

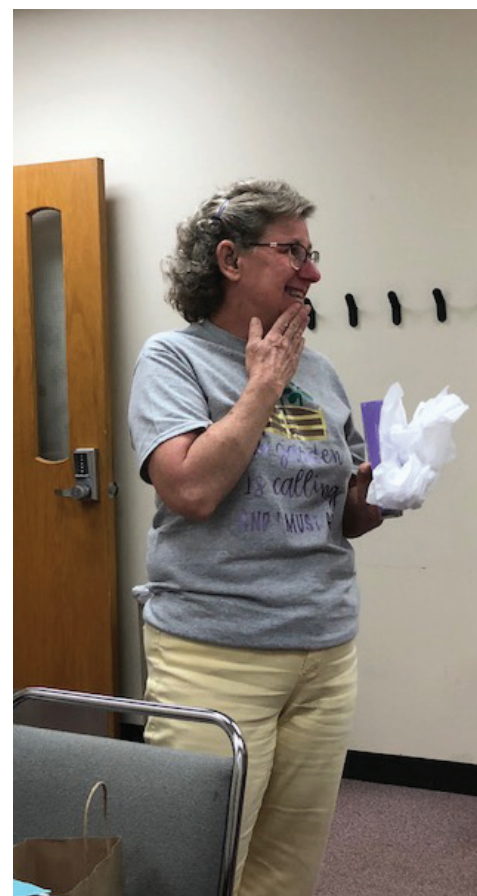
THE COMMUNICATOR

NEBRASKA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Longtime NCDHH Advocacy Specialist Beth Ellsworth Retires

On June 5, 2018 we celebrated the long time career of NCDHH Advocacy Specialist, Beth Ellsworth. Beth started working for the Commission on July 17, 1997. Throughout her time here she met with thousands of clients advocating, assisting, helping connect Nebraskans to better access to effective communication. Beth embodied the mission of this agency to its fullest: promoting and advocating for Nebraskans who are Deaf, DeafBlind or Hard of Hearing. Beth's final day of her work here will be June 29, 2018.



Tips to Working with Elected Officials

John Wyvill, Executive Director



For the broader deaf and hard of hearing community we have a slogan: “nothing about us, without us”. But what does that really mean in terms of advocacy among elected officials. It means to me that our elected officials should receive our input, advice and thoughts before making decisions about our community. Here are some general tips to enhance your communications with elected officials.

- Get to know your elected officials on the local, state and national level. If they don’t know who you are, how do you expect them to help you?
- Understand how the legislative process works and who the players are to improve your ability to influence actions. On the city level, understand how the mayor and city council works. On the state level, understand how a bill becomes law.
- Be sure you understand the significant dates, committees and opportunity for input in this process. There are many different steps in the legislative process. You must be prepared to be at every step in the process to support your advocacy goal.
- Don’t forget the personal touch. This is often times the most effective tactic because it shows your commitment, how it impacts you and your willingness to do something about it.
- In your interaction with elected officials, limit your message to one subject at time during a meeting.
- Be brief. If you provide written materials, aim for one page or less. Include pertinent information only. Brevity, brevity, brevity.

As always, reflect back on your work to see what works or doesn’t so you can improve your efforts in the future. Don’t be afraid to adapt and improvise if something is not working

Farewell to Beth Ellsworth

On a personal note, I do want to take time to acknowledge that one of NCDHH long time employees, Beth Ellsworth is retiring for her years of faithful service and taking up gardening full time. I have worked with Beth for nearly five years and have seen her help client after client. One recent client comes to mind in which Beth went above and beyond time and time again to ensure that the client had the appropriate support and advocacy. When the client thanked Beth for doing this, she was so humble and shrugged her shoulders and said, “I am just doing my job helping people”. NCDHH is a better place because Beth Ellsworth worked here and made a difference to so many. Beth doing her job was a positive life changing experience for so many. I have proud to say that I worked with and for Beth. Thanks for all you have done!



