

*This newsletter was prepared on behalf of the Association of VA Audiologists and does not reflect the view of the Department of Veterans Affairs.*



## Support AVAA

Please consider becoming a Dues Paying Member, this is a voluntary contribution of \$45 annually (cash, check, and PayPal are all accepted). The funds help support the maintenance of our website as well as other administrative and legal fees needed to keep our non-profit status. We are a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization led and run by fellow VA audiologists so please support the great cause so we can continue to advocate for ourselves and the Veterans we serve!

<http://myavaa.org/registration-dues/>

## Spotlight on Chuck Martinez, AuD

On October 29, 2016 Chuck Martinez, Au.D. retired after 36 years of service in the VA. Dr. Martinez received his M.A. in Audiology from Northwestern University in 1979 and his Au.D. from Central Michigan University in 2002. Prior to joining the staff at the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center, he worked as a research audiologist at the Northwestern University School of Medicine. He was appointed Chief, Audiology & Speech Pathology for the VA Greater Los Angeles (GLA) Healthcare System in 2005.

He has participated in clinic management, administration, student training and research at Greater Los Angeles. He was a consultant to the Joint Audiology Committee (AAA and ASHA) on Clinical Practice Algorithms and Statements and has served many hours as a member of the National VA digital hearing aid contract committee for the past two contracting cycles. Dr. Martinez has co-authored several articles that were published in journals and has presented research findings at national meetings. He is a member of

the Field Advisory Council and has co-lead the Health Technician Taskforce. He took over the Advanced Clinical Access initiative when Bob Dunlop retired and has continued to provide presentations and educational opportunities to the Field on Systems Redesign. He has been a member of the National Professional Standards since 2006 and has served as Acting Chair as needed.

Dr. Martinez has provided VA audiologists and AVAA guidance throughout his career. He was the AVAA President in 2006 and has continued to be an advisor to the executive board whenever called upon. He has received two Awards of the Association; in 2013 he was awarded the 1LT. Frank B. Walkup IV Distinguished Service Award and in 2015 he was the co-recipient of the Honors of the Association Award. Dr. Martinez has been an invaluable member of VA Audiology and will be greatly missed.

Dr. Chuck Martinez in his own words.....

1. **What is your favorite word?**  
Disarticulation because I like the way it rolls off the tongue.  
Another would be monotony because I cannot decide if just one Tony is boring.
2. **What is your least favorite word?**  
Meh (if that is a word).
3. **What inspires you on creatively, spiritually or emotionally?**  
The idea that there is always something new and different just over the next hill or around the next corner.
4. **What turns you off?**  
Pretentiousness

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5. **What sound or noise do you love?**

The sound of water in a stream (maybe because it is pretty rare in drought stricken southern California).

6. **What sound or noise do you hate?**

Helicopters flying overhead.

7. **What profession other than your own would you have liked to attempt?**

Possibly mechanical engineer (except for the math part) or some type of mechanic or stuntman.

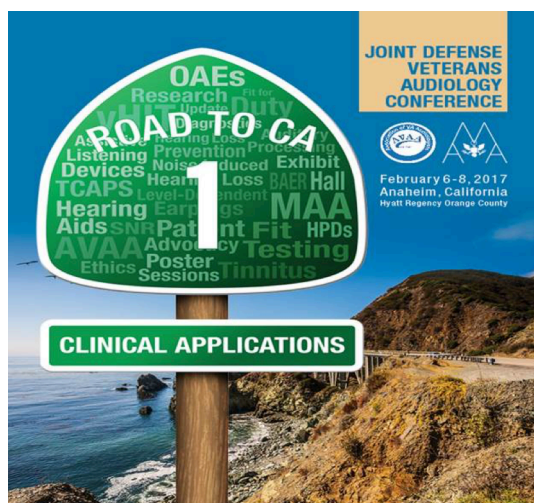
8. **What profession would you not have liked to do?**

Bullfighting

9. **On my first day of retirement you will find me....**

Pulling out my passport and heading for the horizon.

## JDVAC 2017 “Road to Clinical Applications”



Join your colleagues for one of the best events in audiology. JDVAC 2017 “Road to Clinical Applications” sessions will include: amplification, otoacoustic emissions, auditory processing disorder, cochlear implants, vestibular/balance and much more. See the attached for possible CEUs. The agenda is being finalized and will follow soon.

Hearing aid vendors will have training before and after the conference. See the attached document for a current listing of all vendor trainings. Please

remember to register your hotel with KIVA if you are attending a vendor training.

**Registering for the conference or hotel:**

If you are requesting funding, you must register at the following location for ACES approval.

