



NATIONAL HEARING CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

HEAR FOR A LIFETIME

[www.hearingconservation.org](http://www.hearingconservation.org)

2025-2026

ANNUAL REPORT

*Dated January 31, 2026*

# Table of Contents

Message From the President .....	3
Strategic Plan .....	4
Financial Executive Summary.....	4
Organizational Strategy and Financial Sustainability.....	5
Financial Statements .....	6
Financial Position: July 2025–December 2025 .....	7
Membership Executive Summary.....	8
Director of Membership Highlights .....	10
Director of Commercial Partnerships and Annual Sponsor Highlights .....	11
Director of Communication Highlights .....	12
Director of Education Highlights.....	14
2025 NHCA Awards .....	16
2025–2026 Executive Council.....	17

## NHCA Vision

To prevent hearing loss and other auditory disorders due to noise and secondary environmental factors in all sectors of society.

## NHCA Mission

NHCA provides leadership, expertise, and education on hearing loss prevention strategies and services to the broader professional community, and empowers and supports members through networking and advocacy.

# Message From the President



**Sridhar Krishnamurti**  
NHCA President

Dear NHCA Family,

We are excited to publish our 6th annual report. This year has been particularly tumultuous for our family. We had to endure massive company layoffs, Government shutdowns, workforce reduction, and even losing one of our own spirited leaders (Mead Killion) during the year. In the face of these challenges, our members have continued to push forward by helping their patients, creating new projects, publishing papers, and keeping up with the latest developments in hearing conservation. On the positive end, HHS recently reversed layoffs for NIOSH

employees; I am pleased that occupational health and safety still matters and grateful for Secretary Kennedy's decision: <https://www.fedmanager.com/news/hhs-reverses-layoffs-and-grant-cuts-fueling-confusion-for-workers-and-lawmakers>

I want to remind you of the four pillars as we transition to a new President (Jillyen Curry-Mathis) who is taking over from me as our next President. First pillar is our Executive Council (EC) that comprises of volunteers giving their time and effort; shout out to all our new EC members joining us this year. Second pillar is our partner (Civica) helping us maintain our strategic plan and organizing continuing education for NHCA. Third pillar is our sponsors who help us commercially supporting our conferences and demonstrating the tools to succeed. Final pillar is our membership which is the main motivation for NHCA; I salute each of our members for supporting us with annual fees, conference registrations, and voluntary participation. We must continue to push our advocacy efforts towards hearing conservation in the workplace. It will help us to follow continuing education in this area and partner with other organizations that support occupational safety and health (Industrial hygiene, nursing, noise control engineering etc.). I personally have liked signing in monthly (as member) and going to the e-news link below to look up the latest publications listed under each month; I appreciate our editors to keep us enlightened in a monthly format like this.

[Click here for the Monthly eNews](#)

I encourage you to read the entire annual report. Below are just a few highlights from last year, in which NHCA:

- [Restoration of NIOSH request to Secretary Kennedy](#)
- Maintained progress on meeting the strategic plan that runs from 2024 to 2027. Financial security has been addressed; membership growth and value enhance; advocacy efforts continue. [See strategic plan link](#).
- [2025 virtual summit](#): We enjoyed fascinating talks that created intellectual curiosity and improved our knowledge/skills. My thanks to our team that worked hard to put this together (Ashley Montoya, Andy Merkley, Sharon Sandridge, Liz Masterson).
- Appointment of following members to the NHCA task force for ANSI S12.85 for FIT testing (co-chairs: Jen Tufts and Laurie Wells; members: Jackie DiFrancesco, Bill Murphy, and Theresa Schulz).

*Best wishes and thanks for allowing me to contribute as your President during this past year.*

# Strategic Plan Update

This year, the Executive Council continued to meet regularly to review progress, measure outcomes, and advance key strategic initiatives. Through ongoing tracking, discussion, and decision-making, NHCA is ensuring the Strategic Plan remains a living framework that drives meaningful results for members and the profession.