NCDHH
Nebraska Commission
for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



NEBRASKA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF & HARD OF HEARING

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 | 6:45pm

WICHITA WINGNUTS vs. LINCOLN SALTDogs

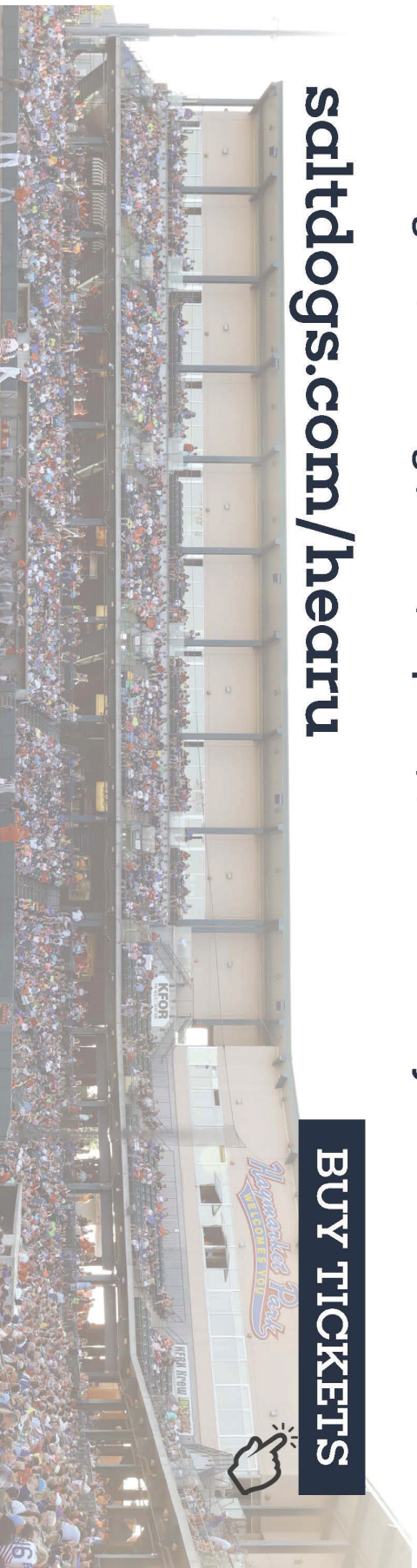
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\$11.00/Ticket: A portion of the proceeds will go to the hearing aid banks!

Buck Night: \$1 Hotdogs, Sodas, Popcorn, \$2 Select Tall Boys & Domestic Draws!

saltdogs.com/hearu

BUY TICKETS



Lincoln Grand Cinema to Offer Open Captioning Pilot Program



Continued work for the NCDHH Full Board's mission of full communication access in movie theaters in Nebraska is taking one great step forward. With the advocating help of Lincoln Mayor Chris Buetler, Marcus Theatres has agreed to a pilot open captioning program at the Lincoln Grand Theatre, starting May 26th. "We appreciate the Mayor's ongoing effort to make the city of Lincoln more inclusive to advocate for communication access to all," NCDHH Executive Director John Wyvill said. NCDHH has been involved with movie theatres around the state in the quest to move forward for more accessibility. "We want to give a

big hand wave to Marcus Theatres for their willingness to have a pilot program to improve communication access at the movies for individuals in the Lincoln area."

Various media coverage including the Lincoln Journal Star, Channel 8 Eyewitness News, KFOR 1240 AM and more have promoted this pilot program in our hopes to encourage all individuals able to commute to the Lincoln Grand Theatre for these shows and contribute feedback to Marcus Theatres.

Feedback can be provided to Mayor Beutler at mayor@lincoln.ne.gov 555 South 10th St. Suite 301, Lincoln, NE 68508 or to Marcus Theatres at lisafrida@marcustheatres.com 1101 P. St., Lincoln, NE 68508



Current Open Captioning Program Schedule:

Incredibles 2

Saturday, June 16 at Noon
Wednesday, June 20 at 5:00pm

Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom

Saturday, June 23 at Noon
Wednesday, June 27 at 5:00pm

The Hustle

Saturday, June 30 at Noon
Wednesday, July 4 at 5:00pm

Ant-Man and the Wasp

Saturday, July 7 at Noon
Wednesday, July 11 at 5:00pm
Wednesday, August 1 at 5:00pm

Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation

Saturday, July 14 at Noon
Wednesday, July 18 at 5:00pm

Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again

Saturday, July 21 at Noon
Wednesday, July 25 at 5:00pm

Mission Impossible-Fallout

Saturday, July 28 at Noon

It is through the work and help of our stakeholders Omaha Association of the Deaf, Lincoln Deaf Club, Hearing Loss Association of America and Nebraska Association of the Deaf we are one step closer to communication access for all at the movies.

