



## Coronavirus Resources for People with Hearing Loss

*Coronavirus (COVID-19) presents new challenges for people with hearing loss and those who are Deaf when they navigate working from home, seeking medical care, accessing routine services, and speech-reading through face masks.*

### Where Do I Start?

Subscribe to [HLAA's e-news](#) and [HLAA-Washington's e-news](#) for up-to-date information. Join the [HLAA Official Community & Support Group on Facebook](#). Visit the [HLAA's News page](#) and [their hearing loss and coronavirus resources page](#) regularly. Read this general guide from Shari Eberts [on living with hearing loss during COVID-19](#) plus [her 7 Tips to Maintain Hearing Health Care Amid COVID-19](#).

HLAA is hosting a series of captioned national virtual support groups and webinars via Zoom—check the [Facebook Group](#) for updated information. [Webinars](#) include “What Nelson Mandela and Others can Teach Us About Coping with the Coronavirus Pandemic and Isolation” and “Hearing Assistive Technology at Home.”

### What If I Need Medical Care?

People who are Deaf or hard of hearing may be at higher risk of getting COVID-19 and becoming very sick, or of becoming isolated, which can weaken our immune systems. Dr. Chad Ruffin offers this [outstanding guide](#) to preparing for care, self-advocacy, returning home, and much more.

Medicare [has expanded telehealth benefits](#) during the COVID-19 crisis—an option for you if you can seek help from your home.

Disclosing your hearing loss to your healthcare team and asking for what you need are key first steps. The Hearing Loss Association of America offers [a Guide for Effective Communication in Health Care](#), [tips on communicating with healthcare staff during COVID-19](#), and a fun, 3-minute [Technology for Patients](#) video.

The HLAA-Washington State Association helped create [hospital kits to bring to the hospital with you](#), and Lane County, Oregon HLAA has a version to [print from home](#).





Bring your mobile phone with you to the doctor or hospital, and use one of the speech-to-text apps listed below.

### Phone and Telecommunications

The phone apps [AVA](#) , [Microsoft Translator](#), [InnoCaption](#), [Otter.ai](#), and [Google Live Transcribe](#) (Android) show real-time visual text of your conversations, called “speech to text.”

[CapTel](#), [ClearCaptions](#), and [CaptionCall](#) translate phone calls (generally landlines) into easy-to-read text.

[WebCapTel](#) apps can be used on a mobile device or a computer. [Webcaptioner](#) works on your computer or laptop.

### Getting Updated Information

Captioned: Select captioned conferences of Governor Inslee’s press conferences can be found on [TVW](#) and [YouTube](#), and [transcripts can be downloaded via the TVW website](#). Live captions aren’t yet available.

The FCC requires that televised emergency information is accessible. For more information and to find out how to file a complaint, click [here](#).

### Online and Virtual Meetings

Online meetings can be made more accessible by keeping meetings small, muting background noise, getting a second screen, using quality headsets and external microphones, and requiring live captions. More online meeting tips are [here](#) from Deafhhtech.org and [here](#) from Catharine McNally.

Chapter and State leaders can get information about meeting platforms and speech recognition options [here](#).

Live captions, or CART, help Deaf and hard-of-hearing people, and they help others understand and recall information, too. Washington State contracts with [these CART providers](#), and [our guide](#) and list of providers can help you arrange CART. [StreamText](#) and [1CapApp](#) work on any platform.





### *Online and Virtual Meetings, continued*

Tina Childress has [excellent resources](#) on the different types of online meetings available, plus much more.

Automated captions provide some help, though they are imperfect. Remind people to speak clearly, face their cameras, and minimize background noise (pets, side conversations, music).

### **ASL Resources**

Dr. Chad Ruffin's [webinar](#) can help people who are Deaf to communicate when an ASL interpreter may not be available in a healthcare setting. The National Association for the Deaf offers [resources](#) such as a voter hotline, medical communications access, [where to send a complaint about a lack of captions or ASL](#), and more.