The Strategic Plan is centered on three primary goals:

1. Enhance Financial Security: NHCA is strengthening its financial position through a comprehensive financial management approach—including balanced budgeting, reserve planning, identification of sustainable revenue streams, and enhanced sponsorship opportunities—to ensure long-term stability and the ability to invest in mission-driven initiatives.
2. Membership Growth and Value: NHCA remains committed to growing a diverse, multidisciplinary membership community while increasing member value. This includes assessing and enhancing member benefits, expanding tailored engagement opportunities, and continuing support for students and early-career professionals, including mentorship. NHCA is also building partnerships across professional organizations, industry, and academia to expand awareness and impact.
3. Shape the Future of Hearing Loss Prevention: NHCA is positioning itself as a leader in hearing loss prevention by advancing best practices, influencing standards and regulations, collaborating with aligned organizations, and developing accessible resources for professionals, educators, and the public. The organization is also working to develop position statements that establish NHCA as a recognized thought leader in the field.

[Click here to read the Strategic Plan.](#)

## Financial Executive Summary

July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025

NHCA concluded the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, in a stable financial position while continuing to navigate a changing cost environment impacting many associations nationwide. Since COVID, inflation—particularly related to hotel space/AV and food and beverage—has significantly increased the cost of producing in-person meetings. NHCA has operated close to break-even for several years and, in years with a shortfall, has relied on modest reserves (investments) to cover the gap.

### FY25 Operating Results

For FY25, NHCA recorded **\$186,972** in total revenue compared to a budget of **\$261,947** (71% of budget). Total expenses were **\$238,156**, below the budgeted **\$254,645** (94% of budget), reflecting continued cost control and disciplined financial management. The year ended with a net operating loss of **(\$51,183)**; however, **\$40,396** in investment income reduced the total year-end result to a net loss of **(\$10,788)**.

### Revenue Highlights

Revenue performance was driven primarily by the Annual Conference, which generated **\$141,913** (92% of budget). Sponsorship revenue totaled **\$38,660** (79% of budget).

### Updated Dues Reporting – Deferred Revenue

In FY25, NHCA implemented an updated dues recognition approach to better align membership revenue with the period in which member benefits are delivered. Previously, dues revenue was recognized in full when received.

Because most memberships renew in December and extend into the following fiscal year, a portion of dues is now recorded as **Deferred Income** and recognized in the appropriate future period.

As of June 30, 2025, NHCA reported **\$21,711.77** in deferred dues on the balance sheet. To evaluate dues performance compared to prior fiscal years, deferred dues can be added to dues revenue recognized during the year. NHCA recorded **\$30,461.42** in dues revenue in FY25; when combined with deferred dues, total dues billed/received equals **\$52,173.19**.

### **Expense Management**

NHCA maintained a lean operating structure, with the most significant expense area continuing to be conference delivery. Total expenses decreased by **(\$65,267)** compared to the prior year, with meaningful reductions in conference-related costs. Administrative costs rose modestly due to higher software subscriptions and records storage costs, reflecting necessary investments in operational support.

### **Financial Position and Reserves**

NHCA ended FY25 with total assets of **\$286,190**, including **\$268,414** in bank and savings accounts, with **\$238,102** held in a Flourish high-yield savings account. Total liabilities were **\$25,571**, and total equity was **\$260,619**.

## **Organizational Strategy and Financial Sustainability**

In response to continued cost escalation, NHCA's Executive Council developed and began implementing a three-part strategy focused on: **(1) reducing costs where possible, (2) increasing revenue opportunities, and (3) strengthening long-term financial stewardship**—while preserving the community and member value that define NHCA.

Key initiatives included conference adjustments (some only partially implementable in FY25 due to contract timing) and the launch of a new **Fall Virtual Educational Summit**. The Summit has helped establish a foundation for future virtual education and non-dues revenue growth.

Looking ahead, NHCA remains committed to long-term sustainability through proactive financial planning, diversified revenue streams, and strategic conference delivery improvements—ensuring the organization can continue delivering high-quality education and professional community for years to come.

