



My list of people and companies to thank for these accomplishments is long! Our 2023 Sponsors included SmartBox, TobiiDynavox, PRC Saltillo, The Bridge School and Attainment; their sponsorship provided resources to fund many of the listed accomplishments. (Thanks to SmartBox, TobiiDynavox, PRC Saltillo, Attainment and Lingraphica for their pledged 2024 support!).

My deep appreciation to everyone who has served/continues to serve on the USSAAC Board of Directors, as committee chairs or committee members. Special thanks to Miriam Boesch and Yoosun Chung who stepped up to represent USSAAC in assuring a successful ISAAC Cancun! These volunteers help make USSAAC a thriving and growing organization, and one of ISAAC's outstanding chapters!

### **Election results**

I am thrilled to announce the results of our recent election and our new board members for 2024! Welcome to Tracy Rackensperger who is "promoted" to President, Patrick Regan, President-Elect, Jennifer Bergstrom, VP of Finance, and Betsy Caporale, returning for her second term as Director, Professional Affairs. Our sincere thanks to outgoing officers Sarah Blackstone and Yoosun Chung who are leaving the Board of Directors after many years of service in various capacities.

### **Membership Drive 2024 Is Open!**

Don't procrastinate – renew your USSAAC membership today! After you sign in at [ISAAC – Members Only \(isaac-online.org\)](https://isaac-online.org) you can find the downloadable renewal form for printing as well as the link to the online renewal form in the left hand navigation bar. Having difficulty? Consult the FAQs at <https://isaac-online.freshdesk.com/a/solutions/articles/35000142525> Note: if you renewed for TWO years last year, you will not see that link at all! Don't remember if you renewed for two years or not? Check your profile on [finder.ussaac.org](https://finder.ussaac.org) - that will tell you when you are paid up through (and your ISAAC ID, that you will also need for renewing). Know someone who isn't YET a member, but should be? Remind them they can join today and get a "bonus" month (the remainder of 2023) at no extra cost! Remember to renew today so you don't miss a single day of USSAAC/ISAAC benefits!

### **Member Benefits**

New benefit for 2024! ISAAC International and its partner ATAAC are offering ISAAC members who refer a new member **free attendance to the online conference**. The new ISAAC member will also receive free registration to the online conference! The ATAAC conference, focusing on assistive technology and communication, will be held in Zagreb, Croatia, October 23-24, 2024. The conference can be attended in person or online at [www.ataac.eu](https://www.ataac.eu). Learn more at <https://isaac-online.org/english/about-isaac/members/membership/>

As you know, USSAAC members receive the webinar registration links “early” (before they are advertised on social media). Register **today** for our January 17 webinar by Dr. Alyssa Hillary Zisk, as seats are limited. During this presentation “*Part Time AAC Use: What Does it Mean and Why Does it Matter?*” Dr. Zisk will define intermittent, unreliable, and insufficient speech, along with part-time AAC use. They will provide examples of these types of speech, including from their own experiences as a mostly speaking Autistic adult, and explain their importance in the context of autistic communication. They will share how part-time AAC use can support people with these speech experiences. Finally, Alyssa will discuss AAC research as a form of self-advocacy. This is bound to be a popular presentation!

[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_XPMHAgaaRimjDP33yrUhUg](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XPMHAgaaRimjDP33yrUhUg)

ASHA CEUs are offered for USSAAC webinars at no additional cost to members (\$25 to non-members). And of course, USSAAC members can access archived USSAAC (and ISAAC) webinars in the “members only” section of the ISAAC website.

### **Advocacy**

Your assistance is needed! DID YOU KNOW...Medicare will be ending reimbursement for telehealth speech therapy services, including augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) services, at the end of 2024. USSAAC,

In conjunction with the Patient-Provider Communication Network

([www.patientprovidercommunication.org](http://www.patientprovidercommunication.org)), is conducting a survey to find out how telehealth is used to provide services to individuals needing AAC. This study has been approved by the University of Iowa Institutional Review Board (#202310450) and is being conducted to gather data to inform policy makers about barriers clinicians, clients and their families face to receiving in-person services and the utilization of telehealth in the provision of AAC services. If you are a provider WE NEED YOU TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY. This is an anonymous survey. Aggregated results will be available from USSAAC. For each clinic or private practice, one SLP should complete the survey.

[https://uiowa.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_2sNBSY8qvonTczQ](https://uiowa.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2sNBSY8qvonTczQ) If you are a person or family member of a person who has received remote AAC services, WE NEED YOU TO

COMPLETE the online survey at

[https://uiowa.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_bw8zOq6PZmREyjA](https://uiowa.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bw8zOq6PZmREyjA) about your experiences with receiving AAC services via telehealth.

On behalf of the USSAAC Board of Directors, my sincere wishes for a wonderful holiday season and all the best in 2024!



Amy S. Goldman, President

## Calendar Re-Cap

January 17, 2024: 7:00 – 8:00 PM Eastern. USSAAC Webinar: Part Time AAC Use: What Does it Mean and Why Does it Matter?

January 25-27, 2024: Assistive Technology Industry Association, Orlando, FL

January 26, 2024: 6:00 – 6:45 PM. USSAAC Meet-up at ATIA, Miami Meeting Room

February 28, 2024: 7:00 – 8:00 PM Eastern. USSAAC Webinar: Let's Talk about...Camp!

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