

Communication Access Across the Health Care Continuum
SECOND FRIDAY FORUM
MINUTES

March 25, 2022 Noon Eastern Time

Speakers:

Thank you to our speakers, Toni and Peggy, for discussing your work and launching a lively and collaborative discussion.

Toni Iacolucci serves on the leadership team of Hearing Loss Association of America's (HLAA) Communication Access in Health Care program. She co-authored the Guide for Effective Communication in Health Care, distributed nationally. Toni is a Board Member of HLAA-NYC and formerly served on HLAA's National Board. Previous experience includes bringing communication access to city agencies and cultural venues and a career in social work administration. With her new CI, she hears for the first time in 15 years.

Peggy Ellertsen, CCC-SLP served as a member of the Board of Directors of Hearing Loss Association of America (2015-2020) and is currently a volunteer contributor to HLAA's Communication Access in Health Care program. She serves on the Management Board of Hearing Rehabilitation Foundation in Woburn, MA and volunteers as a peer mentor for Advanced Bionics cochlear implant candidates and recipients. Peggy completed the Peer Mentoring for Hearing Loss Certification Program at Gallaudet University In 2011.

Discussion:

Link to the Hearing Loss Association of America Communication Access in Health Care Stakeholders registration page (takes 30 sec to complete), quarterly newsletter:

<https://communication-access-health-care.gr8.com/>

- Described the work of HLAA including information about it's history
- Described the challenges about communication challenges in healthcare
 - o 1st focused on patient empowerment and patient advocacy, giving tools to self-advocate and work with healthcare providers
 - o 2 years ago, Communication Access and Healthcare Program was created - barriers to access are faced not only by patients but also those in the healthcare systems - goals expanded to address barriers in broader stakeholder group

- Lack of awareness of prevalence of HL
- Difficulties related to the environment and staff training (e.g., registration, intakes)
- Research work to learn more about public health and outcomes in this area
 - o Nicholas Reed; Megan Morris
- Collaborations w/ PPC Group , Disability, Equity Consortium

Meg Wallhagen

- Nurse researcher; UCSF (diversity, equity, and inclusion), AVA Voice Detects Transcription services, accessible exam tables
- Elaine McCaffery - retired attorney, developed HLAA Hospital Safety Program

Toni - cared for severely ill family member with hearing loss, person with HL; patient panel designed for sensitization of med school students, disability equity consortium

Development of effective systems to ID disabilities, their accommodations in EMR and standards of care in telehealth

Peggy - SLP w/ hearing loss (HL), projects to increase education and awareness of HL in healthcare

- Hearing Life Magazine columns - narratives from pts + providers as well as updates
- Wants to SLPs and Auds to have resources to envision the function of hearing loss in health care, default as needs assessment

Hearing Rehabilitation Conference - hearing healthcare professionals

Interests in preparing healthcare student providers

Stories of telehealth and HL

AA Medical Colleges - developing curricula and impact telehealth in future

June - Question about Disability Equity Collaborative (Megan Morris is founder) - website <https://www.disabilityequitycollaborative.org/>; finding out about improving the systems supporting people with disabilities

Toni - hoping to have a website in the next few weeks about the Comm Access website and resources

Which are long term and worth it vs what will fade into the sunset? What will have fast and impactful outcomes?

Toni - pts are not speaking up for a lot of reasons (stigma, white coat syndrome) so we can't rely on the pts to do that so it's strongly felt that the system should have some responsibilities; important to have staff help pt's advocate for themselves and for system change

Sarah - what are the barriers specifically to policy? Not wanting to be in silos (e.g., hearing, AAC, etc inpatient vs outpatient, etc)

Meg

1. Inpatient - busy setting, highly complex and some things get pushed aside as "lower priorities" - needing to push it higher - one "in" was related to masks; reprimanded and pay out include pressure injuries, falls (bottom dollar), don't see sensory issues as high
2. Ppl asked to do so much across different conditions, time issues - if it was mandated, then it gets paid attention to
3. No way to comm without them hearing you, may not understand that they are missing things - just try this (personal amplifier), personalized needs but it adds to the complexity and the cost of the setting

June: The estimates of those who live with HL are all over the underestimated map. What is your favorite soundbite or elevator speech in terms of the numbers?

- Peggy - did not have numbers on hand but will provide that to us; we almost don't know
- Toni shared - hearingloss.org for the hearing loss stats

Richard - had a question about if there has been steps to align w/ the Joint Commission?
Proposes needing to have a better intake/dynamic assessment flowsheet to make sure they are able to participate both receiving/understanding and expressing their health information

Meg - trouble is that JC is looking for RCTs but its hard to do! Important to keep pushing and get pt perspectives to publicize their problems and get their attention

Megan asked - how are you overcoming difficulties of implementation with all the short staffing?

Tami - trying to show the nurses that it's easy to do to get people the resources that they need

Krista - plug in a headset to smartphones and use a free amplifier app, speech-to-text to allow a person to read the message or Google Live Transcribe for language translation, it's already in everyone's pockets!!!

- Low cost Pocket talker - pts take them home with them and it helps them to access; bypassing the evaluation

Rachel - partnerships with pts and providers, making things seem easy, new, and doable

Jess - might be a ripe environment for change since there are so many new staff that we can leverage their hunger to learn and not have to overwrite entrenched patterns

June provided a resource: Health Plan Member-Focused Emergency Practices Roadmap - <http://www.jik.com/mrp.html>

Katherine Palmer - UPMC - network of interventions in audiology in UPMC, outcomes are that all people are starting to think addressing hearing challenges; power of a pocket talker; needs to have data tracking this; likely that the outcomes are more positive when they use these tools but there is no data.

- What is lacking - effects of simple tools on outcomes - there's no data
- A Lot of places don't have audiology access (e.g., rural and low resources)
- What are basic things that all hospitals can and will do?

Forum Participants – Thank you for joining!

Rachel Santiago

Tami Altschuler

Jessica Gormley

Peggy Ellertsen

Stacey Harpell

Sarah Blackstone

Toni Iacolucci

Whitney Cobas - Lingraphica

Meredith Sager

Grace Gahan - grad student @ BU

Cissy Cheng

Julie Feuerstein

June Kailes

Harvey Pressman

Lois Turner

Richard Hurtig

Megan Wallhagen

Meggyn Nunamaker - cannot speak, types on a ventilator hospital in Kentucky

Krista Kramer

NEXT MEETING: FRIDAY, May 13, 2022 NOON EASTERN