

# State Agencies for People with Hearing Loss

**On Thursday, June 25, 1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m., at the HLAA Convention 2015, Lisa Kornberg will participate along with four other state agency directors to discuss how they collaborate with various organizations for positive outcomes. The audience will learn more about the state government's roles and systems in addressing the needs of people with hearing loss. See more details on the HLAA Convention page at [hearingloss.org/content/convention](http://hearingloss.org/content/convention).**

**T**he National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NASADHH) evolved over time as state directors and leaders of state agencies across the nation recognized the need to share and support one another in navigating state systems. While the fiscal and government structure for state agencies varies, there are more similarities than differences and hence, collaboration allows each state to better serve its deaf, hard of hearing and deaf/blind constituents

There are 38 state agencies for people who are hard of hearing and deaf. Meetings have historically been held biannually during the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) Conference, but by motion it was agreed to meet annually starting this year. Therefore, there will be a meeting at the HLAA Convention 2015 and next year in 2016 at the NAD Conference in Phoenix. The board and members of NASADHH are excited about the opportunities this new collaboration with HLAA will provide to all state agencies and constituents.

**By Lisa Kornberg**

NASADHH's purpose is to function as the national voice of state agencies people with hearing loss and promote the implementation of best practices in the provision of services. To do so, a number of objectives have been established to guide the direction of the organization.

These objectives are designed to:

- increase public awareness through research, education, and informational activities about the abilities and capacity of persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and promote their independence
- provide resources and consulting to improve equal access opportunities to effective communication.
- create best practices in the federal, state, and local provision of services
- provide a forum for administrators of state agencies to study, deliberate, and act upon matters affecting services to deaf and hard of hearing persons
- establish and maintain liaison with federal agencies and national non-profit organizations as they develop policies and administer programs affecting services to deaf and hard of hearing persons
- be a voice on public policies and strategic initiatives to improve programs and services to deaf and hard of hearing persons
- collaborate with other national and state organizations that are serving deaf and hard of hearing people to promote the common causes

Every state has laws that impact the deaf and hard of hearing community—and sometimes it is difficult to navigate through the different legislations to identify areas of key concern. Part of the goal of NASADHH is to work collaboratively to prioritize issues of the deaf and hard of hearing communities over the life span, taking into consideration the rich diversity in the community. Examples of areas of interest range from Universal Newborn Hearing Screening to health insurance coverage for hearing aids to equal access to language and education to the use and distribution of technology and telecommunication devices to those in need.

These issues, which are universal in nature, are addressed in a variety of ways depending on what state you live in. Therefore, NASADHH has also developed a website, [nasadhh.org](http://nasadhh.org) where resources and information can be centralized and made accessible to community members. It is through the collaboration and sharing of information, as well as input from our constituents, that state directors are then able to address and impact policy in their home states. **HLM**

*Lisa Kornberg, LCPC, is executive director of the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Baltimore ([odhh.maryland.gov](http://odhh.maryland.gov)). Since her appointment, Lisa has instituted a comprehensive outreach plan to educate various state and local government agencies about the diversity among and needs of individuals with hearing loss. She can be reached at [lisa.kornberg@maryland.gov](mailto:lisa.kornberg@maryland.gov).*