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Message from the President

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Salima Jiwani, PhD, MSc

I have been involved with many discussions with audiologist colleagues and friends about the issues surrounding stigma with hearing loss and hearing aids, lately. In my opinion, while we are slowly increasing awareness of audiology and audiologists in the world, we still have much more to do before the topic of hearing health care becomes part of everyone's vocabulary, and more importantly, part of everyone's health care routine. How then, can we break away from the stigma associated with hearing loss, that is so prevalent in our society? Do we change the message? Do we eliminate certain words from our audiology vocabulary? Do we work to increase awareness and acceptance of hearing, hearing health and hearing loss? Do we increase awareness of audiology as a field and audiologists as a profession to help our potential future patients and other health care providers understand our full-service scope of practice? Do we work to increase accessibility of hearing health care with our government leaders? These are difficult challenges and I believe that the answer to each should be YES! It will require a lot of work to achieve our vision of reducing stigma related to hearing loss. Thankfully, to help us along the way, we have May month and in Canada, we have the Canadian Academy of Audiology (CAA).

May month is a wonderful time for our profession. Each year, Audiologists dedicate the month of May to raising awareness of hearing health care and communication health care. We do this with a number of campaigns. CAA is no exception to this. We develop themed campaigns with targeted messaging to highlight the importance of taking care of our hearing health. This year, CAA campaigns focus on the themes: "Don't Disconnect" and "Hearing is of Everyone." Outside of CAA, audiologists throughout the country engage in a variety of promotional and awareness initiatives through the clinics or hospitals where they work, the schools where they teach and through volunteer services and educational initiatives in their communities. A lot of time, effort and thought goes into developing these campaigns, especially when the goal is to make a 'big picture' difference in our profession. In my own clinic, AudioSense, I have been inspired by all the work that CAA does to develop May month campaigns with the "big picture" in mind, and add a 'cool factor', a 'fun factor', an 'accessibility factor' and a 'for everyone factor' to all the campaigns, promotions, educational initiatives and services we have been developing. It is no 'ice bucket challenge' yet, but hopefully, these campaigns bring us one step closer to debunking the stigma associated with hearing loss and may help to influence the powers that be to help make hearing health care, and in particular, Audiology services more accessible to our patients. With this said, I wish you all the best of luck this May month and hope you have the most fun with planning and delivering your campaigns to make a difference.