<https://conferences.lrn.va.gov/VACR/Default.asp?campid=25506>

Kiva Consulting will be assisting with the registration of hotel rooms including any vendor paid rooms. Hotel registration will be open through **January 13, 2017**. Please do not call the hotel to reserve your room.

Registering for your hotel room and the conference should be made by using the following link:

<http://www.kdpartnersinc.net/jdvac.php>

## Health Tech Training

The Department of Veterans Affairs Employee Education System (EES) and the office of Rehabilitation and Prosthetics Services along with the Department of Defense Hearing Centers of Excellence (HCE) held its first Audiology Health Technicians Certification Training September 30<sup>th</sup> through October 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 at the Orlando Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC). Sixty-one Audiology Health Technicians participated in the training and received standardized instruction and practical skills experience to visually inspect the ear to rule out conditions that might interfere with testing, to identify problem audiograms for review by an audiologist, to maintain audiometric equipment and to familiarize technicians with their role in the health assessment and disability process. This course provided the opportunity for Audiology Health Technicians to receive the Council on Accreditation of Occupational Hearing Conservation (CAOHC) approved certification, meeting Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) requirements, as well as Office of Disability and Medical Assessment requirements to perform Separation Health Assessments (SHA). Many Audiology Health Technicians also participated in hearing aid vendor training prior to or after the VA training.

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The CAOHC certification training was extremely successful much to the credit of the planning staff, instructors, and the staff at the Orlando VAMC. We appreciate their hard work and dedication, as well as that of the Audiology Health Technicians whose enthusiasm and work ethic underscored why they are an integral part of Audiology Team.



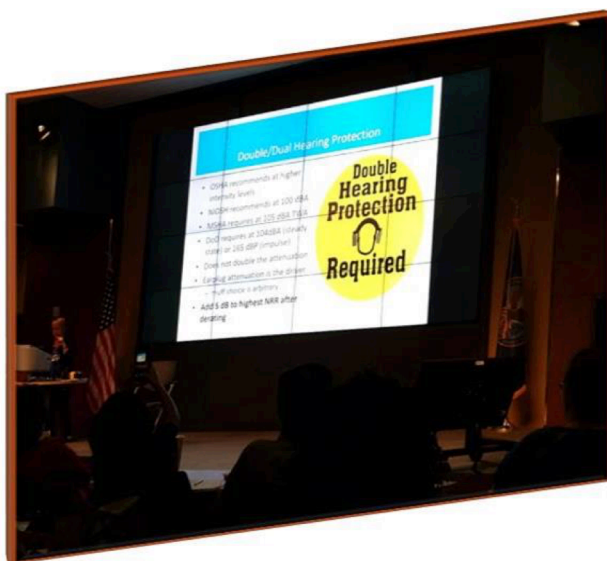
The legislation would, however, **require that hearing aid specialists provide services within their scope of practice related to the practice of fitting and dispensing of hearing aids, and under the treatment plan of an audiologist.**

This legislative action comes on the heels of the **Department of Labor (DOL) announcing that they had officially rescinded the highly concerning apprenticeship program for hearing aid dispensers.** The DOL cited the need to seek additional input from audiology stakeholders before creating such a program in the future.

The passage of H.R. 3471 and the DOL decision represent the culmination of efforts by the American Speechb Languageb Hearing Association (ASHA), American Academy of Audiology (AAA), and the Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA), to prevent hearing aid dispensers from inappropriately expanding their job functions and duties both within the VA system and on the state level.

With regard to our legislative efforts, the Audiology Organizations successfully stopped the advancement of the original House version [H.R. 353](#) and original Senate version [S. 564](#) of the misguided “Fit to Serve” legislation. These bills were proposed and shepherded by the International Hearing Society (IHS) and hearing aid dispensers nationwide. Together, the Audiology Organizations worked with members of Congress to modify the bill's language to appropriately restrict job duties of hearing aid dispensers to reflect their limited training and education. As a result, the language contained in the final, passed version of the [Veterans Mobility Safety Act](#) includes important patient protections that did not previously exist in the original House or Senate bills.

While it is disappointing that these bills passed the House and Senate, we recognize that original bill was much worse and are grateful for all the efforts and time of AAA, ADA, and ASHA provided on this issue. We as a profession need to remain vigilant and we encourage all our members to get involved in the various professional organizations at both the state and national levels to ensure our voices are heard and our veterans are receiving the best possible care.



## Legislation update

Legislative Bill H.R 3471 more commonly known as the “Fit to Serve”

On November 17th, the U.S. Senate passed H.R. 3471, the Veterans Mobility Safety Act of 2015, by unanimous consent. This bill was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on September 12, 2016, and is expected to be signed into law by the President. The legislation includes a provision that would recognize hearing aid specialists for appointment under the VA.