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During our recent collaboration with the FDA to conduct a public workshop on cochlear implant advances, the immense passion that drives us as hearing healthcare professionals became very apparent. It remains somewhat magical to me that our field is so inherently different from many others. The invisible nature of hearing loss and the associated neglect, along with substantial downstream difficulties for people of all ages, may be what drives many of us to feel so passionate about hearing loss advocacy and education.

As cochlear implant advocacy takes lots of time and effort, the ACI Alliance relies on this passion as well as the countless hours of volunteer work of its members. We would like to highlight and acknowledge the hard work and contributions of the volunteers who dedicate their time and knowledge to our cause.

First, I would like to acknowledge the ACI Alliance Board of Directors. In the December issue of Calling, we featured two board members and we plan to continue this section in our e-magazine. This issue features Amy Birath and Kevin Brown. I am incredibly proud of the members of the Board since the ACI Alliance leadership represents both the multidisciplinary nature and coming together of such different professional groups—united by a common cause. As such, the Board consists of physicians, audiologists, speech-language pathologists, educators, and, most importantly, individuals and families affected by hearing loss who have experienced the benefit of cochlear implantation firsthand. A list of the Board members can be found on our website.

continued on page 2
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR  continued from page 1

Next, our advocacy heroes, the State Champions, a diverse group of ACI Alliance members that monitors, and responds to, state and federal policies related to cochlear implantation. Our Executive Director, Donna Sorkin led the initial development of our State Champion program in 1993 as a means of addressing CI coverage in the Affordable Care Act Marketplace Plans. Our successes there led to the advancement of this important program which is now managed by Nichole Westin, our government affairs manager with contributions from all of our staff. From its inception, these activities have been a foundation of the ACI Alliance and remain a cornerstone of the multidisciplinary effort that defines our government advocacy activities. As such, the State Champions are an integral part of what the ACI Alliance does; a full list of volunteer Champs by state can be found on our website. I encourage you to acknowledge their work on behalf of the entire field and let us know if you wish to explore joining our efforts.

The ACI Alliance’s most recent volunteer effort is our CI CAN group (CI Consumer Advocacy Network). In short, it is our newest initiative designed to involve anyone who has or may benefit from a cochlear implant and tap into their advocacy networks as well as other professionals who wish to be involved. ACI Alliance staff provide the necessary training and there is no cost to participate. While it is still early, we are optimistic that this new effort will help us amplify our ongoing efforts to boost grassroots advocacy and education. We encourage you to let your patients know about CI CAN and encourage those who may be interested to apply.

Next, the group currently working in overdrive is the Scientific Program Committee for the CI conference and especially the past and current chairs (Drs. Sarah Sydlowski and Matthew Carlson for last year’s conference and Drs. Lisa Park and Matthew Bush for the upcoming 2022 meeting this Spring). Organizing a conference is a monumental task and the entire Program Committee along with its subcommittees (Continuing Education Committee, chaired by Melissa Hall AuD; Student Scholarship Committee, chaired by Melissa Sweeney MS; Student Poster Competition Judging, chaired by Jacob Hunter MD) deserves much of the credit. If you run into them at the conference, please take a moment to acknowledge their effort.

Other quite time-intensive committees are the Board Nominations Committee, chaired by Camille Dunn PhD, as well as the Research Committee, chaired by Michael Hoa MD. The former lays the necessary groundwork for how the ACI Alliance selects its Board Members. The latter has worked hard to advance the ACI Alliance research mission. These committees along with all the other efforts are listed on our website.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the leadership of Terry Zwolan PhD and Craig Buchman MD as the PIs of an important study that set the stage for a National Coverage Determination (NCD). The study explored CI outcomes for Medicare beneficiaries with sentence outcomes in the best aided condition of 40-60%. The outcome of this study allowed the opening of the NCD process on March 1 to consider expanded indications for the population of older adults. The NCD is discussed more fully on page 9 of this issue of Calling.