# Financial Statements

Fiscal Year: July 1 to June 30

## Summary Statement of Activities

INCOME			
	2024–2025	2023–2024	2022–2023
Dues	\$30,461.42	\$53,740.93	\$59,390.94
Conference	\$141,913.03	\$154,428.00	\$124,723.00
Education	\$12,225.00	\$85,319.00	
Other/Fundraising	\$2,373.00	\$6,457.13	\$8,911.96
Total	<b>\$186,972.45</b>	<b>\$299,945.06</b>	<b>\$193,025.90</b>
EXPENSES			
	2024–2025	2023–2024	2022–2023
Administrative	\$112,595.24	\$106,963.04	\$104,957.55
Conference	\$107,451.31	\$138,872.33	\$104,584.36
Education	\$6,118.97	\$43,100.82	
Other	\$11,990.24	\$14,486.95	\$15,385.00
Total	<b>\$238,155.76</b>	<b>\$303,423.14</b>	<b>\$224,926.91</b>
NET INCOME AND INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE			
	2024–2025	2023–2024	2022–2023
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>-\$51,183.31</b>	<b>-\$3,478.08</b>	<b>-\$31,901.01</b>
Investments	\$40,395.62	\$10,053.68	\$5,685.43
<b>Net Income Including Investments</b>	<b>-\$10,787.69</b>	<b>\$6,575.60</b>	<b>-\$26,215.58</b>

## Financial Position: End of Fiscal Year

JUNE 30				
		2025	2024	2023
ASSETS	Checking	\$30,311.52	\$21,121.19	\$72,664.40
	Flourish (High Interest Savings Account)	\$238,102.31		
	Invested Resources (Vanguard VBIAX)		\$149,907.76	\$130,561.07
	Invested Reserves (Vanguard VASIX)		\$107,849.78	\$101,715.04
	Other & Accounts Receivable	\$2,568.03	\$1,000	\$0.00
	<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$286,190.04</b>	<b>\$303,208.03</b>	<b>\$337,111.18</b>
LIABILITIES	Accounts Payable / Other	\$3,858.79	\$6,840.00	\$9,334.50
	Deferred Income	\$21,711.77		
	<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$25,570.56</b>	<b>\$6,840.00</b>	<b>\$62,746.50</b>
EQUITY	Safe-In-Sound Restricted Fund	\$26,780.09	\$25,920.03	\$28,849.77
	Accumulated Other Comp. Income	\$0.00		
	Retained Earnings	\$244,627.08	\$238,911.54	\$262,197.38
	Net Income	-\$10,787.69	\$6,575.60	-\$26,215.58
	<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>\$260,619.48</b>	<b>\$296,368.03</b>	<b>\$274,364.68</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>		<b>\$286,190.04</b>	<b>\$303,208.03</b>	<b>\$337,111.18</b>