**SAVE THE
DATE**

**OCTOBER
26 / 27**



EDUCATION SUMMIT

Keynote Speakers

Presentations

Breakout Sessions

Topics Include:
Bilingual Communication,
Childhood Education
Partnership in the home, school &
community

More Information to Come!
Contact: Jenny Corum at
jenny.corum@nebraska.gov

Information to Know about an IEP

Jenny Corum, Education Advocate



As a parent, attending an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) can be extremely intimidating. Parents may be intimidated by school administrators and experts in this field. Parents grow anxious and stressed before attending an IEP meeting, especially if previous meetings have not gone the way they have wanted. In reality, everyone is there for the same reason, to develop an educational plan reflecting the child's needs and goals, including accommodations. Here are a few tips to help you prepare for your child's next IEP meeting.

Know your rights and options. IDEA requires school districts to provide parents with information regarding their parental rights, special education laws, regulations, and policies. Familiarize yourself with these laws and protections, and always remember that as the parent you are an equal decision maker when it comes to your child's needs. Your voice is essential at the meeting. Talk to other parents and parent organizations. There are organizations like Hands and voices, NeAD, and NCDHH that have advocates, resources, and/or tools to help parents prepare and guide them through the IEP process.

Get organized and come to meetings prepared. Make sure you receive a current copy of your child's IEP and review the IEP prior to the meeting. Consider developing a parent report. A parent report can contain information about your child's strengths, what a parent wants for their child and what accommodations your child may need to achieve goals. It can also include your child's point of view which can be very powerful in an IEP meeting. Compile a list of questions to ask during the meeting. This will help the team stay on track and allow the parent to ask their questions/concerns. Stay positive. Stay positive and be respectful to each of the team members throughout the meeting but do not be afraid to be assertive. Always remember that you do not have to agree on the IEP right away. You can always request to have a draft copy be sent to you and allow time for the parent(s) to review it before making final decisions.

Scheduling. A parent can always reschedule a meeting. If a certain date does not work for you or another individual you may be bringing to the meeting, you can always ask for alternative dates. If a parent feels that the meeting is becoming hostile or just needs to take some extra time to reflect on the IEP recommended, a parent can request to reschedule the meeting giving them time to reflect.

Always remember that YOU have control over the quality of your child's education. Please contact me at jenny.corum@nebraska.gov if you have any questions or concerns with your child's IEP and I will be more than happy to provide more tools and resources.

Meet NCDHH's Newest Intern

Macee Helmick



Say hello to Macee! She is going to be joining NCDHH for the next 10 weeks as our intern. Macee grew up in Nebraska and is currently finishing up her college career at RIT/NTID pursuing an Associate's degree of Occupational Studies; with her program of study in Business Technology. She will be spending some time in the Lincoln office as well as our Omaha office. If you're around the area, say hi!

Mother-Father Deaf Day

Pamela Duncan, Interpreter Program Coordinator

What is Mother-Father Deaf Day?

The last Sunday in April is designated Mother-Father Deaf Day which is a day that CODAs (Child of Deaf Adult) around the world acknowledge and celebrate our deaf parents. The day also reflects our bi-cultural experiences. Many local groups and deaf parent groups with young KODAs (Kids of Deaf Adults) will plan picnics and other events.



The event's purpose is to celebrate deaf parents of hearing children by preserving deaf culture and heritage. We are grateful to our parents and their friends for giving us this rich gift of culture and language.

In 1994 at the CODA International conference, the membership unanimously passed a resolution proclaiming that Mother-Father Deaf Day shall be established and celebrated annually to honor our parents for the gifts of language and culture that they have given us. The first official observance was in 1996.

In collaboration with the Nebraska Association for the Deaf, Omaha Association for the Deaf and Lincoln Association for the Deaf, we hosted our first annual Mother-Father Deaf Day picnic on April 29, 2018 at Peterson Park in Gretna, Nebraska.

We came together to share food and stories and had the chance to observe how tight-knit the community is. The youngest CODA present was 1 month old Ayla Jo Weyers, and the oldest deaf parent present was Dr. Frank Turk (88 years old). We hosted approximately 70 adults and children and look forward to next year's event, which will be held at the same park on April 28, 2019.



