



# Heard in Fort Worth

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Hearing Loss Association of America – Fort Worth Chapter  
November 2024

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November 9 Program:

## North Texas Veterans Administration Audiology Services

Presenter: Sarah Fray, Au.D.

Dr. Sarah Fray has been an audiologist at the Fort Worth VA clinic since 2019. She got her undergraduate degree at the University of North Texas and doctorate at the University of Texas at Dallas. She did her externship at the San Diego VA. Sarah says, “I grew up as an Air Force brat all around the USA. I currently live in Dallas with my husband, one-year-old son and dog.”

This presentation aims to provide a general overview of audiological services provided by VA North Texas, dispel some common misconceptions/answer some frequently asked questions about the VA, and discuss the differences between the VHA (Veteran Health Administration) and VBA (Veteran Benefits Association).

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## Coming Soon: Election of Chapter Officers for 2025

Election of chapter officers for the following year occurs each fall. Current officers are listed in a box on page 2, below Chapter President Joyce Parlin’s column, *Joyce’s Jargon*. Each of those officers has agreed to continue in their present positions except for Vice-President Kevin Medlin. Kevin plans to devote his HLAA efforts at the state level to develop new chapters in Texas. (See a related article on page 3, about a new startup in Dallas.)

Member Sharon Huber has volunteered to step up to the office of vice-president. Sharon currently serves the chapter as a greeter at meetings and at informational booth events.

The office of Program Chair remains vacant. A volunteer or a nominee for this position would be welcome. ALL positions are open to other volunteers or nominees, provided the person consents to be nominated.

The election of officers for 2025 will take place during our December holiday party.

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## Holiday Party Brunch: December 14

Bring your favorite brunch food items. We’ll have fun, games, prizes, and perhaps surprises! Details next month. *Think about what food you’d like to bring, and sign up at our November meeting.*

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## HLAA - Fort Worth meets on the second Saturday of each month

in the fellowship hall of Central Christian Church, 3205 Hamilton Avenue, Fort Worth, TX 76107.

Snacks and mingle at 9:30 a.m. and meeting at 10:00. Please join us and bring a friend!

*We offer realtime captioning and assistive listening systems for communication accessibility.*

*Captioning is provided courtesy of Cauthen & Associates Court Reporting and CART Services.*

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# Joyce's Jargon

Greetings,

This month brings special days. We will celebrate Veteran's Day on November 11th. If you and/or family members served in any branch of the Armed Forces, we as a chapter thank you for your service. We are excited to have with us for our November meeting on Saturday, November 9th, Dr. Sarah Fray, an audiologist with the Fort Worth Veteran's Clinic. Many members of the military experience hearing loss, tinnitus, or related hearing issues. We would encourage you to participate in this meeting and hear of the services that are available.

Later in November, we as a nation have a day of thanksgiving, an opportunity to focus on being thankful for this country and the blessings we enjoy as a nation. Personally, I have much to be thankful for, and one is the Fort Worth chapter of HLAA. Making new friends and learning about my hearing loss and all the ramifications of hearing loss has been an enormous blessing. Thank you all for being a part of the chapter.

Blessings!  
Joyce Parlin  
Chapter President

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## A New Way to Donate

Our chapter now accepts donations by credit card or debit card. Treasurer Patricia Hindman has a card reading device which sends contributions directly into our account at The Bank of Texas. See Patricia at our meetings if this is a convenient way for you to give.

We depend on donations for paying meeting room and storage rent, booth fees at health fairs and events, printing, website, equipment, supplies, and other expenses. Thank you for all you contribute. If we charged annual dues, we could never match what you, our members and friends, give voluntarily as an expression of your gratitude for the benefits and support you gain from our meetings. We gladly publish your donations on our Chapter Support page. We deeply appreciate you!

### 2024 Chapter Board of Directors

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### Heard In Fort Worth

This newsletter is published by the  
**Fort Worth Chapter of the  
Hearing Loss Association of America**  
Website: [www.hearinglossfortworth.com](http://www.hearinglossfortworth.com)  
Email: [fortworthHLAA@gmail.com](mailto:fortworthHLAA@gmail.com)  
**Mailing address:** Box 1310, Euless TX 76039  
**Telephone:** 817-966-1947 or 817-228-8041



**The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)**, founded in 1979 by Howard E. "Rocky" Stone, is the nation's leading organization representing consumers with hearing loss. The mission of HLAA is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support, and advocacy.

