

Happenings

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The Canadian Academy of Audiology

CAASPR/ACROA: Update on Regulatory Activities

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Healthcare Leaders Call for Action on Hearing Loss

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/2015/03/23/hearing-loss/>

Source: NHS UK.

A new 'Action Plan on Hearing Loss' to support services for deaf people and those with diminishing hearing has been produced by NHS England and the Department of Health.

The plan has been developed with a number of organisations including Public Health England, hearing loss charities and those whose hearing is directly affected.

Aimed at commissioners, Clinical Commissioning Groups, GPs and healthcare providers, the report identifies multiple health and social issues associated with hearing loss. It recommends ways that services for children, young people, working age and older adults living with hearing loss can be improved.

Hearing loss affects the development of language in children. It reduces chances of employment in adults and also increases the risk of other health problems such as mental health. Additionally, hearing loss and deafness reduces people's ability to care for their own and their families' long-term health conditions.

The report sets out five key objectives in the following areas:

1. Good prevention – for example reducing the numbers of young people and adults with noise induced hearing loss; including through immunisation and screening and utilising quality data to understand the social, financial and personal health advantages
2. Earlier diagnosis – for example improving outcomes for babies with hearing loss, increasing identification of the number of children and adults in at risk groups
3. Integrated services – for example reducing developmental and educational gaps due to childhood hearing loss and increasing the number of children, young people and adults with a personalised care plan
4. Increased independence and ageing well – for example including access to technology including support by mobile or tele healthcare and improving access to wider health services from primary to end of life care

5. Good learning outcomes – for example including improving employment opportunities for young people and adults and reducing development and attainment gaps between deaf and hearing children

The direct cost to the NHS of managing hearing loss is estimated to cost up to £450 million a year. Clinical Commissioning Groups will continue to decide what is commissioned locally to address local hearing needs.

Sir Bruce Keogh, Medical Director of NHS England, said: “This plan acknowledges and begins to address the growing problems of hearing loss which has significant economic, social and personal consequences including unemployment and feelings of isolation, exclusion and even depression.”

A hearing loss commissioning framework is also planned to ensure a more person centred and integrated approach and encourage best practice across hearing loss service commissioners.

Professor Sue Hill OBE, Chief Scientific Officer, said: “I was very pleased to lead the development of the Action Plan which represents a true partnership with all stakeholders and provides an excellent blueprint for bringing together a wide range of public organisations committed to improving services for children and adults with hearing loss. Hearing problems are a growing challenge with over 10 million people living with some form of hearing loss which impacts on their ability to fully participate in society which are addressed in this Plan.”

Brian Lamb OBE, Chair of the Hearing Loss and Deafness Alliance, said: “The impact of hearing loss on peoples overall health and well-being has been hugely underestimated until now. The Action Plan is a welcome and essential step to ensure that there is a more joined up approach across public services working with the hearing loss sector. We know that if people are supported to address their hearing loss early they will have better health and well-being leading to less pressure on health and social care services in the future. We have the technology and knowledge to address hearing loss; the Action Plan will help ensure we do so.”

Paul Breckell, Chief Executive of Action on Hearing Loss, said: “The Action Plan finally recognises hearing loss as a priority health issue, reflecting the scale of the condition that affects one in six people across the UK. We know that consistent, high-quality services are vital to ensure that people are able to seek advice from their GP, understand the impacts of, and best manage their hearing loss. We’re eager to ensure that the promised standards are developed as soon as possible, to avoid this much-anticipated Plan gathering dust on a shelf.”

William Demant enters into exclusive negotiations to take over Audika

Source: World Audiology News

William Demant announces that the Company has entered into exclusive negotiations for the potential purchase of 53.9% of the share capital of Audika from the controlling shareholder Holton SAS at a price of EUR 17.78 per share.

Headquartered in Paris, France, Audika is a leading French network of hearing care providers with more than 460 points of sale across France. In 2014, Audika recorded revenue of EUR 98.7 million as announced by the company on 19 January 2015.

If successful, the purchase of the controlling interest in Audika will under French takeover regulations commit William Demant to commence a mandatory public tender offer for the remaining 46.1% of the outstanding share capital of Audika. The acquisition of the controlling

interest in Audika is subject to approval by the French competition authority. Timewise, the mandatory public tender offer is expected to close in June 2015 at the earliest.

