

# TEXAS ACADEMY OF AUDIOLOGY NEWSLETTER



APRIL 2026

TEXASAUDIOLOGY.ORG



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Word From the President.....pgs. 1-2

Legislative Update.....pg. 3

PAC Donations.....pg. 3

Professional Issues.....pg. 4

TAA Membership.....pg. 5

Scott Haug Foundation.....pg. 5

TAA Conference.....pg. 6

TAA Board of Directors.....pg. 6

TAA Sponsors.....pgs. 7-9

## UPCOMING EVENTS

New and renewal membership available till August 15, 2026

Scott Haug Foundation: Outstanding Audiologist Nomination due July 30, 2026

SHF Student Scholarship Recommendation due June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026

TAA Conference: San Marcos Oct. 8-10, 2026

Next advocacy day: Wednesday March 3, 2027



## A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Hunter Gerhart, Au.D.

### Bold Steps Forward: Fighting for Texas Audiologists and the Patients We Serve

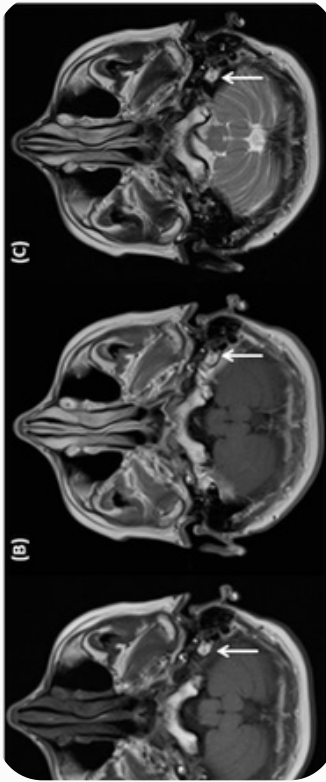
As I step into the role of President of the Texas Academy of Audiology, I want to start by saying thank you. Thank you for your trust, your membership, and your commitment to this profession. It is a privilege to serve alongside such a talented and passionate board of directors, and I am honored to lead this organization during what I believe will be the beginning of a transformative period for audiology in Texas.

I also want to extend my gratitude to our immediate Past President, Alexander Morris, Au.D., for his exceptional leadership. Dr. Morris' dedication to advocacy, education, and membership growth has positioned TAA to take bold steps forward, and I intend to build on that momentum.

So, what's ahead? I want to be transparent with you about the priorities that I intend to take forward during my presidency. These aren't just my goals; they are issues that directly affect your practice, your patients, and the future of our profession.

### Modernizing Our Scope of Practice

Audiologists are doctoral-level clinicians trained to diagnose and manage hearing and vestibular disorders, and our scope of practice should reflect the depth of our training. One of my top priorities is pursuing legislation that would allow Texas audiologists to order diagnostic imaging, bloodwork, and genetic testing as it relates to auditory and vestibular conditions.



States like Arkansas and Maryland have already passed legislation to explicitly include ordering imaging and bloodwork within their audiologists' scope of practice. There is no reason Texas should lag behind. When an audiologist identifies a patient with potential retrocochlear pathology or a complex vestibular disorder, having the ability to order the appropriate labs or imaging without an unnecessary referral delay can make a meaningful difference in patient outcomes. This is about practicing at the top of our license and removing barriers to timely care.

### **Regulating Third Party Administrators (TPAs)**

If you've dealt with third party administrators in the hearing aid space, you know the frustration. Opaque pricing, restrictive networks, and practices that can mislead patients about their actual benefits, or lack thereof. These are real problems that undermine both our profession and the patients we serve.

The Illinois Academy of Audiology has led the way with [Senate Bill 2838](#), which establishes meaningful consumer protections by requiring transparency in hearing care plans, mandating disclosure when plans are owned by hearing aid manufacturers, and prohibiting the practice of forcing providers to offer noncovered products or services at plan-mandated prices. TAA has already formally endorsed Illinois' efforts, and we are now working to introduce similar legislation in Texas. Our patients deserve to know exactly what their benefits cover, and our members deserve to practice without being squeezed by middlemen.

### **Improving Texas Medicaid for Hearing Healthcare**

Access to hearing healthcare for Texas Medicaid recipients remains woefully inadequate. Current Medicaid regulations create significant barriers for both patients and providers, and too many Texans, especially children, are going without the hearing care that they need or are experiencing significant delays in care. TAA will continue pushing for improvements to Texas Medicaid regulations to make hearing care more accessible and to ensure that reimbursement rates reflect the true value of the services that we provide.

### **The Work Ahead**

My priorities of scope of practice expansion, third party administrator regulation, and Medicaid reform, won't happen overnight. Matter of fact, they won't even happen this year considering we are in a non-legislative year in Texas. However, we must push forward. These efforts require sustained advocacy, member engagement, and a unified voice. That's where you come in.

I encourage every TAA member to stay engaged this year. Reach out to your state legislators. Attend our [October conference](#). Share your stories, because the real-world experiences of Texas audiologists are the most powerful advocacy tool that we have.