Hearing Loss Association of America, 6116 Executive Blvd., Suite 320, Rockville, MD 20852. 301-657-2248

## HLAA-Dallas Rekindled!

Initial Meeting Nov. 6, 6:30 PM, at the Callier Center

By Kevin Medlin, Director, HLAA Texas

During the summer of 2024, several audiology students from the University of Texas - Dallas visited the HLAA - Fort Worth chapter meeting. In a discussion after the meeting, I was asked about other Texas chapters of HLAA and whether there was HLAA representation in the Dallas area. (There was not).

These enthusiastic students suggested that perhaps they could rekindle the HLAA- Dallas chapter and asked for assistance in that process. For those who have not participated in a start-up, I can share that it can be a little daunting -- forms to fill-out for the national office, meeting space, captioning, and the general organizational details that need to be worked out to begin.

Skylynn Brown emerged as the leader of the student group and has worked tirelessly with the national office, some previous members of the Dallas chapter, and the state office to begin the process.

**Her efforts are finally paying off as the initial meeting of HLAA - Dallas is planned for Wednesday, November the 6<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8 p.m. at the Callier Center, 1966 Inwood Road, Dallas, TX 75235 (Building 2, Room J108).**

This will be an informational meeting about HLAA and its goals and will be open to all interested parties. Please join me in supporting the Dallas group as they convene for their initial meeting. If you have questions, please contact Skylynn at 606-219-6272.

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## October 12 Program Summary

### Ask the Audiologist

*“Everything you ever wanted to ask an audiologist but were afraid to ask.”*

Presented by Heather Dean, Au.D., owner of Burleson Audiology Clinic, Burleson, Texas

Summarized by Darlene Liesner from the meeting transcript by Carrie Gibson, CSR, of Cauthen & Associates.



Heather Dean, Au.D. and Certificate Holder in Tinnitus Management, owns the Burleson Audiology Clinic. Her practice services the full spectrum of hearing healthcare needs. Her partner, Erin Washburn, Au.D., worked for Cochlear Americas for eight and one-half years. Dr. Dean answered audience questions in a Q&A format throughout the meeting. She graciously filled in for the previously scheduled speaker, who was unable to attend.

**Q: Can you connect my cochlear implant and my hearing aid to my Android phone?**

**A:** You do not have to stay with your current audiologist. Insurance will cover any adjustments Dr. Washburn makes to your cochlear implant. For hearing aid adjustments by Dr. Dean, you will pay an office visit fee. Android phones can be finicky with cochlear implants.

**Q: Can you suggest any help for tinnitus?**

**A:** Diet modifications. Watch your sodium and caffeine. Drink plenty of water. Get a good night's sleep, and reduce stress. Lenire (len-ear) is an at-home device which combines listening to audio and tongue stimulation. Burleson Audiology is not certified in Lenire treatment yet. Join the American Tinnitus Association (ATA) and/or read articles on their website.

**Q: Does Dr. Washburn service MED-EL and Advanced Bionics cochlear implants?**

**A:** A MED-EL representative comes in to help. Our clinic does not have the programming software and computer for Advanced Bionics.

**Q: Years ago, my acoustic neuroma was removed. I am recently experiencing dizziness. Are they related?**

**A:** Dizziness can come from many places. Reach out to your neurologist.

**Q: Am I further damaging my hearing by listening to podcasts with my Bluetooth streamer?**

**A:** Keep the volume down. If other people can hear your streamer, it is too loud.

**Q: How do I persuade my spouse to get his hearing tested?**

**A:** Try saying, "I don't know if you have hearing loss. Let's go see what the test says. A baseline hearing test starting at age fifty-five, like an annual physical, is always good." Also, auditory deprivation may lead to cognitive decline. Hearing loss is the #1 modifiable risk factor for cognitive decline. Wearing your hearing aids even when you are alone is important. Burleson Audiology has Cognivue, a computer-based device which tests cognitive function. If you wear your hearing aids consistently, your brain is getting all the knowledge it needs.