Zoo Events: Scottsbluff & Omaha!

SAVE THE DATE!



Deaf & Hard of Hearing Awareness Day

Saturday, September 8

1:00pm-4:00pm

Riverside Discovery Center

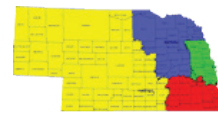
1600 S. Beltline Hwy W, Scottsbluff, NE 69361



Crafts, Sensory Safaris, Fun & more!



NE Regional Program



Contact:

Brittney Isom 308-633-3751 brittney.isom@nebraska.gov

Sara Peterson 308-641-1402 speterson@esu13.org

SAVE THE DATE! SEPTEMBER 30, 2018 OMAHA HENRY DOORLY ZOO

More details to come!

Self Care in the Summer

Carly Weyers, Behavioral Health Coordinator

While some people are counting down the days for the warmth and relaxation of summer, the summer months can trigger mental health issues for some people. The unstructured schedule with three months of freedom from school can be very overwhelming.



For parents, the unstructured schedule in a child's day can be very stressful, but to make things easier, you can talk with your child to discuss the expectations for summer break and what their goals are. Try to be consistent with your schedule as much as you can by setting up play dates with friends, send them to summer camps or daycare programs. That would keep their mind busy and make things easier for you to go work and maintain your schedule. For teens, you could encourage them to get a part-time job or find a volunteer activity to help them learn about work ethics and find their interest in careers! It would also keep them busy! As for college students, a break from school will be nice but three months might be too long. Summer would be a perfect time for you to find an internship or continuing work on your career/educational goals to build your resume and keep you focused!

As an individual, it would be a good idea to keep yourself moving: go for hikes, find a bike trail or challenge yourself with a new activity! Summer is also a good time to plan a getaway. Most people use their vacation time to do errands, but summer is a good time to use hours for self-care: go to the pool, pick up a book or enjoy lunch with your friends. That would reduce your stress especially during summer!

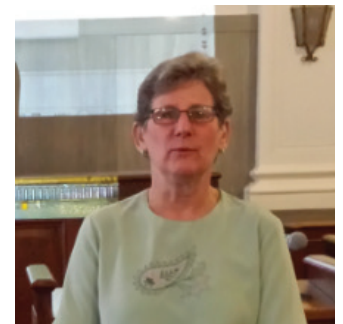
Emergency Preparedness

Beth Ellsworth, Advocacy Specialist

With all of the flooding going on and the unexpectedness of disasters it is so important to prepare so we are not caught off guard. But what is necessary and what is not?

Speaking of emergency supplies; here is a list of important items to include:

- Extra batteries for hearing aids, implants, light or loud phone signaler. It is a good idea to have at least one battery operated phone and signaler (light or audible)
- Keep one battery operated phone and signaler charged
- Have pen, pencil and pad of paper stored in a secure place (NCDHH has a terrific card that identifies emergency contact, communication tips and pictures and phrases) for emergency personnel
- Prepare in advance
- Contact the American Red Cross in your area and talk with them about your needs in the event of an emergency
- Contact your TV stations and keep on them to broadcast all news and emergency information in open caption format
- Be an advocate and tell hotels and places you stay what you will need. TV with closed captioning, amplified phone, visual and audible alarms



This is just a start to what needs to be done to prepare for an emergency. To learn more contact the American Red Cross at www.Prepare.org If you do not have internet please contact me for a written copy of the American Red Cross guidelines specific for hearing loss. I would be happy to work with you in making a plan!

Be Emergency Ready!

Teresa Hevner, Advocacy Specialist



We all know what time of year it is, summer! A time to get outside and enjoy the long days and warm nights. This time of year is also when many people re-stock their emergency kits. Having a kit on hand is very important for situations such as a flood, fire, or tornado. There are many different things you can do to ensure you and your family are prepared. Having an emergency kit that is portable ensures you have essential resources if you need to evacuate your area due to natural or man-made disasters. Carrying something easy to transport such as a large backpack, or plastic container are both good ideas. Having a portable kit gives you the chance to evacuate faster, but it also provides you with essential items to stay self-reliant until you can seek help.

