolating themselves."

Audiologist Virginia Ramachandran would agree. "People don't always perceive that they need (hearing aids), because hearing loss comes on gradually. Usually they are the last person to know. Eventually, though, we all go through this," Ramachandran said.

Continued on Page 4

We start losing our hearing as early as our 20s, but most people aren't aware of it—or they're in denial.

"Maybe it's because it makes people think about their mortality, or it makes them feel old," Ramachandran said. "I had one 90-year-old patient who came to me and when I confirmed they did have hearing loss, they said, 'I don't understand what could have caused this.' I had to tell them as we mature, this is a natural part of the process."

Most people Hansen talks to are surprised that hearing aids aren't typically covered by insurance. She said she thinks that will change as her baby boom generation gets older and needs them more.

"Unlike our parents' generation, we are not afraid to complain. I do think you'll see a lot more pressure on the government and on private companies to pay for more," Hansen said.

But until then, don't expect to see this change any time soon. "There are 35 other mandated benefits you have to cover," said Susan Pisano, vice president of communications for America's Health Insurance Plans, a professional association that represents the health insurance industry. "To add something else—especially with the high cost of health care, which will only continue to go up—it is going to be a hard argument to make."

Where the argument might get easier is with children. "Hearing devices are an absolute necessity for children," Ramachandran said. "They are still developing speech and language, so they need to hear. Older people do need them, but they have an advantage over children with hearing loss. They already have experience with language, and their brain can sometimes fill in the gap with words they don't always hear. Children don't have that experience, and untreated hearing loss will severely hurt their development."

Jocelyn Ross knows that worry all too well. Her daughter Alyssa, born in 2009, is one of the 13,000 or so children born in the U.S. each year with congenital hearing loss. It is one of the most common sensory birth defects.

In South Carolina, where the Ross family lives, roughly 4% of infants fail the newborn hearing screening, according to Ross. Yet none of them receive any help under the state's public health law. Ross is trying to change that. She founded Let South Carolina Hear and helped persuade a state legislator to introduce a bill this year that would cover at least part of the cost. The legislation didn't make it through this session, but Ross is hopeful it will pass someday.

She needs to be. Ross says each of her daughter's behind-the-ear hearing aids cost \$2,500. The devices require constant adjustment and will need to be replaced every few years as Alyssa grows older. If Ross lived in neighboring North Carolina, at least some of the cost of Alyssa's devices would be covered, but because she lives in South Carolina, that cost comes out of her pocket.

"This is a major life function, especially for children," Ross said. "I don't want her to have any limits, and with the devices she can do anything she wants to do. This is an expense that would be hard for anyone, but you do what you have to do." She says she worries, though, about the families that can't find that \$2,500, and wonders what happens to their children, because she's seen how much hearing aids have transformed her daughter's life.

"Even when she was 2, she would point to her ears if the batteries got low," Ross said. "She only takes them off when she wants to go to sleep. She wants very much to be a part of the world, and she needs them to do this—and so do so many others."

We Welcome All Donations

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Be sure to designate who to acknowledge for your donation. For example: "this donation is: In Memory of; or In Honor of; or Happy Birthday; or Congratulations to..."

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Thank you!

Mark Your Calendars

Our June 19th meeting will be our annual picnic (rain date June 20th). This is a fun event for our members, because we get to mingle with each other, something we never get to do at meetings. It will be held at Stepping Stone Park in Great Neck. We will provide all the food and beverages. You may bring a friend, significant other, even your wife or husband.

There will be a \$5.00 per person charge.

Please get in touch with Hilda Drucker at (516) 482-6433 or hildad@mailbug.com to confirm.

Directions will be provided in the next newsletter.

Make A Note

Our May meeting will be on LOOPING. We will cover all areas of looping, including museums, houses of worship, train stations, airports, and most importantly, looping your home. **You really want to be at this meeting.** There will be CART (Real Time Captioning) provided.

Joke Corner

Have you ever looked at someone your own age and thought, "Surely I can't look that old"?

I was sitting in the waiting room for my first appointment with a new dentist. I saw his diploma on the wall, which had his full name. Suddenly, I remembered that a tall, handsome dark-haired boy with the same name was in my high school class around 30 years ago.

Could he be the same guy that I had a secret crush on, back then?

When I saw him, however, I quickly discarded any such thought. This balding, gray-haired man with the deeply lined face was way too old to have been my classmate.

After he examined my teeth, I asked him if he had attended the City High School.

"Why yes, I did. I'm a Colt," he gleamed with pride.

"When did you graduate?" I asked.

He answered, "In 1974. Why do you ask?"

"You were in my class!" I exclaimed.

He looked at me closely.

Then that ugly, old, bald, wrinkle-faced, rotund, gray-haired, decrepit son of a gun asked me:

"What did you teach?"

Stay Connected

Make sure you're on our chapter email list, so we can quickly notify you of important and time-sensitive information, such as meeting changes, etc. Send us a note at:

hlaalongisland@gmail.com.

Email Newsletter

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80-38 212 Street
Hollis Hills, NY 11427

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Membership Dues

Stay abreast of pertinent news and information. Send in your dues today.

Dues include Newsletter.

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