I am excited about the road ahead and grateful to walk it with you.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me at [audiology@texasaudiology.org](mailto:audiology@texasaudiology.org) with questions, ideas, or feedback. This is your Academy, and together, we will move our profession forward. Here's to a bold and impactful year!

Hunter Gerhart, Au.D.  
President, Texas Academy of Audiology  
[Audiology@TexasAudiology.org](mailto:Audiology@TexasAudiology.org)



## Legislative Update

by **Sonia Cuero, Au.D**

**VP of Legislative Issues**

Advocacy@TexasAudiology.org

The Texas Legislature does not meet this year, however we have work to do. Issues at the top of our list for 2027 include expanding our scope of practice to include ordering bloodwork or imaging as needed, reducing TPA use by certain insurance carriers that limit patient access to care, and working with TDLR to add a masters level degree to licensing language.

We cannot do this without your support. Mark your calendars for our next advocacy day Wednesday March 3, 2027. Last year we had 38 audiology advocate professionals. Let's break that record!

Your membership matters. If you are not a TAA member, please consider joining. Austin Advocacy Day 2025 has demonstrated the value in supporting the Texas Academy of Audiology. Government policy and advocacy is a fraction of what TAA does for the profession, and I hope you will consider supporting the organization. Please encourage your colleagues and classmates to join as well. Our audiology voice is strongest when we use it together. [Click here to join/renew.](#)



### **PAC Donations:**

by **Kimberly DeBona, Au.D.**

**PAC Treasurer**

## Attention Texas Audiologists!

As we all know, an election is upon us, and the PAC needs your help. We have distributed \$5000 for the Primary election to candidates who help us champion our cause in the legislature. Now our coffers are very low so we need your contributions to have more funds for the General election. Please consider donated to the TAA PAC today!

You may go online to the TAA website [https://texasaudiology.org/PAC\\_Donation](https://texasaudiology.org/PAC_Donation)  
Or you may Venmo with the QR code below or @TAA-PAC last 4 of cell: 7091

Finally, you can mail a check payable to TAA PAC to:

**Kimberly DeBona**  
**4016 Tiffany Trl**  
**College Station, TX. 77845**

Please consider supporting your TAA PAC before the end of the year. We can't do it without your support!





# 2026 Hearing Aid Service Codes: Addressing the Devaluation of Audiology Services by Contracted Payor

by **Andrea Gohmert, Au.D.**  
**VP of Professional Issues**  
Advocacy@TexasAudiology.org

**TAKE  
Action!**

With the rollout of the new hearing aid service CPT codes (92628–92642) in 2026, many Texas audiologists are now seeing updated reimbursement fee schedules from commercial payors. Unfortunately, several of these new rates are coming in below the previous legacy code reimbursements (92590–92595), raising significant concerns about the devaluation of audiology services and the potential financial impact on practices.

Because commercial payor rates are dictated by individual contracts, audiologists do have options. Here's what you can do:



### **1. Continue Billing All Allowable HCPCS Codes**

Even with the introduction of new CPT service-based codes, HCPCS codes have not changed—and many payors continue to reimburse for them. Ensuring full use of all allowable codes can help offset inadequate CPT reimbursement rates.



### **2. Contact Your Payors and Renegotiate Contracts**

Audiologists should proactively initiate renegotiation discussions. To make a strong case for improved rates, you must know:

- Your hourly cost to operate, and
- The necessary data on the time and resources required for appropriate hearing aid fitting and follow-up care.

Direct discussion with the payer could be helpful to address the low values for 30- and 60-minute appointments.



### **3. Request a “Carve-Out” for Hearing Aids in Contract Negotiations**

If payors are unwilling to offer acceptable reimbursement for the new hearing aid codes, you can request a hearing aid and DME carve-out. This allows hearing aid pricing to be treated separately from the standard fee schedule, helping ensure your practice can be properly compensated.



**DISCLAIMER: The Texas Academy of Audiology offers general guidance to audiologists and does not supersede federal and state laws and regulations. Action taken with respect to the information provided in the resources is an individual choice and not the responsibility of the Texas Academy of Audiology.**

**TAA Membership**  
by Emily Bodish, Au.D., FAAA  
VP of Membership  
Audiology@TexasAudiology.org



**HELLO**  
*TAA Family*

I am thrilled to introduce myself as your new Vice President of Membership for the Texas Academy of Audiology. My name is Emily Bodish – a proud University of North Texas Class of 2021 graduate, self-proclaimed "ear nerd," and former President and Vice President of the Dallas Audiology Society. Advocacy and community have always been at the heart of my career, and stepping into this role feels like a natural and exciting next step.

I am genuinely honored to serve in this capacity, because membership engagement is truly the lifeblood of this organization. Your involvement fuels our legislative efforts – the ones that protect what we work so hard for every single day. Your feedback is what challenges us to grow, improve, and show up better for the audiology community across Texas.

So, from one ear nerd to another – please stay engaged. Together, we keep this organization one of the strongest states! Renew your membership each year, advocate for your colleagues to join, show up for your profession, and know that every single one of us makes a difference every single day!

