



Wednesday, October 17, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Hearing Loss Association of America's Santa Fe chapter, this letter has been written to ask for your support of a change to the applicable New Mexico statute that addresses the scope of practice for audiologists and hearing aid dispensers that would require them to counsel clients about hearing aid options that can provide a direct connection between their hearing aids and assistive listening systems (ALS) that meet the standards set forth in the 2010 revisions to the American With Disabilities Act (ADA) for assistive listening systems.

Even the best hearing aids are not able to provide the necessary clarity in many settings, particularly in large assembly areas. To address this shortcoming, assistive listening systems are required by the ADA in most large public venues and are also found in the vast majority of places of worship. An ALS will make it possible for a person with significant hearing loss to hear and participate in proceedings that otherwise might be unintelligible.

The experience at our HLAA chapter meetings is that far too many hearing aid users have never been told about the ability of most hearing aids to connect wirelessly to some ALS without the need for a headset. They simply touch a button on their hearing aids or cochlear implant to turn off the microphone in their hearing aids and turn on small copper coils in the devices called telecoils. Although the vast majority of hearing aid models have telecoils, they are often not even activated by the hearing care provider and the person is not told that their hearing aids even have this capability.

There are growing numbers of places in Santa Fe and throughout New Mexico where hearing aid wearers can access such an ALS but those wearers must know about the technology and that their hearing aids have this capability. Therefore, we urge you to support a statute change that would require that hearing aid buyers be counseled in this technology so that they can make an informed decision as to whether or not they would want this feature included and activated in their hearing aids.

Respectfully,

John J. Hooper

President and
The Board of Directors - Santa Fe Chapter,
Hearing Loss Association of America