As always, I wish to express our gratitude for your continued support of cochlear implantation and the ACI Alliance. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact our staff via the provided links on our website. We hope to see you at the upcoming in-person meeting or online should you choose the virtual version.
Annual CI series
Expand your expertise + earn CEUs online

The latest courses in the AudiologyOnline annual CI series, presented in partnership with the American Cochlear Implant Alliance, are now available!

Topics include:

- Guidelines for CI candidacy in adults & children
- CI for patients with single-sided deafness or asymmetric hearing loss
- Preoperative evaluation & postoperative management for CI

GET STARTED: AudiologyOnline.com/ACIAseries22

Become an AudiologyOnline member for 24/7 access to 1500+ evidence-based online courses, including CI series courses. Courses may be offered for AAA, ASHA, and IHS CEUs.

unlimited ceu access | $99 per year
We're counting down the days to our in-person meeting, CI2022 DC, which will be held in Washington, DC from May 18-21, 2022. As the start of the meeting draws closer, our excitement is building. We can't seem to remember the last time that we've all been in-person together so it will be a welcome change to break out of the virtual meeting window to come together in-person in DC. The ACI Alliance Program Planning Committee has spent many hours to plan a meeting that will bring us back together and we feel like we’ve been preparing for a big family reunion. After eight months of work, we’re pleased to invite you to CI2022 DC to reconnect with old friends and make some new ones as we share the bountiful spread of our annual meeting.

The abstract submission process of CI2022 produced an impressive amount of original research abstracts with nearly 350 abstracts submitted from 148 different institutions representing 31 countries. Following a rigorous abstract peer review process, we have organized a cutting-edge program that features 32 e-posters, 151 in-person posters, 23 poster highlights, and 128 podium presentations. Our program begins on the afternoon of Wednesday May 18 with three industry satellite symposia. The first full day of the conference, Thursday May 19, is packed with exciting content such as the John Niparko Memorial Lecture given by Rene Gifford PhD, a panel discussion on the impactful work of Childhood Development after Cochlear Implantation (CDaCI) study, and an entertaining and educational case-based panel entitled “Stump the Experts.”

Thursday’s concurrent podium sessions will promote transdisciplinary discovery and discussion covering diverse topics.
themes such as “Spotlight on SSD,” “Results May Vary: A Critical Look at CI Outcome Variability,” and “Understanding and Addressing Disparities in Hearing Healthcare.” Thursday afternoon features concurrent poster highlights sessions, a keynote presentation by Sarah Bowe, MD focused on gender disparities in healthcare, and a panel discussion from women who are advancing the future of hearing healthcare. We conclude the activities on Thursday with the poster exhibit session and our welcome reception social event.

The program continues Friday May 20 with another full day of content that will reunite the ACI Alliance family. Friday’s content includes a keynote presentation by Sumit Agrawal, MD entitled “From Synchrotron to Artificial Intelligence: The Journey to Improve Cochlear Implant Outcomes.” The concurrent podium sessions feature a variety of themes that will be meaningful to all attendees such as “Grassroots Expansion of Cochlear Implant Care and Access,” “The Measure of Success: Test Methods Reboot,” “Research Review on CI Recalls and Revisions,” and “It’s All About the Array: An Update of CI Electrode Research.” The (Re)Habilitation Connect Forum is an evidence-based practice-focused session that will occur on Friday afternoon and is sure to provide attendees with food for thought and quality networking opportunities.

We will reconvene on Saturday morning May 21 for the final course. This half day of content will close out the conference on a high note with a total of 9 concurrent podium sessions throughout the morning and early afternoon covering topics such as “Contemporary Update on Cognition and Cochlear Implantation,” “The New Normal: Lessons Learned from Life in the Pandemic,” and “Opening Doors with Progressive Pediatric Care.” With over 40 hours of CME/CEU content, this conference packs the professional plate as attendees reconnect with colleagues from all over the globe. We believe that this meeting represents the best possible way for the professional community to come together as a reunion of one family in 2022. See you soon in DC!