The American Red Cross encourages people to check their preparedness kits at least twice a year. They suggest individuals and families have a kit that is ready for evacuations. One very important item is water. The kit should have one gallon per person, per day, for at least 3-days. Bottled water is the best option, as you can keep it in its original container and leave it sealed until you need to use it for drinking or sanitation. Non-perishable foods, which are easy to prepare are very important also. The same rule of 3-days applies to the food you store as well. Things like canned goods or food that does not require refrigeration are viable options for your kit. Making sure the food you pick is lightweight, is also something to consider as you may need to travel away from the area. Since you will be utilizing canned foods, a can-opener and plastic utensils are also an essential item to pack. Always take into consideration the dietary needs of you, and your family members. For instance, hard candy for children (a comfort food). Alternatively, food for infants or elderly members.

For individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, communication could be a potential barrier in emergencies. A note pad and paper may be beneficial to have in your kit. A battery-powered radio may allow your friends, family or neighbors to listen and inform you on what is happening in emergencies. If you have availability of a smart phone, you can download FEMA's free preparedness portal app. This will allow you to receive alerts about the area affected near you. NCDHH has resources such as our ABC Fingerspelling cards, I Am Deaf/ I Am Hard of Hearing identification cards as well. We have many other resources you may want to include in your emergency preparedness kits. Individuals who utilize hearing aids may want to pack one or two extra sets of batteries in their kits.

Other items to consider are a flashlight and extra batteries are important tools to have on-hand for emergencies. Another item to consider would be a whistle. Yelling may exude too much energy, but a whistle may help alert for help with less strain to your body. Some other items that are suggested are:

- 7-day supply of medications
- One complete change of clothes
- Sanitation and personal hygiene materials
- Copies of personal documentation (in water-proof storage)
- Proof of Address
- Birth certificates
- Insurance policies
- Medication lists/ medical information
- Emergency blankets
- First Aid Kit
- Rain gear
- Matches (in a water-proof box)
- Maps
- Extra cash (or traveler's checks)
- Family contact information
- Cell phone Chargers/ Solar chargers
- Duct Tape

You may also visit the American Red Cross website to look at their full list of recommended items at <http://www.red-cross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/survival-kit-supplies>. You can also visit DEAF Inc.'s website and view their emergency preparedness vlogs at https://community.fema.gov/AP_Login.

Potential Emergency Disaster Preparedness

Kim Davis, Advocacy Specialist

Once again, it is the season for potential natural disasters, such as lightning, floods, tornadoes and fires. I like to check for any new or updated emergency alert technologies or programs for self-awareness and, even more importantly, to stay abreast on being prepared to take shelter or evacuate. The town's tornado siren alerts does no good when you can't hear it go off in the middle of the night or even during the day wherever you are. That's pretty scary, especially if the weather does take a turn for the worst. Having an effective visual or vibrating Emergency Alert System is something to consider. Determining which emergency alert system is best would require doing some researches on which devices or programs are effective and available where you live. Below are some available emergency preparedness resources to assist you and those you cherish.



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio

Seek one that has the capability to provide captions and the ability to operate on battery when there is an electricity power outage. Prior to purchasing one, you may wish to see if the county you reside in will have the ability to provide the broadcasting NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS) warnings, watches, forecasts and other emergency information. The NWR Station Listing for Nebraska can be found at www.nws.noaa.gov.

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs)

If you have a mobile device, you may wish to check to see if it has the WEA program pre-installed. WEA messages may include alerts that may be of imminent threat, AMBER and presidential. To confirm your device is capable of receiving the alerts and is available in your area, please check your wireless device's setting or contact your wireless provider. For more information, visit www.ready.gov/alerts.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) APP

FEMA created an app available through Apple's App Store and Android's Google Play. You can receive alerts from the National Weather Service on this app, as well as preparedness tips, resources on where one can find disaster recovery centers, and much more. Additional information can be found at www.fema.gov/mobile-app.

National Weather Service Email and SMS Weather Alert Services

You may wish to subscribe for weather alert services through email or text messaging (SMS). There are several different available providers. Visit www.weather.gov/subscribe or check your local TV or radio station to see if they provide local emergency alerts through email and/or text messaging.