# Statement of Financial Position

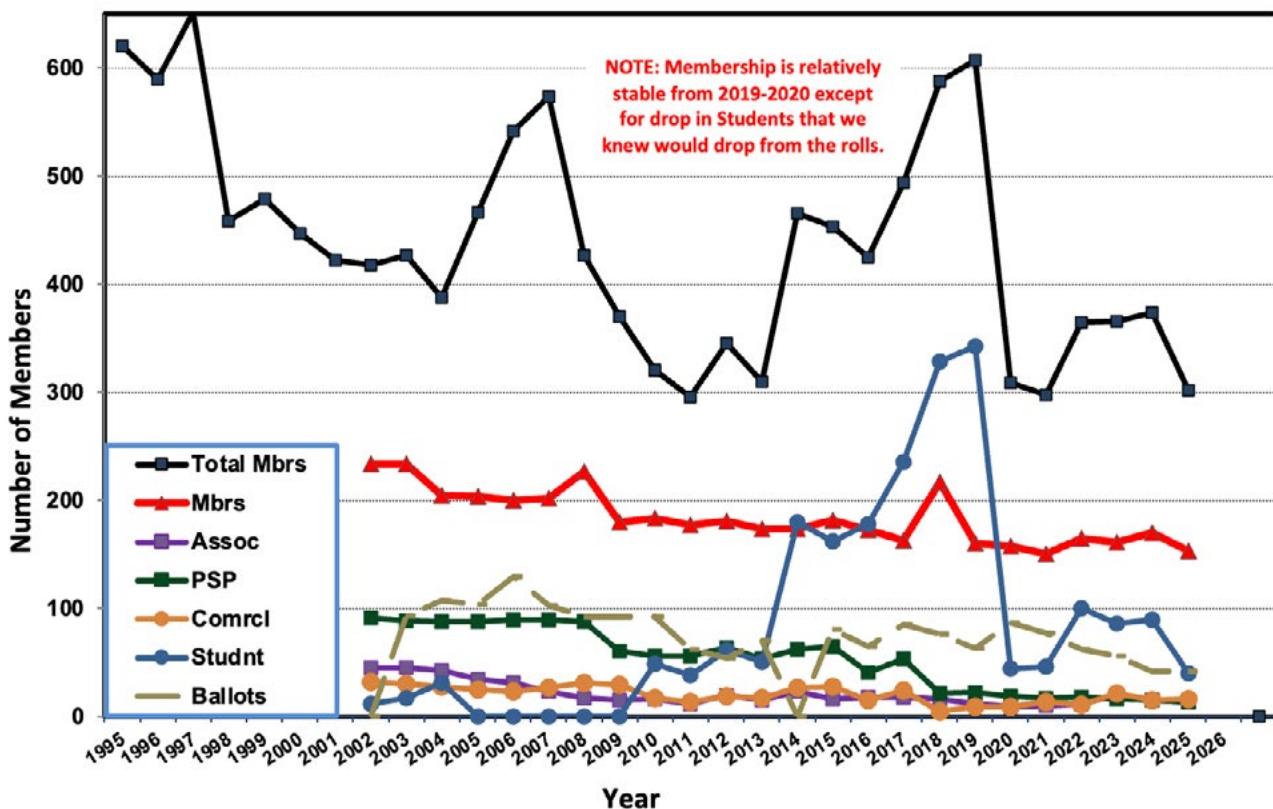
as of December 31, 2025

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Actual</u>
<b>Income</b>		
40100 Membership Dues Income	\$32,293.62	
40200 Conference Income	\$81,730.00	
40280 International Fit-Test Fall Online Symposium	\$6,540.00	
40300 Fundraising/Other Income	<u>\$1,240.00</u>	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b><u>\$121,803.62</u></b>	
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b><u>\$121,803.62</u></b>	
 <b>Expenses</b>		
50100 Administration Expense	\$58,534.08	
50200 Conference Expense	\$5,352.97	
50300 International Fit-Testing Online Fall Symposium Expense	\$6,240.00	
50400 Board & Membership Expenses	\$6,090.00	
50500 Fundraising and Publications	<u>\$3,947.50</u>	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>\$80,164.55</u></b>	
 <b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b><u>\$47,879.07</u></b>	
 <b>Other Income</b>		
40400 Investment Income	<u>\$4,966.99</u>	
60001 Investment Management Fees	<u>\$430.78</u>	
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b><u>\$4,536.21</u></b>	
 <b>Net Income</b>	<b><u>\$52,415.28</u></b>	

# Membership Executive Summary

## 2025 Totals

Individual	153
Early Career Member	10
Professional Service Provider	13
Professional Service Provider Additional Representatives	13
Commercial Member	16
Commercial Member Additional Representatives	21
Associate	13
Emeritus	15
Retired (NEW membership level in 2023)	7
Students (Student membership dues are \$2)	40
<b>Total NHCA Membership</b>	<b>302</b>



## Membership Report (2020–2025 Trend Analysis)

From 2020 through 2025, the association's membership reflects a period of post-disruption stabilization followed by a modest decline in the most recent year, shaped by intentional data cleanup, revised counting methodologies, and changes in membership structure.

### **Overall Membership Trend**

Total membership declined sharply in 2020 (309) following pre-pandemic peak years, then remained relatively stable in 2021 (298). Membership rebounded modestly in 2022 (365) and held steady in 2023 (366) and 2024 (374), indicating a consistent post-2020 baseline. In 2025, total membership declined to 302, reflecting both natural attrition and continued normalization following data corrections and revised counting practices.

### **Individual Membership Stability**

Core individual Members remained the foundation of the association throughout this period. Member counts held steady between 151–170 from 2021–2024 and totaled 153 in 2025, demonstrating resilience and sustained professional engagement despite fluctuations in total membership. Early Career membership remained modest but stable, ranging from 9–13 members annually, supporting the long-term membership pipeline.

### **Summary**

Overall, the 2020–2025 period represents a transition to more accurate, disciplined membership reporting, following years of inconsistent tracking. While total membership declined in 2025, the association continues to maintain a stable core of individual members, a consistent emeritus population, and a defined pipeline through students and early career professionals. These trends provide a solid foundation for future growth efforts focused on retention, conversion, and organizational engagement.