What Else Do You Need to Know About CI2022 DC?

**Registration/Getting Your Badge/Hotel**

It's not too late to register for the conference. Online registration can be accessed at [www.CI2022DC.org](http://www.CI2022DC.org) for both in-person and virtual registration. If you are an ACI Alliance member, have your code available when you register. Contact [Jhous@acialliance.org](mailto:Jhous@acialliance.org) if you are a member and don't know your code. You may also join now and immediately benefit from member rates.

The conference will be held at the Renaissance Washington, DC Downtown Hotel. There are limited hotel rooms left at the Renaissance but we have also reserved rooms at special conference rates at the Grand Hyatt Washington, a 6-minute (0.3 mile) walk from the Renaissance. The hotel reservation deadline is April 26. [Hyatt Details](#)

To register onsite to obtain your badge and program book:

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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, May 18</td>
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<td>Saturday, May 21</td>
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**COVID-19 Vaccination Policy**

CI2022 DC is a COVID-19 vaccination required event for all attendees and staff. Attendees must show proof of full COVID-19 vaccination to pick up their own badge. Attendees must be fully vaccinated with a vaccine approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or World Health Organization (WHO). A list of approved vaccines can be found here. With the CI2022 DC vaccination requirements in place, it is anticipated that masks may be optional, but will remain recommended.

To simplify badge pickup, CI2022 DC will use CLEAR to collect proof of vaccination for U.S. based attendees. CLEAR’s free mobile app and Health Pass feature provides a simple and secure way for this information to be shared. For the most efficient entry into CI2022 DC Meeting, all registrants should sign up for CLEAR and complete their COVID-19 proof of vaccination as soon as possible, but at least 48 hours before arriving at badge pick up. For new CLEAR users a CI2022 DC code will be available in advance of the meeting.

Non-U.S. based attendees, as well as U.S. based attendees unable to use CLEAR, will need to provide proof of vaccination for manual inspection at the designated Health...
Check-In Desk. Either a digital or hard copy of one’s vaccine record will be accepted. Digital vaccination certificates and mobile applications used in other countries will also be accepted. Vaccine records must clearly state the following:

- Full name
- Type of vaccine administered
- Date when the vaccine was received
- Location where vaccine was administered

In addition to providing a copy of their vaccine record, all attendees will be asked for a government-issued photo ID that matches the name on their vaccine record.

Panels and Special Programs
Feedback from prior meetings emphasized the desire for more content presented in an interactive format. We have moved forward with more discussion format sessions including:

- **CDaCI** (Childhood Development After Cochlear Implantation) began 20 years ago by Dr. John K. Niparko as a means for multiple CI centers to collaborate and conduct research on how deaf children develop after cochlear implantation and the factors that impact on outcomes.

- **Stump the Experts** will be a case-based session in which a multidisciplinary group of cochlear implant experts will weigh in on their assessment of complex cases. Discussion will involve treatment options, candidacy concerns, and suggestions for improved outcomes.

- **Women Advancing Treatment and Careers in Hearing** will follow keynote speaker Sarah Bowe’s talk on gender disparities in healthcare.

- **ACI Alliance Research, Advocacy and Awareness Initiatives: Moving the Field Forward** will be convened Friday morning and involve a number of our members. We will begin with a brief business meeting to elect new board members. We will then cover key recent organizational initiatives including **ACI Alliance on the Hill (Virtual)**, the Medicare NCD, Cost Effectiveness of Cochlear Implants in Children sponsored research, and more. Learn how ACI Alliance is working to advance access to CI and change awareness.

