GSA Webinar Series
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Educating Policymakers: Sharing Your Expertise with Capitol Hill

Co-sponsors:
The Gerontological Society of America (GSA)
National Association for Geriatric Education (NAGE)
Webinar Panel

Moderator:
Brian Lindberg, MMHS
GSA and NAGE Policy Advisor

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Moderator:
Brian Lindberg, MMHS
GSA and NAGE Policy Advisor
Educating Policymakers: Sharing Your Expertise with Capitol Hill

Our Goal:
• Inform
• Explain
• Inspire
Why have a hearing?

• Hearings create an official record of information and opinions. It provides lawmakers an opportunity to present their views and challenge opponents.

• Your statement could influence the final version of the bill or regulation.
Planning for Your Presentation

• Consult with committee staff in advance.
  – Ask what questions you are likely to be asked.

• Follow the rules established by the committee hosting the hearing
  – Ex. Length of remarks, what format to submit written testimony, and number of printed copies.

• Inquire about other witnesses.
  – Coordinate your testimony to avoid duplication.
What about your particular hearing?

- The letter from the committee chairman usually gives specific details about the hearing.
  - Purpose
  - Date, time and location
  - Names or titles of witnesses requested
  - When to submit your prepared statement and the number of copies required
  - Committee point of contact
Guidelines for Submitting Testimony

• Submission:
  – Prepared testimony should be sent via e-mail to the Committee Staff Contact before the hearing, in order for it be included on the website within 48 hours of the hearing.

• Style and format:
  – Name of witness
  – Short title of witness [optional]
  – Before the [insert Committee name]
  – United States [Senate or House of Representatives]
  – Title of hearing
  – Date of hearing
Evaluating Testimony

- Is the issue framed to meet the concerns of legislators?
- Is the language clear, concrete, colorful, and jargon-free?
- Is there a strong opening and closing?
- Is there a clear call to action?
- Does the testimony rely on a variety of evidence?
Frank Lin, MD, PhD
Associate Professor of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery, Geriatric Medicine, Mental Health, and Epidemiology, Johns Hopkins Medicine
Hearing Loss In Older Adults: From Epidemiology to Public Policy

Frank R. Lin, M.D. Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Otolaryngology, Geriatric Medicine, Mental Health, & Epidemiology
Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, Maryland
Hearing Loss & Cognitive Impairment

Epidemiologic Insights from 2011-2014

- Cognitive Load
- Changes in brain structure
- Reduced Social Engagement

Hearing Loss

Cognition & Dementia
Hearing Loss & Cognitive Impairment
Evidence/Epilogic Insights from 2011-2014

Hearing Loss

Intervention

Cognitive Load

Changes in brain structure

Reduced Social Engagement

Cognition & Dementia

Hearing loss intervention could:
• Reduce the cognitive load of processing degraded sound
• Provide increased brain stimulation
• Improve social engagement

Role of HL as a potentially modifiable, late-life risk factor for cognitive decline & dementia
Hearing Loss & Cognitive Impairment
Epidemiologic Insights from 2011-2014

Intervention

Hearing Loss

Cognitive Load

Changes in brain structure

Reduced Social Engagement

Cognition & Dementia

Hearing loss intervention could:
- Reduce the cognitive load of processing degraded sound
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Aging and Cognitive Health Evaluation in Elders (ACHIEVE, 2017-22) randomized trial will test whether treating HL can delay cognitive decline

Role of HL as a potentially modifiable, late-life risk factor for cognitive decline & dementia
But what do we do between now and 2022 (when the ACHIEVE trial finishes) given current prevalence rates of hearing loss & hearing aid use in the U.S.?

[Graph showing prevalence of hearing loss by age]

Arch Int Med, 2012
Barriers to Obtaining Hearing Loss Treatment

- Cost/Affordability
- Awareness & Understanding
- Access to Services & Technology
- Technology Design & Utility
How can hearing loss be effectively addressed in the community?

*Leveraging Epidemiologic Insights into Top-Down National Initiatives*

- National Academies of Science, Engineering & Medicine Workshop on hearing loss & healthy aging - *Report released 2014*

- White House Conference on Aging & President’s Council of Advisors on Science & Technology - *Report released Oct 2015*

- National Academies Accessible/Affordable Hearing Care Consensus Study - *Report released 2016*

*Among several recommendations to reduce barriers, both White House PCAST & NASEM recommended that re-regulation of hearing aids to allow for OTC sales could have the most immediate impact*
With a separate FDA regulatory classification for OTC hearing aids…

- Consumers have direct access to hearing aids that will meet strict performance criteria for safety and effectiveness.
- Entry of consumer electronics manufacturers (e.g., Apple, Samsung, Bose) will lead to reduction in cost of devices to consumers.
- Devices are created for end-user in mind with integration with consumer electronics & adoption of wireless standards for far-field sound transmission.
- Broader adoption of hearing technologies among even the non-hearing impaired.
Converting a theoretical recommendation into action…

Timeline of the OTC Hearing Aid Bill

• High-profile consensus national recommendations for the FDA to re-regulate attracts Congressional attention
  • Elizabeth Warren & Chuck Grassley in the Senate; Marsha Blackburn and Joe Kennedy in House
  • Re-regulation appealing to both Republicans and Democrats