# Director of Membership Highlights

The association continued making steady progress toward **Strategic Goal #2: Membership Growth and Value**, with a focus on strengthening the multidisciplinary member base and enhancing the overall value of membership. Throughout the year, priority efforts centered on gathering meaningful member input to better understand what members value most and to guide future enhancements to the member experience. Building on this work, the association plans to continue collecting feedback through member surveys and direct engagement opportunities to support informed decision-making and targeted improvements.

Membership growth strategies also emphasized expanding organizational visibility and outreach beyond the association's core audience. Recommendations were developed to strengthen promotional efforts at external conferences, professional meetings, and continuing education opportunities to increase awareness of the association and attract prospective members. Conference participation remains an important tool for visibility, relationship building, and brand recognition, and the association will continue evaluating where exhibit and outreach efforts can have the greatest impact.

The association also identified academic engagement as a key growth lever. Continued development and implementation of a student-focused presentation is recommended as a long-term strategy to increase awareness among emerging professionals and strengthen the pipeline of future members and leaders. In addition, the association recognized the importance of strengthening its ability to track and evaluate non-member participation. Improvements in analyzing engagement data and monitoring conversion of non-members into members will support more strategic recruitment efforts and help identify opportunities to expand participation among new audiences.

Partnership development remained a priority, with ongoing efforts to increase awareness among professional organizations, industry stakeholders, and academic institutions. Future work will include identifying additional partnership opportunities, increasing representation at aligned professional meetings, and coordinating with education initiatives to build a list of potential presentations and speakers that can elevate visibility and reinforce the association's mission through external educational outreach.

Finally, the association advanced early development efforts for a mentorship program designed to support students, early career professionals, and individuals new to hearing loss prevention. A foundational outline was established to guide the structure and goals of this initiative. Continued development of the mentorship program is recommended as a key engagement strategy that will strengthen professional connections, foster community, and contribute to long-term membership growth.

Sharon Sandridge  
**Director of Membership**

# Director of Commercial Partnerships and Annual Sponsors Highlights

NHCA's mission is to prevent hearing loss caused by noise and other environmental factors across all sectors of society. Achieving this mission requires education and training, research and development, and innovative products and services—none of which would be possible without the dedication and generosity of our commercial partners.

We are proud to welcome **ShoeBox** as our title sponsor. ShoeBox continues to make hearing testing more accessible than ever, and their innovative approach aligns with NHCA's vision of expanding the reach of hearing conservation.

A cornerstone of NHCA's commercial partnerships, **3M** has been instrumental in advancing regulatory and best-practice standards in hearing conservation. They have also stepped forward as a special sponsor of NHCA's 50th Anniversary Conference. Their comprehensive solutions and decades of expertise continue to shape our industry.

We're grateful to have **CAOHC** and **Examinetics** join us at the supporting level. CAOHC's leadership in hearing conservation education and certification complements our mission by promoting evidence-based best practices that protect worker hearing health. Examinetics supports our mission with nationwide audiometric testing, including mobile/on-site and portable Salux options.

This year's contributing sponsors include **ASHA**, **Gauss Technologies**, **Noise Smart**, **Soundtrace**, **WAHTS Hearing**, **Westone**, and **Zero Plus Technologies**.

**Impact of Sponsorships—thanks to our partners' support, NHCA has been able to:**

- Provide free educational resources on our website
- Host dynamic events including our Annual Conference
- Offer enhanced education and training opportunities
- Connect cutting-edge research with practical applications
- Create valuable networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities

We invite you to learn more about our sponsors here: [www.hearingconservation.org/sponsors](http://www.hearingconservation.org/sponsors).

Jesse Norris  
Director of Commercial Partnership



# Director of Communication Highlights

Building on the momentum from 2024, NHCA communications continued to promote the organization's strategic priorities of evidence-based hearing loss prevention practices and improving access to high-quality educational resources. As NHCA celebrates its 50th anniversary, the communication efforts of 2025 reflect both a respect for the organization's legacy and a clear vision for its future. By elevating member expertise, embracing emerging science, and expanding outreach across disciplines, NHCA is well positioned to lead the next generation of hearing loss prevention. We look forward with confidence to the next 50—and to a future defined by innovation, collaboration, and measurable impact in hearing conservation.