- **(Re)Habilitation Connect Forum** is a half-day program for anyone who wants to learn more about two important (re)habilitation topics in a clinically-based, research-driven framework: (1) What special education services should infants and children with CIs receive in early intervention and as they age? and (2) How can we maximize adult outcomes with short-term aural rehab? After the formal presentations, we will gather to “Continue the Conversation” at a reception sponsored by Hearing First. This session is not just for therapy professionals!
Continuing Education: In-Person and On the Virtual Platform

Jessica Houk MBA / Manager of Information Technology and Membership Services / ACI Alliance / jhouk@acialliance.org

CEU and CME will be offered from the same providers that have been available in the past. Tier 1 CE Hours for audiologists will also be offered. All attendees will receive a Certificate of Participation. This year, we have incorporated a new claiming form that will be online only. Instructions will be at the registration desk on how to access the CEU or CME forms. If you plan to continue claiming CEU or CME on-demand after the live conference ends, you will continue using your online form; otherwise, you should submit the form at the conclusion of the live conference.

All content from the in-person conference will be recorded and made available on-demand on our virtual platform by Monday, May 23, 2022. This includes podium presentations, invited speaker presentations, Industry Satellite Symposia, and Poster Highlights. All posters will be available in PDF format. Industry Satellite Symposia content will include the Wednesday afternoon presentations as well as daily breakfast symposia. The virtual platform, along with CME and CEU claiming, will be available to both in-person and virtual-only attendees for 30 days post-conference (June 21, 2022).

For more information, contact Jessica Houk at jhouk@acialliance.org.

CI2022 DC at a Glance

Conference Dates: Wednesday, May 18 – Saturday, May 21, 2022

Conference Website: www.CI2022DC.org (links to abstracts, registration, hotel, updates)

ACI Alliance Detailed Information: https://www.acialliance.org/page/CI2022

Full Program: https://bit.ly/3vf4szp

Welcome & Opening Session with Niparko Lecture: Thursday, May 19, 8:45 a.m.

Hotel and Meeting Venue: Renaissance Washington DC Downtown

Secondary Hotel: Grand Hyatt Washington (6-minute walk)

Hotel Reservation Deadline: April 26

CI Manufacturer Satellite Symposia:
- Wednesday, May 18
  - 1:00 – 2:15 p.m. / Cochlear Americas
  - 2:45 – 4:00 p.m. / MED-EL
  - 4:30 – 5:45 p.m. / Advanced Bionics

CI Manufacturer Breakfast Symposia: Thursday (AB), Friday (Cochlear), Saturday (MED-EL), at 7:30 a.m.

Opening Reception, Exhibits, Posters:
- Thursday, May 19
  - Poster Exhibit Session, 4:45 p.m.
  - Welcome Reception, 5:45 p.m.
What is Cochlear Connected Care?

Connected Care is a transformational approach to hearing healthcare where patient data and insights seamlessly connect across different care settings – from the surgical suite, to the clinic and into a patient’s everyday life.

Surgical Care
Surgical Care solutions can enhance patient outcomes through intraoperative tools and insights, and improve the surgical experience.

Self-managed Care
Self-managed Care solutions empower patients to proactively manage their hearing in everyday moments and build listening skills.

In-clinic Care
In-clinic Care solutions streamline patient management and care, giving clinicians the time and flexibility to optimise every appointment.

Remote Care
With Remote Care solutions, clinicians can deliver quality care when it’s needed, without a trip to the clinic.

Explore our latest Connected Care offerings: https://bit.ly/3lmU1Wp

This content is meant for professional use. If you are a consumer, please seek advice from your health professional about treatments for hearing loss. Outcomes may vary, and your health professional will advise you about the factors which could affect your outcome. Always read the instructions for use. Not all products are available in all countries. Please contact your local Cochlear representative for product information. Views expressed are those of the individual.

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One of the first initiatives undertaken by the newly organized American Cochlear Implant Alliance was the formation of a multi-center study to explore outcomes in older adults with greater speech recognition than is allowed under current Medicare coverage criteria. We approached the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), requesting that they partner with us and allow Medicare expanded coverage for individuals who were part of the ACI Alliance study. Principal investigators Terry Zwolan PhD, Craig Buchman MD, and John Niparko MD led the study effort.

