

DIRECTORS, 2023

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April 2023

Dear Friends:

Spring is in full bloom here in the northeast! While the temperatures are still jumping around – 45 one day – 85 the next! We are fairly certain any chance of snow is behind us.

Webinars: Registration open now!

As a reminder, USSAAC members get early notification of registration, as “seats” are limited and may fill up quickly! And, ASHA CEUs are available at no additional cost to members. Many thanks to Betsy Caporale and her Education committee for the strong roster of programs and presenters this year!

- **April 26, 2023, 7:00 – 8:00 Eastern:** Tim Jin, Alison Pentland, Wendy Quach, Yoosun Chung, and Shelley Lund, *“Perspectives of People of Color Who Use AAC: Focus Group Results and Live Panel”*. Client-centered and culturally responsive services have been buzzwords in the field for many years; however, these concepts have not been put into practice, particularly when it comes to certain marginalized populations. Last year, a team of researchers set out to identify how we can better support Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) who use AAC by facilitating an online focus group. This webinar will review the eight primary themes identified in the focus group. Several BIPOC AAC users will share their perspectives and the session will conclude with a question-and-answer segment. Engagement from attendees will be encouraged during a brainstorm of meaningful action and ways to address the needs of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color who use AAC. Register at <https://bit.ly/3ZqQAiR>
- **May 10, 2023:** Melanie Fried-Oken, Betts Peters and Michelle Kinsella, *“Clinical Considerations for Future Non-Implantable Brain Computer Interface (BCI)”*. The REKNEW (Realizing Expressive Knowledge in Everyone With communication disorders) lab at OHSU believes the ability to express oneself is a basic human right. We are committed to the development of non-implantable AAC BCI systems for individuals with severe speech and physical impairments. Our current focus is on the BCI Functional Implementation Toolkit. The BCI-FIT is a hybrid system combining EEG with other signals such as EMG or eye tracking. This webinar will include a discussion of clinical screening tools for ACI-BCI use, and a demonstration of how data is gathered and used to match technology to optimize BCI-FIT performance for individual users. Register at <https://bit.ly/3L4Aqre>

Committee Spotlight: Advocacy

The Advocacy committee, chaired by Lew Golinker, Esq., asks its members to share their expertise regarding how SLPs identify AAC/SGD needs and how they make recommendations from among similar alternatives. On occasion, support from current peer-reviewed research may need to be identified. Depending upon the “case” in question (e.g. where there are issues regarding access) input from other disciplines may be sought.

One thing the Advocacy committee does not do is represent *companies* e.g., in their payment rate or disputes with funding sources. USSAAC may participate to resolve a dispute, but will participate either on its own behalf or on behalf of its individual members. Coordination with the companies is sought when related to requests for information about current and past practices by the particular funding source or other similar funding sources. A recent example was the support USSAAC provided on behalf of MaineCare recipients, i.e., Maine's Medicaid program, in response to a decision by the program to demand that Tobii Dynavox open an in-state office as a condition of its continued right to participate as a MaineCare provider.

Interested in joining this committee? Contact Lew at lgolinker@aol.com

New Member Benefit! USSAAC becomes a Closing the Gap Alliance Partner!

USSAAC is thrilled to announce a formal partnership with Closing the Gap! As an Alliance Partner, USSAAC members will receive a 10% discount on the standard 3-day conference registration (Oct. 11-13) using code **USSAAC**. Registration URL: <https://www.closingthegap.com/conference/registration/>

Make your Member Finder Profile today!

Member Finder (<https://finder.ussaac.org>) is a way for the public to access a service provider (from among *any* of the disciplines represented in USSAAC!), find a person who uses AAC who can mentor them or their family, and locate others in the AAC community. USSAAC's Member Finder is growing! Once we hit 100 profiles, all members with profiles will be entered in a drawing for a \$25.00 gift card (Amazon or Starbucks). You can choose to have your information **ONLY** available to members (rather than to the public). It just takes a minute – you don't even need to know your ISAAC number (just be sure to use the email on record with ISAAC). Please complete your profile TODAY!

ISAAC Conference Cancún

Congratulations to all who had their paper accepted for ISAAC Cancun! You will be a part of a world-class international educational program! Scheduling specifics will be released soon. Did you miss the February 20 Q&A meeting? Watch it (and learn more at [ISAAC – Conference Cancún Q & A \(isaac-online.org\)](https://isaac-online.org)! And – once you have registered – it's time to book your stay at a Conference Cancún participating hotel. More details at <https://isaac-online.org/english/conference-cancun/hotel-accommodation/>

SpeakUp!

We were delighted to feature another blog from Meggin Nunabaker who provided more first-person insights, “*To the Future and Beyond: Can Telepractice be an Effective Treatment Tool for People Who Use AAC?*” Speaking of the future – stay tuned for our next installment of AAC Legends and Leaders, featuring futurist Gregg Vanderheiden. Who else do you think we should interview for this series? Contact speakup@ussaac.org with your ideas.

Speaker Connection Continues to Grow!

Looking for a speaker for your class, conference or community group? Check out the talent at USSAAC’s Speaker Connection <https://speaker.ussaac.org> ! Know someone who SHOULD be listed? Let them know you need not be a USSAAC member to be a part of the Speaker Connection!

Have a great month!



Amy S. Goldman, President

Calendar Re-Cap

April 3 – July 15: Closing the Gap Early Bird registration

April 26, 2023 7:00 PM Eastern: USSAAC Webinar, “*Perspectives of People of Color Who Use AAC: Focus Group Results and Live Panel*”

May 10, 2023 7:00 PM Eastern: USSAAC Webinar, “*Clinical Considerations for Future Non-Implantable Brain Computer Interface (BCI)*”

June 21, 2023 7:00 PM Eastern: USSAAC Webinar, “*Examining Core for Early AAC Users*”

July 22-23, 2023: ISAAC Pre-Conference Workshops, AAC Camp, Executive and Council Meetings:

July 24-27, 2023: ISAAC Cancun Main Conference

October 11-13, 2023: Closing the Gap, Minneapolis, MN.

October 11, 2023: 5:30 – 6:30 PM. USSAAC Meet-up at Closing the Gap.

Stay up-to-date on USSAAC activities through social media - Follow, like, comment and share at <https://www.facebook.com/ussaac1>

Follow ISAAC at <https://www.facebook.com/ISAACinternational>

