



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Stephanie Czuhajewski
sczuhajewski@audiologist.org or (866) 493-5544

Special Report to the Audiology Community: 18x18 Initiative Unifies Audiologists and Furthers Multi-organizational Goals

The [Academy of Doctors of Audiology \(ADA\)](#) has received a tremendous amount of attention since its introduction of the [18x18 Initiative](#) in November. Stories about a record-breaking pledge drive to support 18x18 efforts are true, as are reports of ADA's unprecedented membership growth and momentum. In fact, ADA has welcomed more new audiologist members during the past six months than at any other similar period in recent history.

It is important to understand though, that this phenomenon has very little to do with ADA as an institution. ADA is merely the vehicle that carries the energy, passion, hopes, dreams and directives of its membership and the audiology community. Audiologists aren't flocking to ADA simply because of the member benefits (as excellent as they are). They are coming, in droves, because of what ADA members *believe* and what they *do* to bring their beliefs into reality.

- We believe that audiology, a doctoring profession, should be practiced with the same autonomy and authority as other doctoring professions that require similar education, skills and training (such as optometry, podiatry and chiropractic).
- We believe that audiologists should be the entry point for Audiologic Care and that every patient, including Medicare recipients, should have access to safe, effective and efficient hearing and balance health care services, just as federal employees and most Americans enjoy.
- We believe that audiologists should be recognized Medicare providers for the full scope of care that they provide under their state licenses and state-defined scopes of practice.
- We believe that coverage of (and access to) comprehensive audiologic benefits will help patients avoid complications, as well as more serious and costly issues that stem from untreated balance and hearing disorders.

These shared beliefs, combined with considerable due diligence by ADA on behalf of its members, have resulted in the audiologist-driven, patient-centered 18x18 Initiative. As featured in the Hearing Journal, 18x18 if enacted, would achieve:

- Limited License Physician Status within Medicare
- Medicare Direct Access
- Comprehensive Audiologic Benefits under Medicare

18x18 is the only initiative that fully includes all of the legislative changes to Medicare sought by the major national organizations representing audiologists. The American Academy of Audiology (AAA) has stated on numerous occasions that it philosophically agrees with the tenets of 18x18 and the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) has also indicated that it recognizes the potential benefit that would accrue to audiologists from the proposed 18x18 legislation.

Instigated by ADA at the behest of its members, owned by the profession and embraced by audiologists across the country, the 18x18 Initiative has forever changed the way audiologists view their profession and their professional responsibilities. Audiology cannot reach its potential and audiologists will not be satisfied until 18x18 is achieved.

The good news is that 18x18 is achievable! ADA's federal policy strategists at Prime Policy Group have carefully vetted the proposed 18x18 legislation and have advised that this comprehensive approach is intelligent and strategically sound. Congress seldom makes changes to Medicare law—and it will be more difficult to “go back to the well” with multiple requests than to seek one logical, comprehensive, well-designed change. 18x18's comprehensive approach should be faster and less expensive to achieve than “incremental” approaches.

Although 18x18 has been deemed feasible and necessary by some of the brightest clinical, legal and political minds as the most efficient approach, that doesn't mean that it will happen overnight. ADA and its members have taken the long view, by setting 2018 as a reasonable target.

How important is 18x18 to you?

Audiologists have a longstanding record of professional service, dedication and sacrifice to achieve major professional advancements that eliminate outdated norms, elevate patient care and ensure autonomy. Are you willing to make an investment in your future by supporting efforts to achieve 18x18 today?

Invest Your Time

Time is one of the most important and difficult sacrifices to make—your investment in 18x18 will not be time wasted.

In under 18 minutes, you can advance 18x18:

- E-Mail 18 friends and colleagues and tell them to visit www.18x18.org.
- Like 18x18 on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/18x18.org>. We just launched the page and hope to get 18,000 “likes” by our Annual Convention in November. (it's ambitious and achievable, just like 18x18)
- Write letters to your state and national audiology organizations, encouraging them to support 18x18. Download template letter and proclamation here: <http://18x18.org/resources/proclamation-template>
- Update your [ADA member profile](#) to include your home address (as an alternate address) so that ADA can better identify your legislators of record.

If you have 18 hours or more to allocate towards 18x18 initiatives this year, you can also:

- Volunteer for an 18x18 subcommittee and help develop the strategic and tactical plans for achieving 18x18.
- Prepare and deliver a presentation to your state audiology organization, a university or to other constituents that need more information about 18x18.
- Attend a fly-in to help ADA advocate for 18x18 to legislators in Washington DC, or visit legislators in your district (contact ADA headquarters for more information and talking points).
- Attend the ADA convention and participate in the annual membership meeting and other activities that will support and advance 18x18.

Invest Your Talent

Are you good at writing, researching, networking, teambuilding, speaking, organizing or fundraising? If so, ADA needs you to put your talent into action to advance 18x18. Please contact Stephanie Czuhajewski at sczuhajewski@audiologist.org and turn advocacy into your volunteer vocation.

Invest Your Money

A financial commitment from every practicing audiologist will not only help fund the 18x18 Movement, from an operational standpoint it will send every member of Congress the message that we are a unified profession with a unified objective. The amount of your donation is less important than your willingness to donate whatever you can to this cause. Whether you have \$18 or \$1,800 to give, your donation will be used to responsibly achieve 18x18.

If you believe that 18x18 represents your preferred future, join ADA today and become part of the community that is leading our profession forward!

"Don't sit down and wait for the opportunities to come; you have to get up and make them."

- Madam C. J. Walker

18x18 Resources:

- 18x18 on the web at www.18x18.org
- 18x18 featured in the May issue of the Hearing Journal
http://journals.lww.com/thehearingjournal/Fulltext/2013/05000/Cover_Story__Unlocking_Direct_Audiology_Access.1.aspx
- 18x18 Webinar available for viewing: <http://www.18x18.org/resources/webinar>
- 18x18 Handout:
http://www.audiologist.org/resources/2012_convention/ADA_Proposed_Legislation.pdf
- 18x18 Talking Points: <http://www.18x18.org/what-is-18x18/talking-points>
- ADA President's Podcast featuring Dr. Nancy Green on 18x18:
<http://audiologypractices.org/president-s-message-march-2013>

About ADA

Established in 1977, the Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA) is the only national organization dedicated to audiologists in autonomous practice. ADA and its members strive to epitomize practitioner excellence, high ethical standards, professional autonomy and sound business practices in the provision of quality audiologic care. For more information, visit www.audiologist.org.

About 18X18

18X18 is a national audiology initiative that seeks to amend Title 18 of the Social Security Act by 2018 to provide for the treatment of audiologists as physicians for purposes of furnishing audiology services under the Medicare Program, to provide for a broadened scope of audiology services available for coverage under the Medicare program and to enable Medicare beneficiaries to have their choice of qualified audiologist. To learn more about the 18X18 Initiative and how you can help achieve it, visit www.18x18.org.

###