The study assessed outcomes in Medicare beneficiaries with scores that fell between 40 and 60% correct on AzBio sentences in the best aided condition when stimuli were presented in quiet at 60 dBA. Study results were published in *JAMA Otolaryngology* in October 2020 “Assessment of Cochlear Implants for Adult Medicare Beneficiaries Aged 65 Years or Older Who Meet Expanded Indications of Open-Set Sentence Recognition” by Zwolan et al.

**Coverage Determination Process Announced March 1**
The study results were favorable and helped us in our efforts to formally request a reconsideration of criteria under a formal process through CMS called a National Coverage Determination (NCD). The NCD request was opened for public comment on March 1.

ACI Alliance provided guidance to our members and others in the broad hearing loss community to encourage as much input and support as possible. When the comment period closed on March 31, 32 comments had been submitted by our associated organizations including the American Academy of Audiology, ASHA, Academy of Dispensing Audiologists, AAO-HNS and the ITEM Coalition. Dozens of our members documented their experiences as CI clinicians and researchers, and the need to provide older adults with candidacy criteria that more closely matched that of individuals covered by private insurance. Three hearing implant companies submitted comments based on data that they have collected on patient outcomes. Adult CI recipients, many of whom are active in ACI Alliance submitted comments, adding their important perspective. Formal comments submitted by ACI Alliance are posted on our website as are the comments of PIs Drs. Terry Zwolan and Craig Buchman.

The full set of public comments are available online here.

**Lou Ferrigno Shares His Personal Story with CMS**
On April 5, ACI Alliance met with CMS officials responsible for evaluating the NCD and determining how and whether CI candidacy will be changed. We brought with us *The Incredible Hulk* to share his compelling journey with hearing loss and then, recently receiving a cochlear implant. Lou noted that his hearing had declined in recent years, making it increasingly difficult to interact with the range of people in his personal and professional life. Since he received a cochlear implant a year ago, his hearing has dramatically improved and he urged CMS officials to make CIs more readily available to those older adults who may benefit. We were all moved by his compelling story as well as his interest in helping ACI Alliance with this important public policy goal.

**What Happens Next?**
CMS will review the submitted comments and compare them to the proposed expanded coverage criteria to determine if the comments support the proposal. CMS will then publish a summary of the public comments received and responses to the comments. Based upon the analysis of the evidence base and the public comments, CMS will issue a preliminary coverage determination that is responsive to the NCD request. That preliminary determination will again be subject to public comment and, after another 30-day comment period, CMS will make a final decision. That decision will become the new and updated NCD for CI coverage for Medicare beneficiaries. ACI Alliance will continue to monitor the process and seek the input and involvement of our members and the entire hearing health community as the process moves forward.
As the world begins its return to normal following the COVID pandemic, so do the state legislative bodies. The past two years had been disrupted but now things are running as they did in the “before times.” So far this year, we have seen a number of bills that may impact the lives of children or adults pass, be amended or be introduced. Our ACI Alliance State Champions and CI CAN members have been working hard to improve state and national policies via our country’s legislative system.

Federal Legislation
Despite what appears in the news, there are times when the U.S. Congress does come together to pass legislation that benefits the American people. The House did so in December 2021 when it passed the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Reauthorization bill. EHDI provides the crucial newborn hearing screening program as well as early intervention services. Since the initial passage of EHDI in 2000, we are now at the point in which 98% of infants are screened for hearing loss in the US in the first month of life. The House bill, as passed, maintains all the provisions and requirements from the 2017 bill with no additions beyond a study by the GAO. That study would analyze how information disseminated by state EHDI programs are relied upon by parents and identify ways to address disparities in outreach to families. ACI Alliance recently reviewed the 50 state and DC EHDI websites and found significant variation in the provision of critical information available via these important electronic information sources. The study findings will be presented as a poster at the upcoming CI2022 DC conference.

Focus on EHDI now shifts to the Senate where we, along with our collaborative partners, will continue to work to support this critical legislation and encourage an increase in the funding for the HRSA component. ACI Alliance signed onto a letter with a number of other organizations on these issues which you can read here.