Warm Regards,

*Emily Bodish, Au.D., FAAA*

VP of Membership

## DID YOU KNOW?

**TAA is now offering  
Company /Group  
Memberships!**

**Go to [TexasAudiology.org](http://TexasAudiology.org)  
for more information**



Scott Haug Foundation

*Greetings From  
The Scott Haug  
Foundation*

It's my pleasure to update you on what's in store for 2026.

The Foundation will once again be organizing a Thursday night fundraising event at the conference in San Marcos! We will be sure to let everyone know when the details are final. This event is our chance to raise funds to support our student scholarship program. It's also a great opportunity to build relationships with colleagues from around the state. Friday night will also prove to be a great night as we do Fiesta, TAA style. It's a night that sure to be full of memories and fun.

Work has begun collecting nominations for the student scholar awards. Each year we recognize outstanding third-year students from each of our five Texas universities.

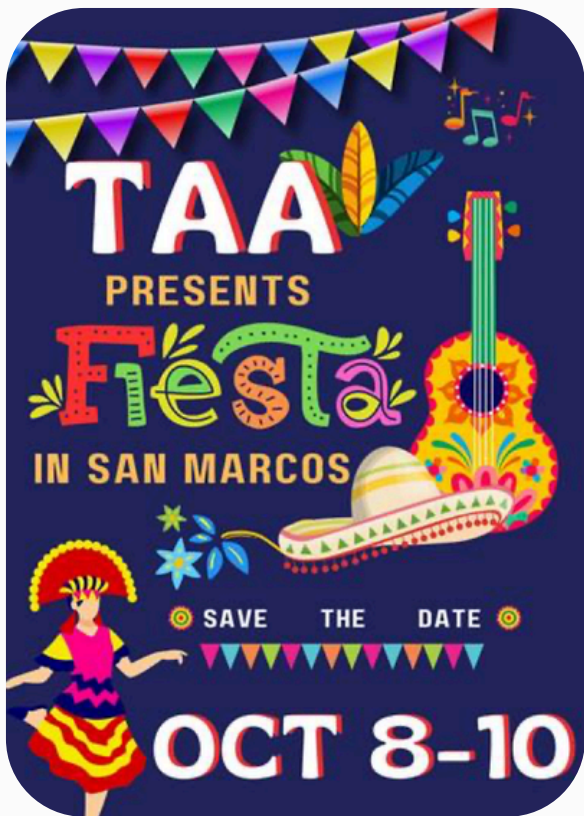
Do you know a phenomenal audiologist? Every year the Foundation recognizes the Outstanding Texas Audiologist. In Texas we have many amazing audiologists that deserve to be recognized for their contributions to the profession and to the communities we serve. To learn more about the process of nominating an audiologist, please go to: [www.scotthaug.org](http://www.scotthaug.org)

The Scott Haug Foundation (SHF) is a 501c3 organization so all donations are tax deductible.

The founders of the SHF knew the importance of getting together in person for learning and fun. The Texas Academy of Audiology is the most important organization for us and the most important conference a Texas Audiologist can attend. I hope you'll join us this year in San Marcos!

*Steven Hamlett*

Steven Hamlett  
Scott Haug Foundation President



Save the date for the Texas Academy of Audiology Annual Conference, October 8–10 in beautiful San Marcos, Texas, where learning meets celebration with a vibrant Fiesta flair. Planning is in full swing, and we’re thrilled to welcome confirmed speaker Bob DiSogra, who will present on medical emergencies in the audiology clinic as well as diabetes and other chronic conditions and their impact on audiologic care—timely, practical topics that will elevate your clinical expertise. Beyond outstanding continuing education, attendees can look forward to a spirited Fiesta-themed dinner dance, a bustling exhibitor hall, engaging student events, and plenty of opportunities to connect and network with colleagues from across the state. Mark your calendars and get ready to learn, lead, and celebrate with your TAA community in San Marcos!



**by Rachel Higginbotham, Au.D.**  
**VP of Education**  
 Education@TexasAudiology.org

## ***TAA Board of Directors***

### **ELECTED OFFICERS**

Hunter Gerhart, Au.D.,  
**President**  
 Alexander Morris, Au.D.,  
**Past President**  
 Holly Pavlicek, Au.D.,  
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 Sarah McAlexander, Au.D.,  
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**VP of Education**  
 Sonia Cuero, Au.D.,  
**VP of Legislative Issues**  
 Emily Bodish, Au.D.,  
**VP of Membership**  
 Andrea Gohmert, Au.D.,  
**VP of Professional Issues**  
 Sandy Magallan, Au.D.,  
**VP of Public Relations**

### **APPOINTED BOARD MEMBERS & SUPPORT STAFF**

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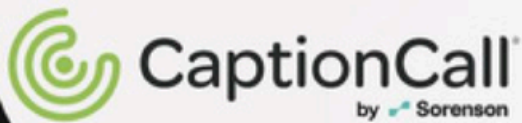
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