## NHCA Website

The NHCA website continued to serve as a central repository for authoritative guidance and member-driven content. A major milestone was the publication of the [NHCA Position Statement on Hearing Protector Fit Testing \(HPFT\)](#), which formally describes NHCA's stance as a best practice within hearing conservation programs. This document provides practical, evidence-based justification for HPFT implementation and represents a key deliverable aligned with the NHCA Strategic Plan.

The website also highlighted the strength and diversity of NHCA's membership through [The NHCA Narrative](#) recognizing exceptional contributors, including Ted Madison, Kirsten McCall, and Theresa Schulz. A special acknowledgment to John Johnson for authoring these pieces.

Additionally, the NHCA website hosted [Hearing is Quality of Life – Part 3](#), extending the video series developed in collaboration with the National Occupational Research Agenda Hearing Loss Prevention Cross-Sector Council. This installment continued to humanize the consequences of occupational noise exposure by centering the lived experiences of noise-exposed workers and reinforcing hearing conservation as a quality-of-life issue rather than solely a regulatory obligation.

## Spectrum



The [Spectrum Newsletter](#) remained NHCA's flagship publication in 2025, delivering timely, peer-reviewed content to members. The Signals in Noise section featured forward-looking contributions that addressed both measurement challenges and evolving risk paradigms, including:

- *Towards a Consensus Metric for Estimating Auditory Damage Risk Criteria from Impulse Noise* (Devon Kulinski, Christopher Smalt, Douglas Brungart)
- *The Path Forward for Hearing Protector Fit Testing* (Bill Murphy)

- *Beyond Decibels: Redefining Noise Hazards Using Kurtosis* (Wei Qiu and Bill Murphy)

The *Tone Burst* section highlighted innovation and leadership in hearing conservation, including:

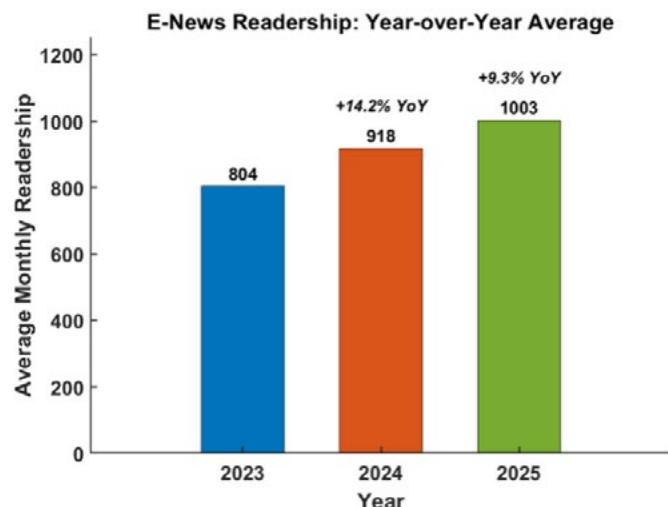
- *Advancing Hearing Health in the Military: The National Military Audiology and Speech Pathology Center Leads the Way* (Joshua Bernstein et al.)
- *Developing Innovative Technologies for Hearing Conservation at Creare* (Odile Clavier and Jed Wilbur)

Readership remained steady throughout the year, with an average of 150 readers in 2025. We extend our sincere gratitude to Marjorie Grantham (Spectrum Editor), Kristy Casto (Associate Editor), Bill Murphy (Signals in Noise Editor) and Susan Cooper, Mary McDaniel, and Laurie Wells (Reviewers) or their commitment over the course of the year.

The E-Newsletter continued to be NHCA's broadest-reaching communication channel in 2025. Readership metrics showed sustained growth, with average monthly reads increasing from **804** in 2023, to **918** in 2024, and **1,003** in 2025, representing an approximate **9.3% year-over-year increase** from 2024 to 2025. This trend reflects both expanding audience engagement and the growing relevance of NHCA-curated content.

Special recognition is extended to **Vidya Krull**, who assumed the role of E-Newsletter Editor in 2025. Under her leadership, the newsletter maintained consistent delivery, balanced technical depth with accessibility, and continued to promote NHCA initiatives, educational opportunities, and emerging research.

An [archive of past E-Newsletters](#) can be found on the NHCA Website.