State Legislation
State Champs continue to move the needle on screening for Cytomegalovirus (CMV) in children. CMV affects approximately 1 per every 200 births in the United States and is the most common cause of non-hereditary hearing loss in children. Currently, there is no national legislation regarding education or screening for CMV; a growing number of states have CMV screening and/or educational laws. When conducted, screening for the virus is usually undertaken only after an infant has failed an initial hearing screening. Many children who are asymptomatic at birth develop hearing loss later and hence are missed during the early hearing screen. ACI Alliance and its advocacy networks actively support legislation that recommends screening for CMV as part of newborn screening or after a child has failed the newborn hearing test. A bill providing for CMV screening recently passed in Florida due in large part due to the hard work of State Champs Tina Stern AuD (University of Miami) and Cedric Pritchett MD (Nemours Children’s Hospital). Shelley Moats AuD helped pass a similar bill in Kentucky in honor of one of her patients. We continue to track pending CMV bills in New York, Pennsylvania, and Nevada.

Finally, our State Champs have been on the forefront of pushing back on state legislation that could limit parent choice on decision-making for their children with hearing loss, particularly pertaining to communications options. The ACI Alliance position on this topic has consentingly been that parents and families have the right to choose their child’s path to communication and technology options. Federal legislation is in place to protect this right. Over the past few years, we have successfully halted language in state bills that would have hinder such protections if passed. This year, a few bills have been introduced and have moved forward. Our State Champs have worked directly with legislators to amend bills to better protect all families, including testifying before relevant state committees. We also continue to educate on how improving funding and support for existing programs will see a greater benefit for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

To join our advocacy efforts, please reach out to Nichole Westin at nwestin@acialliance.org.
Confidence over the Phone

Captions confirm every word they hear.

CapTel® Captioned Telephones show word-for-word captions of everything a caller says over the phone. It’s like closed captions on TV, only for phone calls. CapTel restores a patient’s confidence in talking over the telephone, knowing they can confirm what they hear just by reading the captions.

A no-cost CapTel phone is available for your patients with hearing loss.

REQUIREMENTS: Hearing Loss, High Speed Internet, Dial-tone. No-Cost Phone with valid third-party certification is subject to change without notice. Terms and conditions may apply. FEDERAL LAW PROHIBITS ANYONE BUT REGISTERED USERS WITH HEARING LOSS FROM USING INTERNET PROTOCOL (IP) CAPTIONED TELEPHONES WITH THE CAPTIONS TURNED ON. IP Captioned Telephone Service may use a live operator. The operator generates captions of what the other party to the call says. These captions are then sent to your phone. There is a cost for each minute of captions generated, paid from a federally administered fund. No cost is passed on to the CapTel user for using the service. CapTel captioning service is intended exclusively for individuals with hearing loss. CapTel® is a registered trademark of Ultratec, Inc. The Bluetooth® word mark and logos are registered trademarks owned by Bluetooth SIG, Inc. and any use of such marks by Ultratec, Inc. is under license. (v1.6 10-19)
Tuesday Talks: A New Webinar Series for CI Candidates, Recipients, Family Members, and Others

ACI Alliance launched a new webinar series for adults, parents and other family members seeking information on cochlear implants and related topics in January. *Tuesday Talks* are captioned and held monthly (live) at 12 Noon ET—of course on Tuesdays. The inaugural four-part series covers late onset hearing loss in children, the new Rally Caps film, and two talks on understanding a mapping session (one for parents and one for adults). Each webinar is moderated by members of our consumer network (CI CAN) who bring their own personal experience with hearing loss and CI to the discussion. See the topics and speakers below.

