

# COVID-19 UPDATE

South Carolina audiologists, SCAA is here for you! COVID-19 has changed everyone's day to day routines as well as work flow. SCAA spoke to several members throughout the state. We wanted to get an idea what our colleagues were doing to handle this unprecedented time. In true audiologist fashion, we seem to be handling it in stride and adapting well.

We first spoke with Todd Gibson. He is in private practice (Lake Murray Hearing Associates) in the Midlands. He has two offices, one in Lexington and the second, downtown Columbia. Todd shut his doors for 6 weeks and furloughed his employees. Curbside and home visit services were available during this time for emergent hearing situations. Fortunately, the PPP loan allowed Todd to open his doors back up. However, he found finding protective equipment to be his biggest obstacle. Through an online marketplace (PPE Exchange), of regional and national supplies, of PPE he has been able to secure the proper PPE. For more information on this supply source please contact Todd at [tgibson@lakemurryhearing.com](mailto:tgibson@lakemurryhearing.com).

School. It is on everyone's mind. Do we go virtual, hybrid, five days a week? Agh, the stress for parents and caregivers. Heidi Clower is a district audiologist in Berkeley County. She is also the Planning Committee Chair for the Quill school, more information to follow on this! Heidi has been working hard this summer to be prepared to return to school. She is prepping kits for the students to take home. Inside are transmitters, receivers (and case), sanitation wipes, lanyards for Roger transmitter, cleaning supplies, DAI cords and important phone numbers to the cochlear implant companies! Of course, her contact information is included too.

Face shields will be utilized by those working with the hearing-impaired students to ensure the children receive visual cues. As the theme continues, this is a fluid situation and Heidi is ready to adapt and make changes as the school year progresses.

Last, but certainly not least, we spoke with Kim Block. Kim is the owner of Lakeside Audiology. She sees patients from North and South Carolina and provides audiological services to all ages. Kim only saw emergent patients from the end of March through most of April. She is now back to a normal schedule and offers curbside service. Kim made a statement that resonated, she said: "Our (audiologist) job is to be their (patient) advocates. What are we doing if we aren't helping?" That, my friends, is what we are doing. That is what we did during the shutdown. We helped. We planned. We got ready. It is what we do!



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## The Quill School

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As alluded to earlier, Heidi Clower has been instrumental in the planning and execution of The Quill School. For those of you who do not know, The Quill School-SC is a public charter school serving deaf and hard of hearing students grades K-3, with the possibility of serving K3-5th grade. It will focus on language development in spoken language, multi-modal (ASL 1/2 day, spoken language 1/2 day), and ASL. Doors will open Fall 2021/Fall 2022. Potential locations include the Midlands, Upstate, and the Low Country. The Quill school is “writing a new future for deaf and hard of hearing children.” Their motto is: “We are all deaf, we are all deaf together.”

There will be common areas to encourage community development. The children and staff will respect and learn from each other. Unlike the mainstreamed classroom, where the children may only be seen for 30 minutes a month, The Quill School will immerse the child so they can develop the tools to learn to live with their hearing loss.

The Quill School Planning Committee’s focus is to survey the parents of deaf and hard of hearing children in South Carolina ages birth – 8. The committee wants to determine locations in areas of greatest need. **Please share the survey with your pediatric families. The survey can be found on their website: [www.thequillschool.org](http://www.thequillschool.org).**



## Advocacy Update

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 Legislature broke Mid-March. They returned in May to pass legislation to allow COVID-19 monies, found in the CARES Act, to be handled.

Bills impacting SCAA:

S.0915- Required Hearing Aid Coverage and Replacement by SC Insurers: currently residing in the Senate Committee on Banking and Insurance.

H. 3284- Hearing Aid Coverage for Children: currently residing in the House Committee on Labor, Commerce and Industry.

S. 557- Hearing Impaired Special License Plates: currently residing in the Senate Committee on Transportation.

### **UPDATE: Annual SCAA conference**

Our 32<sup>st</sup> conference is tentatively on hold until further notice. Please check back at [www.scaudiology.org](http://www.scaudiology.org) for updates.

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