## — Industrial Hygiene in the Workplace (IHW) Magazine Articles —

NHCA's collaboration with *Industrial Hygiene in the Workplace (IHW)* magazine remained a pathway for disseminating hearing conservation expertise beyond the membership. The 2025 "Listen Up! From the NHCA Experts..." column featured several high-impact articles, including:

- *Bone Conduction: Pushing Protection to the Limit* (Ted Argo)
- *2025 Safe-in-Sound Excellence in Hearing Loss Prevention Awards* (Ted Madison and Chuck Kardous)
- *The Age of Derating Is Over: Embracing Hearing Protector Fit Testing within Hearing Conservation Programs* (Devon Kulinski)
- *What Industrial Hygienists Should Know About CAOHC* (Andy Merkley)

These articles addressed persistent gaps in practice, challenged outdated assumptions (such as reliance on derating), and reinforced fit testing and competency-based training as cornerstones of modern hearing conservation programs. [Past IHW magazine issues](#) can be viewed in their digital edition archive. Thank you to our experts!

Devon Kulinski  
Director of Communication

# Director of Education Highlights

The National Hearing Conservation Association (NHCA) continued to strengthen its education programs in 2025 by focusing on collaboration, innovation, and practical learning. Through webinars, expert panels, and our second annual virtual educational summit, NHCA offered valuable learning opportunities for hearing health professionals, researchers, and advocates from many backgrounds.

We began the year with a highly successful Annual Conference held in Charleston, South Carolina, from February 6–8, 2025. Hearing conservation professionals from around the world came together for an engaging and informative event. Podium presentations, breakout sessions, and poster presentations shared timely and practical information on hearing conservation in both workplace and community settings.

Our partnership with the Council for Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation (CAOHC) continued to be a key part of our education efforts. On March 12, 2025, NHCA and CAOHC co-hosted the webinar *“Effective Strategies in Noise Abatement.”* Presenters David M. Jones, P.E., INCE Bd. Cert., and Terry Tyson, P.E., INCE Bd. Cert., from the Institute for Noise Control Engineering (INCE), reviewed basic noise control principles and discussed real-world examples of difficult noise control challenges. The webinar attracted 37 registrants and is now available on demand through both NHCA and CAOHC.

On May 21, 2025, NHCA and CAOHC partnered again to host a panel discussion on hearing fitness for duty. Panelists Dr. Odile Clavier, Dr. Doug Brungard, and Dr. Christian Giguère shared insights from both occupational and military settings. They discussed how job tasks relate to hearing and communication needs and highlighted the growing use of functional hearing assessments. These assessments may provide a more practical option than traditional hearing conservation tests. The session was attended by 49 participants and is available in the NHCA Learning Center.

NHCA also expanded its educational offerings beyond traditional workplace topics. On July 9, 2025, we welcomed Benjamin Kanters for a webinar on the emerging field of music audiology. Drawing on his experience in music, sound engineering, and hearing conservation, Mr. Kanters discussed the unique needs of musicians and audio professionals who rely on excellent hearing. His presentation helped attendees better understand the culture and language of the music and audio industries and offered new ways to communicate with and educate patients. This webinar was attended by 20 participants and is available in the NHCA Learning Center.

A major highlight of the year was the 2nd Annual NHCA Fall Virtual Educational Summit, held on September 24, 2025. The summit featured 14 sessions and brought together professionals, researchers, and advocates for a full day of learning. Keynote speaker Dr. David Greenberg emphasized the role of hearing health as part of overall, whole-person health. Sessions covered advances in personalized hearing protection, boothless audiometry, safer materials, and emerging therapies. Speakers also addressed real-world challenges

such as hidden hearing issues, workplace safety tools, and sound exposure risks in gaming. Presentations shared powerful examples of hearing conservation in action, including work with military aviators, Navy sailors, musicians, and workers experiencing dizziness. The summit highlighted the value of collaboration and community and closed with optimism as NHCA looks ahead to its 50th Anniversary Conference in 2026.

After a short break in August and September to accommodate the Fall Virtual Educational Summit, the CAOHC/NHCA webinar series resumed in October with a session on Auracast™. Led by Brandon Rawlings, AuD, this product-neutral webinar explained the evolution of Bluetooth technology in hearing aids.