**Why We Need to Talk about Late Onset Hearing Loss**  
*Valerie James Abbott, Author and Advocate*

**Rally Caps and the Importance of CI Representation**  
*Jodi Michelle Cutler, Author and Filmmaker*

**Understanding Your Child’s CI Programming Session**  
*Terry Zwolan PhD, Director of Audiology at Hearing First*

**COMING SOON!** Tuesday, April 19 at 12N ET  
**Understanding an Adult’s CI Programming Session**  
*Meredith Holcomb AuD, Director, Hearing Implant Program, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine*

The first set of talks were recorded and will be made available for viewing in May. Watch your mailbox (and the website) for details. Our *Tuesday Talks* are one-hour in duration, free, and open to the public. Though designed for parents and adults interested in cochlear implants and related topics, others have attended and enjoy the sessions.

A new series of *Tuesday Talks* will launch in September covering a range of important topics. We are excited about offering this important new resource for our broad community.

For more information, [click here](#).
Some of Our Favorite ACI Alliance Resources for Parents and Adult Recipients

Improving awareness of cochlear implants is part of the ACI Alliance mission. By creating accessible resources across a variety of topics, we increase knowledge about the benefits across a broad population. Here are some of our most popular resources for the recipient community (and others). Please share.

**Insurance**
One of the most frequent inquiries we receive relates to insurance coverage. We cover private and public insurers and advice on advocating for coverage throughout the CI process. There is a video overview.

**Steps to a Cochlear Implant**
CI surgery and activation are important parts of the process to getting a cochlear implant, but this resource comprehensively explains what happens before and after the surgery. It covers hearing assessments, referrals, post-operative appointments, (re)habilitation, and device maintenance.

**Cochlear Implant FAQs**
Geared toward an audience not already familiar with CIs and their benefits, this resource covers the basics of how CIs work as well as frequently asked questions on the difference between CIs and hearing aids, preservation of residual hearing, and learning to listen to music with a CI.

**Stories**
Recipient stories help candidates and family members understand the CI process and the benefits. This resource includes stories about children, patients in their 80s and 90s, and everyone in between. These stories help people considering a CI feel less alone in their hearing loss journeys.

**Adult Rehabilitation**
Naama's Blog: Cochlear Implant Rehabilitation for Adults, was launched in 2016 to address the lack of high-quality rehab guidance materials for adult CI recipients. ACI Alliance regularly publishes this resource to cover a range of topics including mapping appointments, using the telephone, listening to podcasts, music, and much more.

**Listening @ ACI Alliance**
Listening @ ACI Alliance is a free, monthly online newsletter on cochlear implants and hearing loss shared with hearing healthcare providers, adult CI recipients (and those exploring CI), parents and family members interested in CI, educators who work with deaf and hard of hearing children, and anyone wanting to learn more about cochlear implants.
The clear choice for hearing with both ears

Dedicated to adults and children with no usable hearing in one ear and some in the other, the Marvel cochlear implant and compatible Phonak hearing aid can help you or your child enjoy a more powerful connection to the world.

Enjoy conversations even in challenging listening situations
Two devices designed to communicate and work together
Stream audio to both ears
Adjust both devices with a single control
A dynamic and integrated system
Matching colors*

Learn more at AdvancedBionics.com/TheClearChoice
Supporting All Parents to Boost Services for Children with Hearing Loss

Laura Odato MPP / Director of Operations and Marketing
ACI Alliance / LOdato@acialliance.org

Dr. Dana Suskind’s latest book, Parent Nation: Unlocking Every Child’s Potential, Fulfilling Society’s Promise (Penguin Random House, 2022) builds on her earlier work on the importance of early language exposure for children with hearing loss. Dr. Suskind is a pediatric otolaryngologist who specializes in hearing loss and cochlear implantation and directs the University of Chicago Medicine Program on Pediatric Hearing Loss and Cochlear Implants. She is the author of the best-selling 2015 book Thirty Million Words: Building a Child’s Brain. Suskind and her colleagues were early supporters of American Cochlear Implant Alliance efforts for families.