**Q: My hearing aids itch my ears. What can I do about it?**

**A:** Hearing aid domes (little rubber tips) and earmolds are made from hypoallergenic materials, so you are probably not allergic to them. The nerve sensors in your ears are super sensitive. The more you wear your hearing aids the better. The nerve sensors will become numb. A bigger ear dome will not move/tickle as much. Earmolds may reduce hearing aid whistling noise. Some drugs may cause dry ears. Talk to your audiologist. One drop of oil every other day or twice weekly should be sufficient. Too much oil may damage hearing aids.

**Q: Why are hearing aids so expensive?**

**A:** Burleson Audiology sells hearing aids in an unbundled format. The cost of the hearing aid is separate from the cost of services, which are paid for individually. With a bundled format, the cost of the hearing aid includes the cost of services and three years of office visits and is more expensive upfront. Starkey Cares is an income-based nonprofit. Starkey, the hearing aid manufacturer, provides hearing aids at no cost other than an income-based application fee. Ask your audiologist. The Dallas Hearing Foundation is an income-based nonprofit offering financial aid. Some audiologists sell refurbished donated hearing aids at a discounted rate. Some hearing aid companies will give hearing aids to someone the office chooses based on the individual's need.

**Q: Do you treat babies and small children?**

**A:** Burleson Audiology sees infants who either have not passed the newborn hearing screening or were born at home or birthing centers and have not been screened. The Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) test measures how the hearing nerve and brain respond. Small sensors are placed on the infant's head and gentle clicking sounds are played in the baby's ears. The test identifies hearing issues as early as possible. Dr. Dean is not a pediatric audiologist. She generally sends parents to Dr. Bari Pham at Monkey Mouths in Southlake.

**Q: How can parents/grandparents know when a child needs their hearing tested?**

**A:** Most school systems conduct hearing screenings every or every other year. In some schools, the school nurse, who is not trained in testing hearing, does the screening. Also, the audiometer may be of poor quality. Some pediatricians have hearing screening machines in their office. At home, parents/grandparents may notice: Does the child come when you call? Do they follow directions? Teachers may notice: Are they falling behind? Are their grades declining? Are they performing as well as they did at the beginning of the school year? A child may have fluid behind their ears and need to see an ENT.

**Q: Can hearing aids be donated for someone else to use?**

**A:** Behind-the-ear aids can be donated to someone. Burleson Audiology does a transfer of care. They do a hearing test, wipe the former programming from the devices, and clean them up. They ensure all the parts and pieces are correct for the new owner. If a device is still under warranty, Burleson Audiology sends it in. Some hearing aid manufacturers will invalidate the warranty because the device no longer belongs to the person who bought it. Mobile audiology clinics and mobile audiology Facebook groups may help the homebound. Marylyn Koble, audiologist in Arlington, has a physical practice and a mobile practice.

**Q: Will I ever be able to enjoy music with my cochlear implants?**

**A:** Listening to music with your cochlear implants will get better with time. With cochlear implants, you hear an electrical stimulus vs. acoustically. Music will always sound different.

**Q: I am a teacher with cochlear implants. My classroom has an audio induction loop and overhead microphones. I cannot hear my third graders whispering among themselves. I am afraid of losing control of the class. Can anything else be done?**

**A:** Ask Kevin Brown, owner of Southern Star Technologies. He installs audio induction loops.

At the end of the meeting, Dr. Dean left her and Dr. Washburn's business cards.

# Support your Fort Worth chapter

We will acknowledge your donations in each issue of the newsletter.

**The list is updated monthly. 2024 Gifts:**

**Platinum** = \$400+; **Gold** = \$200 to \$399; **Silver** = \$100 to \$199;  
**Bronze** = \$50 to \$99; **Friends** = Up to \$49

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Husband of Dr. Shirley Molenich,  
Given by Dr. Marie Kelly**

**The Fort Worth Chapter is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.  
All contributions are tax-deductible.**

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Hearing Loss Association of America - Fort Worth Chapter  
**2024 CHAPTER DONATION FORM**

Make checks payable to: **HLAA - Fort Worth Chapter**

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**Kevin Brown**

kevin@SouthernStarTechnology.com  
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**Heather Dean, Au.D., FAAA, CCC-A**  
Doctor of Audiology  
Board Certified in Audiology

121 NW Ellison St. Ste. 101  
Burleson, TX 76028  
PH: 817.764.3077  
FAX: 817.754.1923



Heather.Dean@BurlesonAudiology.com  
www.BurlesonAudiology.com



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Find us on

**CarsonHearing.com**  
rcarson@carsonhearing.com