• Bipartisan OTC Hearing Aid Act introduced into Congress in early 2017
  • Would require Food & Drug Administration to create a separate regulatory classification for hearing aids meeting precise performance criteria to be available OTC
  • Multiple potential paths to passage: standalone legislative bill vs. attaching as a rider to another bill (FDA User Fee Bill)

• Spring 2017 – Steps to attach OTC hearing aid bill as a rider to the FDA user fee bill moves ahead
  • Must be approved by Senate HELP committee & House Subcommittee on Health
Converting a theoretical recommendation into action…

Timeline of the OTC Hearing Aid Bill

• How do you win? Opponents >> Proponents
  • Coordinating closely with Congressional staffers who are championing legislation
    • Role of academics: White papers & op-eds
  • Knowing the political landscape (some funding needed for lobbyists who can provide this context) with targeted outreach efforts to key Congressional representatives (i.e., committee/subcommittee members)
    • Importance of coordinating outreach from patient advocacy organizations (Hearing Loss Association of America), industry, & academic experts
  • Key turning point – May 2017 House Subcommittee on Health holds a Congressional Hearing to discuss which bills to attach as “non-controversial” riders to the FDA User Fee bill
    • Committee staff invited one proponent and opponent of OTC hearing aid bill
    • I was selected to present the pro side; Audiologist representing hearing aid industry presented the con side
Preparing for House Testimony

• Teleconferences with:
  • House committee staffers about general protocol rules
  • Industry lobbyists & lobbyist providing pro-bono assistance to Hearing Loss Association of America
  • Congressional policy staffers for those Congress members who are lead sponsors of the bill
  ➔ Importance of getting a clear idea of what the critical issues are to address in testimony – i.e., what issues matter to the handful of key Committee members that will determine fate of legislation
• Reading previous testimony & watching previous Congressional hearings – everything is on the web!
  • Just google the committee/subcommittee and you can watch previous hearings & read/watch previous testimony
• Importance of effectively communicating about the public health importance/impact of the bill with academic credibility ➔ this makes a huge difference (all else being held equal)

“From a clinical perspective, I’m a board-certified otolaryngologist with fellowship training in otology and am an expert in the medical and surgical management of hearing loss and other conditions affecting the ear. From a research perspective, I am a public health expert on the impact that hearing loss has on older adults and society. My interest in and testimony on the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act stems directly from this background.”
Impact & sustainability of market-based solutions vs. government funding/public messaging for public health problems

OTC Hearing Aid Bill passed Congress in July & signed into law in August

FDA regulation for OTC hearing aids to go into effect by 2020

Apple/Samsung/Bose hearing aids to follow...
“Supporting Tomorrow’s Health Providers- Title VII & VIII of Public Health Service Act”

US House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health Testimony September 14, 2017

Janice A Knebl, DO, MBA
DSWOP Endowed Chair and Professor in Geriatrics
Director, Center for Geriatrics
Interim Chair, Department of Internal Medicine
PI, HRSA GWEP: “WE HAIL”
UNTHSC @ Fort Worth
“Supporting Tomorrow’s Health Providers- Title VII & VIII of Public Health Service Act”

- Invitation 2 Weeks prior to Testimony
  - Nancy Lundebjerg, PhD AGS Executive Director
  - Amy York Eldercare Workforce Alliance
  - Brett Mc Reynolds Eldercare Workforce Alliance
- Emails/Conference Calls
- Clearance at Home Institution- OGR
- Notify Home Institution (Marketing/Communications) and Key Partners
- Preparation of Testimony (Submitted prior to Testimony Date)
- Research Background
“Supporting Tomorrow’s Health Providers - Title VII & VIII of Public Health Service Act”

• Testimony
  – Coordination
  – Flexibility
  – Preparation
  – 5 Minutes !!!!!
  – Post Testimony
  – Take advantage of other opportunities
“Supporting Tomorrow’s Health Providers-
Title VII & VIII of Public Health Service Act”
“Supporting Tomorrow’s Health Providers- Title VII & VIII of Public Health Service Act”

• Lessons Learned
  – Quick Response Needed
  – Takes a Team
  – Preparation
  – Flexibility
  – Advanced Planning
  – Dissemination
  – Follow up opportunity
Opportunities for Creating Expertise

• GSA Expert Referral Service
  – Timely answers
  – Ability/Willingness to answer quickly
• Presentations at GSA / AGS
• Interest Group reinforces expertise
• Publications in journals
Senate Testimony

- Formal invitation - you must adjust to their schedule
- Deliver testimony 48 hours in advance
- Practice testimony for FIVE minute delivery
- Received questions from Committee members post testimony
Congressional Field Hearing

- Much less formal process in field
- No requirements for written submission earlier
- Shorter presentations- 3 minute testimony
- More questions from Committee members
- Press is still in audience and want quotes
Become a Trusted Resource
Thank you!

Q & A

Please submit your questions using the “Question” tab on the webinar control box.

Following this webinar, attendees will receive email with link to:

• Webinar PowerPoint
• Webinar recording