



# Changing Landscapes

By Jami Brooks, Au.D  
2018 TAA President

Hope everyone's first quarter finished up great! I wanted to thank everyone for your support of the Texas Academy of Audiology...you are why we exist. There is strength in numbers.

As is happening in many areas of healthcare, our landscape is changing and as a profession we must adapt or become extinct. **Your membership and involvement in TAA is vital.** I believe that each of us must first stay informed of important issues that affect both our future and our patients' futures. Secondly, we must make educated decisions to support or oppose proposed changes, and then we must FIGHT FOR WHAT WE BELIEVE IN. Every voice, call, and email counts....make sure yours is heard!

The *Audiology Patient Choice Act* has been introduced in the U.S. Senate to allow seniors and people with disabilities on Medicare to have direct access to hearing and balance services already covered by Medicare that are within an audiologist's scope of practice. This bill would ensure that Medicare's treatment of audiologists is consistent with the classification of other health care providers such as dentists, podiatrists, chiropractors, and optometrists – removing unnecessary hurdles for the hearing impaired.

TAA will continue to send out email blasts to inform members of other news as it happens throughout the year. We must stand together for the future of Texas Audiology.

**THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO MAKE YOURSELF HEARD!**

Email me at: [jami@brookshearing.com](mailto:jami@brookshearing.com) if you would like to get involved in TAA and we will work together to find an area that fits your skills and passion!

UPDATE YOUR TEXAS ACADEMY OF AUDIOLOGY MEMBERSHIP PROFILE REGULARLY WITH CURRENT CONTACT INFO AND PHOTO. THIS WILL MAKE IT EASIER FOR PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING AND THOSE SEARCHING FOR TEXAS AUDIOLOGISTS! IT ONLY TAKES A COUPLE OF MINUTES. LOG INTO TEXASAUDIOLOGY.ORG IN THE MEMBERS SECTION

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# *It's Election Time!!*

By Kimberly DeBona, Au.D.  
TAA PAC Treasurer

As we all know, this is an election year and the TAA Political Action Committee (PAC) is in full swing. Each election year the TAA PAC supports candidates who have been friendly to our causes at the advice of our lobbyist Brad Shields. We sent support checks to 2 Senate candidates and 20 House candidates for the Primary Election.

However, we need your support to get ready for the General Election this fall. PAC donations can be made online or by mail to:

**TAA PAC Treasurer  
2481 E. 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
Odessa, TX 79761**

Please consider sending your support to help us get ready for the general election. All PAC donations must be made from personal funds. We cannot accept them from business accounts. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [dachsie@earthlink.net](mailto:dachsie@earthlink.net). Thank you for your continuing support!

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*As students of a relatively small healthcare profession, it's critically important for us to be invested in our profession's future at both the national and state level. We are most effective when our voices are heard together.*

*Our professional organization at the state level has a direct, tangible impact on the practice of audiology in Texas, as **states** have the authority to set and regulate professional licenses. This distinction was highlighted at the end of the last legislative session when a bill was introduced to remove licensure for audiologists and SLPs. Without an active state organization, our ability to practice would have been jeopardized.*

- Alexander Morris  
Texas SAA Ambassador

## *TAA Board Welcomes Student Liaisons*

This year, the TAA Board is excited to welcome one representative from each of the 5 Texas Au.D. programs as a student liaison. We are excited to have these future leaders join us:

- **Alexander Morris**  
University of Texas at Dallas
- **Ashley Brown**  
University of North Texas
- **Jackie Vizcaino**  
Texas Tech University
- **Chahat Hamirani**  
University of Texas at Austin
- **Sloan Jenkins**  
Lamar University

