

New Guide to Help You Communicate at Health Care Appointments

prepared by the Education & Outreach/Healthcare Committee

Hearing and being heard at healthcare appointments can be difficult for people with hearing loss. Effective strategies are available to minimize the barriers to improved hearing.

Using the “Communication Guide for People with Hearing Loss at Health Care Appointments” (on the opposite page) will help you with these strategies. First, as a person with hearing loss, you must advocate for yourself. Staff and providers cannot assist you if they do not know you need assistance. Second, you need to identify what staff and providers should do to help.

To use this guide, review it before each health care visit, as the reason for the visit, the setting, and the provider varies. Fill out the guide and highlight what strategies are best for you. Refer to the guide during the appointment as needed. It is your tool.

When is a good time to talk about your hearing loss? After you exchange greetings, start the conversation by sharing with staff or provider that you have hearing loss. Explain what that person(s) can do to eliminate hearing barriers. As we do in everyday life, it always helps to thank people for their assistance.

It is also very important to be prepared for the medical aspect of your appointment. Gather your paperwork, collect your thoughts, and write down your questions for the provider. Only then will your mind will be available to fully “listen” during the appointment.

If you need more information about assistive listening devices, refer to the HLAA Demo Center through the website hearinglossrochester.org. Watch the video or sign up to participate in the Demo Center Zoom meetings. Your audiologist is another useful source of information.

Speak up! When you advocate for yourself you are not just helping yourself, you are advocating for all people with hearing loss!

by Eileen Lumb