Social Network Sites Check-Ins

Having a communication plan in place for family members and friends to be aware of where you can be found or to update on your status and well-being is also critical. One of the several available options is that you can obtain notifications from specific persons or update your status in your profile on Facebook, Twitter or Google accounts. This feature provides a way for subscribers to quickly communicate their status in an emergency. Subscribers may also seek to receive emergency or public alerts from participating emergency alerting, public safety and other organizations involved in emergencies that have a social network account.

Battery Charger

This is necessary have as a backup, unless you desire to have a large number of extra batteries for most of the above devices of your choosing. If you have rechargeable batteries, you could charge them using a power inverter with USB ports and AC outlets that plugs into your car cigarette adapter or operate on solar energy.

Other Publications of Interest

For extensive information on emergency preparedness, here are a couple of good resources:

- Ready, a national public service campaign by the US Department of Homeland Security, www.ready.gov
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Disaster Preparedness Video, developed through the Community Emergency Preparedness Information Network (2010), <https://vimeo.com/7781021>

Turn Down That Music!

Aaron Rothenberger, Advocacy Specialist



Personal music devices are all over these days. You cannot walk down the street without seeing pairs of headphones or earbuds everywhere, especially with the younger generations. Headphones come in all sorts of shapes, sizes and colors. With brands like Skull Candy, Beats, AirPods, the selection of headphones is incredibly varied, and there are even some hearing aids that now stream music.

One question that I get asked a lot is about how this ubiquitous use of headphones has effected teenagers and their rates of hearing loss. Are we seeing an increase in teen hearing loss due to headphones and personal music devices?

Our ears can handle up to a certain level of noise before we risk hearing damage. 80 to 85 decibels is considered the breakpoint between harmful sound and harmless sound. Listening to sound at 85 decibels for longer than 8 hours can cause permanent hearing loss. For each additional 3 decibels that the noise increases, the exposure time is halved. For example, 8 hours at 85, 1 hour at 94, 15 minutes at 100, 1 minute 30 seconds at 109. Normal conversation occurs at around the 60 to 70 level. A lawn mower can be around 90. A motorcycle can be around 100. Thunder can be around 120. And a gunshot can get up to 165. Most handheld digital devices can produce sounds up to 110 decibels, which is as loud as a rock concert.

Researchers from Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston analyzed federal data collected from national yearly surveys of the health of American citizens. They looked at the prevalence of hearing loss among U.S. adolescents, 12 to 19, between 1988 and 1994 and compared that with the prevalence of hearing loss between 2005 and 2006. They found a 31 percent increase in hearing loss among those between 12 and 19 years old.

That seems like pretty overwhelming evidence that hearing loss has increased pretty significantly since the late eighties. But there is a catch. The research looked at 1988 to 1994, 6 years. They then compared that to 2005 and 2006, 2 years. When results from 2008 and 2010 were added, the results showed that the levels of hearing loss matched the 1994 levels of hearing loss. To add another interesting point, when researchers looked at adults 20 to 69 around those time frames, they found that the overall annual prevalence of hearing loss dropped slightly, from 16 percent to 14 percent, or 28 million adults in the 1999-2004 period versus 27.7 million in the 2011-2012 period.

The researchers do not know the reason why hearing loss prevalence is declining but speculate possible factors could include fewer manufacturing jobs, increased use of hearing protectors, less smoking and advances in health including better medical care to manage risk factors associated with hearing loss.

So is hearing loss in teens growing or declining? Much more research is required to be sure. But in the meantime, we should definitely take precautions to not harm our hearing from listening to personal music devices at an unsafe level.

A couple things you can consider doing when listening to music with headphones:

- Use noise canceling headphones that allow you to block outside noise without having to turn the music up
- Keep the volume up just enough to hear your music comfortably, but no higher
- Take breaks, don't use the headphones for more than an hour at a time without a 5 min break in-between sessions
- Listen to your personal device's safety settings. Some personal music players have settings that limit the volume automatically to safe levels

Wireless Personal Listening Devices

Brittney Isom, Advocacy Specialist

In today's world of advancing technology it's hard to find something that is not wireless. Think about it, most of us walk around with cell phones in our pockets; the majority of those are little computers. What about people who need an assistive listening device to hear better, but want the convenience of not being hooked up to a bunch of wires? I recently had a client bring this to my attention and I thought this would be a great topic to share with all of you. Here are a few examples of assistive listening devices that are wireless.