# *The Scoop from the Scott Haug Foundation*

*By Jacque Patton  
SHF President*

As usual, the 2017 TAA Conference was wonderful, filled with time for continuing education, product viewing with exhibitors, updates from AAA and our TAA, and fun and entertainment with colleagues! The SHF awarded its second annual Dr. Robert J. Dunlop Memorial Student Scholar Award to Ms. Natalie Yates, and outstanding third year Au.D. student from Lamar University. ALSO, we were honored to present the FIRST annual Scott Haug Outstanding Texas Audiologist Award to Dr. Karen Ditty, who incidentally wowed all the attendees with her outstanding super “hear-o” costume at the dinner and dance on Friday evening. Know an outstanding Texas Audiologist who you feel deserves the recognition of colleagues? **Nominations are now open for the 2018 award.** The deadline for submitting your nomination is June 30<sup>th</sup>. See the TAA or Scott Haug Foundation website for specific details ([www.scotthaug.org](http://www.scotthaug.org)). Nominations should be sent to [hearingconnection@gvtc.com](mailto:hearingconnection@gvtc.com).

We are anticipating with great excitement the 2018 conference in The Woodlands, October 18-20. On Thursday morning the 18<sup>th</sup> we will again host a “best ball scramble golf tournament.” Put together a team with three of your best pals for a fun way to enjoy golf and reconnect with former classmates, colleagues, or current co-workers; or sign up solo and we will place you on a team. Prizes await the winning team, as well as the male and female payers with closest to the pin and longest drive shots.

Friday morning, we are honored to kick off the conference with the introduction of the Keynote Speaker to begin our two days of continuing education. Friday evening we will again partner with TAA and various corporate sponsors to provide dinner and a themed dance complete with music from our fun loving, disc spinning D.J., Fabian Cuero. Wow your colleagues with your costume related to this year’s conference theme: “Join us in the Woodlands for an Audiology Fairytale.” Again, there will be prizes presented to the most creative participants; so get your favorite fairytale costume ready! Your generous corporate sponsors help fund this night of fun and dancing through their participation.

The 2017 Conference marked another “first” – the first TAA Conference t-shirt, which featured a wonderful and unique design. This year the SHF will again sell the official 2018 conference t-shirt to help fund activities at the conference. Watch out for pre-ordering information.

In closing the SHF encourages you to **join! Join** in the work of THE Texas organization FOR AUDIOLOGISTS – **become a member** of TAA today! And **join** in the fun, education and fellowship at this year’s TAA conference!

**Be sure to stop by and chat at the SHF booth!  
See you at The Woodlands in October!**



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# Insurance Reimbursement

By Shawna Jackson, Au.D.  
VP of Professional Issues

We have all heard the comments, complaints, and the frustrations. Insurance reimbursement is not only difficult to figure out, insurance companies are sometimes simply wrong. Appeal, discuss, and try your best to work with the companies. When all your options are exhausted, Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) may be the next resource. A complaint may be placed by either the patient or the provider, or both.

One complaint the Texas Academy of Audiology has heard from many members is the implementation of HB490 involving insurance coverage for hearing aids for pediatrics. Have you experienced difficulty with this? Has an insurance company said their plan is not required to follow the new state law and you believe this is in error? Have you been denied necessary accessories, earmolds, or other supplies that are required by the law to be covered? Has United Healthcare told your parents they have to use HI Health Innovations for their pediatric members? Have you or your patients filed a complaint to TDI in response to these concerns? TAA wants to know!

A complaint form is available online at :  
<http://www.tdi.texas.gov/forms/consumer/cp012complform.pdf>  
and may be submitted via email to:  
[ConsumerProtection@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:ConsumerProtection@tdi.texas.gov)

The mailing address for complaint letters is:  
**Consumer Protection, Texas Department of Insurance**  
**PO Box 149091 (mail code 111-1A)**  
**Austin, Texas 78714-9101**

You must write "**COMPLAINT**" on your letter to TDI.