Parent Nation builds on the foundation of her first book which emphasized optimizing brain development in early childhood. After publishing Thirty Million Words, Suskind concluded that the focus on brain development left out a critical piece of the puzzle—a lack of overall support for all parents. Her work with children who are deaf or hard of hearing highlighted the importance of parent support. Parent Nation was inspired by the realization that such support is lacking in our society for all parents, a recognition that she considers her “call her to action.”

The book weaves together the science of early childhood brain development with practical solutions for supporting clinics and pediatric providers. She uses stories of individual families to empower parents to advocate for their children and develop their own support networks. Parent Nation encourages readers to imagine what support for parents and children could look like “in a parent nation” and provides a blueprint for workplaces, policymakers, and individuals to guide us there.

Parent Nation underscores what parents, medical providers, and other professionals serving families witnessed during the COVID pandemic with so many families who relied on specific institutions sound their support networks gone. Families of children with hearing loss experienced these difficulties even more acutely as critical services, including early intervention, were unavailable.

Following the publication of Parent Nation, Dr. Suskind will initiate the “Building a Parent Nation” campaign. Her goal is to shift the politics around family-centered reforms and help us envision how national policies can directly impact a child’s ability to learn and thrive. Initiatives include a book discussion guide, a weekly newsletter and a downloadable set of curricula for parents. Suskind is challenging all of us to move forward with the support of families in a broad context to encourage healthy cognitive and language development for all children.
Meet the ACI Alliance Board of Directors

Amy Lynn Birath AuD, CCC-A/SLP, FAAA, LSLS Cert. AVEd

My interest in communication and communication disorders began when I was in high school and volunteered with a Special Olympics bowling group. (Of note, they all were better bowlers than I). My path meandered, but ultimately led me to the Moog Center for Deaf Education, where I am the Coordinator of Speech-Language Pathology and serve as an audiologist and speech-language pathologist who is certified as a Listening and Spoken Language Specialist. My passion is developing relationships and working with children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families, supporting them as we all work together to help the children achieve their full potential academically and socially. In addition to providing direct services to children and their families, I am involved in research, curriculum development, and professional mentoring, and I teach in the Program in Audiology and Communication Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis. In my free time, I enjoy the outdoors, live music, theatre, good food, and spending time with family and friends.

I am honored and excited to be serving on the ACI Alliance Board of Directors. It has given me a broader forum to learn from others, grow as a professional, and contribute to the field while focused on ACI Alliance’s mission of advancing access to the gift of hearing by cochlear implantation through research, advocacy, and awareness. I forever will be grateful for this opportunity.

Kevin D. Brown MD, PhD

I am currently Vice Chair and Associate Professor of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery and Neurosurgery at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine and Division Chief of Neurotology and Skull Base Surgery. I trained at the University of Iowa for residency and then the University of Miami for fellowship. ACI Alliance serves a critical role in advocacy for cochlear implant patients, health care providers and the implant industry. The organization also provides an outstanding venue to present and exchange research in cochlear implantation at our annual meeting. I was delighted to join the board, and currently serve as Treasurer.

Cochlear implantation and research related to cochlear implants have been a passion of mine since early residency. I am fortunate to work with an outstanding team of dedicated researchers, audiologists, speech therapists and fellow surgeons at North Carolina that facilitate performing research at the highest level. Our clinic was an early leader in expanding cochlear implant candidacy to adults and children with greater residual hearing and asymmetric or unilateral sensory hearing loss. We are also interested in evaluating how to optimize electrode choices prior to cochlear implantation based on cochlear anatomy. Once patients are implanted, we optimize mapping to improve performance based on cochlear anatomy.

It is an incredibly exciting time to be part of cochlear implant care. We continue to expand candidacy, increase awareness, and improve programming to the benefit of our patients and our society. Our team is excited to be part of the work of ACI Alliance.
The SYNCHRONY 2 Cochlear Implant System features S-Vector magnet technology. With 25% more magnet strength, it’s the ideal implant for single-unit audio processors.

The sounds of a morning jog.

IT’S THE LITTLE THINGS that make it a memory.

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