Participants learned about the differences between Classic Bluetooth and Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) and how these technologies support streaming, remote care, and improved patient outcomes. The session also introduced Auracast™, a next-generation broadcast audio system designed to improve assistive listening through shared audio in public and private spaces. Attendees gained practical knowledge to help them better advise patients and prepare for future advances in hearing healthcare.

Together, these education programs reflect NHCA's continued commitment to providing relevant, high-quality learning opportunities. As we look ahead to 2026 and celebrate NHCA's 50th anniversary, we remain focused on building strong partnerships, expanding access to education, and advancing the future of hearing conservation.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Andrew Merkley, AuD, CCC-A, CPS/A  
**Director of Education**

# NHCA Awards

Each year, NHCA presents awards in several categories at its Annual Conference to recognize member achievements and contributions to the association and the profession. While not all awards are presented every year, award categories include:

**Lifetime Achievement Award:** Recognizes a lifetime of extraordinary accomplishments in the hearing loss prevention profession as well as service to NHCA.

**Outstanding Hearing Conservationist Award:** Recognizes outstanding contributions to or achievement within the field of hearing conservation.

**Michael Beall Threadgill Leadership & Service Award:** Recognizes sustained outstanding leadership and service to NHCA.

## Conference Awards

### **Outstanding Lecture Award**

Bestowed annually for the best presentation at the Annual Conference.

### **Outstanding Poster Award**

Established in 1997; recognizes the best poster presentation at the Annual Conference.

### **Media Award**

Recognizes writers and/or producers of news features that heighten public awareness of the hazards of noise.

### **The Golden Lobe Award**

Recognizes task force members for outstanding contributions to the health and welfare of the association.

**In 2025, the awards below were presented to honor individuals for their time, energy, and service.**



### **Lifetime Achievement Award: Michael Santucci**

The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes individuals who have had a long career of sustained, extraordinary contributions to both the hearing conservation profession and NHCA. It is an extremely rare honor, awarded only four times in the past 49 years—to Robert Dobie (2017), Elliot Berger (2013), Alice Suter (2008), and Don Gasaway (2000).

### **Media Award: Jim Burneka, Jr.**

### **Outstanding Lecture Award: Donald Finan**

*Effect of Shooting Glasses on Earmuff Attenuation*

### **Outstanding Poster Award: Allison Woodford**

*The Use of In-ear Dosimetry to Understand Musician's Unique Sound Exposure (MUSE)*

### **Golden Lobe Awards:**

#### **Sharon Sandridge and Madison Saunders**

Service representing NHCA at industry conferences and trade shows

#### **Andy Merkley, Sharon Sandridge, and Thais Morata**

Service planning the inaugural Fall Virtual Educational Summit

#### **Angela Anderson**

Service as NHCA E-News Editor



# NHCA Executive Council

*Thank You*

To our outgoing officers, new officers, and our continuing Executive Council members for their service and leadership.

## Outgoing Executive Council Members



**Elizabeth Masterson**  
Immediate Past-President



**Sharon Sandridge**  
Director of Membership



**Andy Merkley**  
Director of Education



**Frank Wartinger**  
Member-at-Large



**Hannah Miller**  
Student Member Representative



**Elliott Berger**  
Historian

# Congratulations

Please join us in congratulating our newly elected NHCA Executive Council members, starting their terms following the 2025 NHCA Conference.

## New Officers for the 2026–2027 Executive Council



**John (Andy) Merkley**  
President-Elect

**Frank Wartinger**  
Director of Membership

**Melanie Hayes**  
Director of Education

**Stephanie Karch**  
Director of Marketing & Public Relations

**John Johnson**  
Member-at-Large

**Theresa Schulz**  
Historian (Ex-Officio)

## Continuing Executive Council Members



**Jillyen Curry-Mathis**  
President

**Sridhar Krishnamurti**  
Immediate Past-President

**Valerie Pavlovich Ruff**  
Secretary/Treasurer

**Devon Kulinski**  
Director of Communication

**Jesse Norris**  
Director of Commercial Partnerships

**Kristy Deiters**  
Member-at-Large

## Ex Officio Executive Council Members



**Ashley Montoya**  
Executive Director,  
2022–Present

**Kelly Torres**  
Association  
Manager