In addition, please send a copy of the letter to TAA for collection. We encourage TAA members and non-members, as well as parents whom send a complaint, to copy us at Texas Academy of Audiology. Copies may be sent to:  
[audiologytexas@gmail.com](mailto:audiologytexas@gmail.com)

*Texas Academy of Audiology*  
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*Student Poster Scholarship*

## Call For Posters

1<sup>st</sup> Place: \$350 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: \$250 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: \$150

Submission Deadline is  
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Contact Dr. Shawna Jackson at  
(214) 905-3154 or  
[shawna.jackson@utdallas.edu](mailto:shawna.jackson@utdallas.edu)  
or visit our website  
[www.texasaudiology.org](http://www.texasaudiology.org)  
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# Texas Science and Engineering Fair

By Tracy Board, Au.D.  
VP of Public Relations

Three representatives from TAA served as judges for the Texas Science and Engineering Fair in San Antonio on March 25, 2018. Jane Watson, Au.D., Michelle Tejada, Au.D., and Tracy Board, Au.D., awarded Special Prizes in areas pertaining to hearing, balance or sound, and winners received monetary prizes. The projects were so incredible that two students actually tied for first place!

### 1<sup>st</sup> Place – TIE

Megan Cantwell  
Senior Division

*Social Skills in Adolescents with Cochlear Implants*  
Austin, Texas

Anushka Jetly  
Senior Division

*Detection of Ear Infection Using a Smartphone Application*  
Friendswood, Texas

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Place

Hudson Hamby  
Junior Division  
*Now Hear This!*  
Waco, Texas

## Calling All Texas Audiologists!!

By Robert Herring, Au.D.  
VP of Membership

Make sure you go to [www.texasaudiology.org](http://www.texasaudiology.org) and renew your membership. It's simple and quick so don't delay.

Avoid the late fee and renew your membership by APRIL 30! Your membership is vital for TAA to thrive and be a strong voice of Audiology in Texas.

Encourage all of your colleagues to do the same. The work that your state organization is doing is to help you and your future. Please take the time to renew now.





## *Call for Nominations*

If you are interested in serving on the Texas Academy of Audiology Board of Directors, or would like to nominate someone, please email Chris Araj, Au.D., Past President and Chair of the nominations committee at

[DrAraj@PearlandHearingAids.com](mailto:DrAraj@PearlandHearingAids.com).

Elections will be held at our annual conference in October. Terms will begin on January 1, 2019. For more information or if you have questions please don't hesitate to reach out!

## *Future Leaders of Audiology Student Conference (FLASC)*

*By Jacob Keup, Au.D.*

FLASC wasn't just a conference, it was an absolutely amazing opportunity to grow and learn. I was selected to represent FLASC from the University of Texas as a 3<sup>rd</sup> year going into my 4<sup>th</sup> year residency, finishing up my Au.D. The conference began just a month or so into my placement, so I was brand new to the practicing field of Audiology. The Future Leaders of Audiology Students came from all over Texas and Louisiana to represent each university. Although all had different names and universities on their tags, we all had one likeminded goal: to further progress audiology, and to be leaders in the field. The experience taught me a lot about the nitty gritty aspects in audiology that you don't necessarily learn in school. From legislation, to best practice, to the direction of the profession, to hot topics revolving the field: FLASC made me much more knowledgeable and confident. I can take the tools I've learned and used from the other likeminded individuals and mentors, and put it to use every day as I practice.

The conference and doctoral program helped me realize that we have a goal to not only protect the profession in its endeavors, but also to further advance it. We are well-prepared, dedicated, and committed to understanding, integrating, and applying academic and clinical knowledge to the field. We dedicate considerable time to practicing procedures and learning the intricacies of diagnosis/treatment. We strive to provide accurate, efficient, and client-centered skills for patients. We truly appreciate the extensiveness and depth of audiology, and understand there is always more to learn. We have reliable work ethic and are team players to push for success in the field of audiology. We as audiologists are the experts of hearing and balance, and we should embrace this. I think the future holds us as Doctors of Audiology to broaden our scope even more. All in all, this program helped me realize the importance of being a leader in the field. I am so happy for the people I've met and what I've learned through FLASC. It positively shaped my experience transitioning from a student to a professional. The slogan of the University of Texas is "What starts here, changes the world"; and with audiology, we can do just that. Be a Leader. Change the world; and make a difference in people's lives.