First up, is The Conversor. This device focuses on desired sounds, near or far away, filtering out unwanted background noise and enhancing sound level and clarity. It consists of two components; an FM microphone/transmitter and a pendant receiver. The microphone/transmitter provides the sound level and clarity. This can be held in the hand and pointed directly at the desired sound, placed on a suitable surface in a close proximity to the source, or worn by a speaker moving around the house. The receiver is worn by the user on a

pendent around the neck. This sends the improved sound from the microphone/transmitter into the hearing instrument (hearing aid).

The ClearSounds Quattro 4.0 is an adaptive Bluetooth neckloop offering sound improvement to anyone, even with or without hearing aids or cochlear implants. Bluetooth is a technology that uses radio transmissions to exchange data between devices over short distances. This will allow you to connect to your mobile phone so you can hear the conversations clearly and connect to music and television.



The SurLink wireless accessories from Starkey Hearing Technologies have the capabilities to let you talk on the phone, entertainment (t.v., music, etc.), allows you to adjust your Starkey Hearing aid instruments or have a clear quality conversation. The great thing about the SurLink line is you can customize it to match your lifestyle.

This is just an example of some wireless personal listening devices available. If you or someone you know could benefit from these, please contact the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at 402-471-3593 so they can direct you to the Advocacy Specialist in your area.

NCDHH Team Member Cindy Woldt Celebrates 20 Years!



In 2018 we celebrated Administrative Assistant, Cindy Woldt, and her 20 years of service to the Commission. Chances are, if you have visited our Lincoln office or called us, you have spoken to Ms. Woldt. Her organization, technology knowledge and expertise has kept this office running smoothly. If you see Cindy, thank her for all she has done for our office!

Do's & Don'ts for Communicating with People with Hearing Loss

Kathy Scusa, Advocacy Specialist



Approximately 20% of the United States population has significant hearing loss. Of the 30 million Americans who have hearing loss, only 15-20% of them will have hearing assistive technology (hearing aids). That leaves a LOT of people who have a hard time communicating. The following tips will allow a person with hearing loss to effectively use what hearing they have and use visual cues to receive as much information as possible. People with hearing loss often rely on visual cues for information. Some people have difficulty knowing where a sound is coming from. Others hear sounds, but may not be able to recognize the words that were spoken. All of these tips are easy to do but may require a conscious effort at first.

Do: Get the person's attention before you begin to speak and maintain eye contact while speaking.

Do: Face the person directly, and on the same level whenever possible.

Do: Use a clear voice and enunciate words. Speak with a normal tone of voice.

Do: Stand a normal distance from the person.

Do: Be in the same room.

Do: Reduce background noises when conversing. Turn off the radio or TV.

Do: Restate, what is misunderstood. Find a new way to phrase the words they did not understand.

Do: Be sure there is good lighting. The light source should be behind the person with hearing loss.

Do: Have Patience. Recognize that people with hearing loss will have more difficulty hearing and understanding if they are ill or tired.

Do: Use hand gestures, facial expressions, pantomime and body language to help explain a concept.

Do: Use visual aids such as black/whiteboards, objects, maps, charts, drawings, and pictures. Write down words to help them understand the topic being discussed.

Don't: Tell the person, "Never mind." Don't repeat your statement the same way, rephrase your thought to be sure they understand.

Don't: Talk while walking away or from another room.

Don't: Shout. Shouting will just be frustrating for everyone and communication is actually worse.

Don't: Mumble or cover your mouth when speaking.

Don't: Try to communicate while you are eating or have anything in your mouth.

Don't: Overly exaggerate or slow your speech at first. If the person has difficulty understanding, slow your speech a bit more and break sentences into smaller portions.

Don't: Jump from topic to topic. Be sure to let the listener know when a new topic is starting.

Don't: Fill out forms or read while talking. Maintain eye contact.

Don't: Try to have a serious conversation with background noise. If the conversation is important, make sure you are in a quiet environment.

Don't: Let the conversation go on too long. Extended periods of concentration to hear and understand are very tiring. Be aware of fatigue.

If you would like to discuss anything hearing related or NCDHH's programs and services, please contact me at my North Platte office phone number (308) 535-6600 or you can email me at kathy.scusa@nebraska.gov. I look forward to serving you.