The entire transaction will amount to an equity value of EUR 168 million. The price of EUR 17.78 per share represents a premium of approx. 32% on top of the most recent stock price quoted on Euronext Paris and a premium of approx. 46% compared to Audika's weighted average share price over the last three months.

For decades, William Demant has been a supplier of hearing instruments to Audika, and under the assumption that the acquisition process will be successful, the partnership is bound to be strengthened even further.

Bill Would Create a Demonstration Program for Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing U.S. Air Force Members

By David H. Kirkwood

Source: HearingHealthMatters.org

Since its enactment in 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has made public accommodations, telecommunications technology, and the workplace more accessible to countless people with hearing loss. For example, just last month, the New York Police Department, following the lead of departments around the country, [opened its doors](#) to police officers who need hearing aids to pass its hearing test.

Legislation introduced March 26 in the U.S. House of Representatives, proposes a more aggressive application of the ADA, one that would permit a small number of deaf and hard-of-hearing men and women to join the United States Air Force as part of a demonstration program.

Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA) introduced the Keith Nolan Air Force Deaf Demonstration Act ([H.R. 1722](#)), after meeting the man the bill is named for. Nolan, Takano wrote in a [commentary](#) in the April 5 issue of *Military Times*, "shared with me his lifelong dream to serve in the military, as his family members before him did."

Although Nolan, who is deaf, completed the first two levels of the Army ROTC program at California State University, Northridge, with flying colors, and without the help of an interpreter, he was not allowed to continue his training. Department of Defense medical standards for enlistment in the military exclude anyone who is deaf, uses a hearing aid, or has a cochlear implant.

Takano, a two-term Congressman from Riverside CA, said that he championed the legislation, "inspired by the passion and dedication of Keith and countless deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals."

If enacted, the law would create a demonstration program for 15 to 20 people who meet all essential qualifications to serve as an officer in the Air Force, except those related to auditory impairment. Participants would include both people who are deaf and people with a range of other auditory impairments. They would be provided with, the bill states, "the necessary auxiliary aids and services in order to fully participate in the demonstration program."

Takano introduced a similar bill last July as the House counterpart of a Senate bill sponsored by Tom Harkin. Harkin, one of the leaders in the passage of the ADA and a prominent advocate for people with hearing loss, retired last year after representing Iowa in the Senate for 30 years.

MAKING THE CASE

While admitting people who are deaf into the armed forces might seem far-fetched, Takano argues otherwise in his article in *Military Times*. In fact, he points out, there is already a model for the United States to follow. The highly regarded **Israeli Defense Force**, he says, “has successfully integrated more than 100 deaf and hard-of-hearing soldiers into regular units.” He notes that the Israeli military has also created a sign language course to help commanders better communicate with their deaf soldiers.”

Takano, a former schoolteacher who serves on the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee, explains that the Deaf Demonstration program is designed to “create an opportunity for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals to serve their country and an opportunity to see if this larger integration of the deaf community into the military could work.”

He emphasizes that his bill “does not ask for complete, immediate integration. It is simply a pilot program to see what the obstacles are for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals to serve in active-duty military roles and if they can overcome them.”

SUPPORT FROM AN AIR FORCE PILOT

Takano’s proposal has received a vote of confidence from Air Force Capt. Casey Doane, whose mother, father, and younger brother, are hearing impaired. Doane, a helicopter pilot with normal hearing, **wrote**:

“From my direct experience I can say it is entirely possible for deaf or hard-of-hearing Americans to serve in the Air Force. Obviously, certain accommodations and limitations would have to be made, but ultimately no more than for other individuals with unique circumstances who are already serving.”

Capt. Doane added, “Growing up in a deaf family I was able to see first-hand the adversity that deaf individuals faced every day. But more importantly, I was able to see the determination and perseverance that is necessary to serve as a leader in the Air Force. In fact, I credit my own determination to those experiences.”

After its introduction, H.R. 1722, which is co-sponsored by Representatives Niki Tsongas, John Delaney, Ted Lieu, and Chris Van Hollen, was referred to the House Committee on Armed Services.

Save the Date!

CHHA National Conference 2015: May 21-23

Halifax, Nova Scotia



Special Keynote speaker, Dr. Steve Aiken, presents: “It’s All in Your Head: Listening to What the Brain Has to Say”, an upbeat and interactive presentation that will talk about the role that the brain

plays in the perception of sound and how you can get the most out of your hearing.

See the schedule and more at: <http://www.chha.ca/conference/index2.php>
