AudiologyNOW!® 2015 Steers Current and Future Audiologists to Success in San Antonio, TX

(Reston, VA–April 20, 2015)—More than 5,600 audiologists, students, hearing-health professionals, and industry representatives gathered in lively San Antonio, TX, on March 25–28 to attend AudiologyNOW! 2015, the annual conference of the American Academy of Audiology and the premier event of, by, and for audiologists.

The 2015 Program Chair Helena Solodar, AuD, and her committee put together a comprehensive and business-oriented line-up of presenters and sessions. The conference kicked off with 270 attendees participating in the seventh annual Academy Research Conference (ARC), which focused on vestibular assessment and rehabilitation. ARC Chair Devin McCaslin, PhD, and his committee brought together subject-matter experts to discuss age-related vestibular loss, video head-impulse testing, pediatric assessments, and more. The conference was funded in part by the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) and sponsored in part by Interacoustics and Otometrics/Audiology Systems.

Students and the Student Academy of Audiology (SAA) play a very active and important role within the profession of audiology. More than 900 students attended AudiologyNOW! this year; the SAA held its third student conference on Wednesday, March 25, in conjunction with the convention.

As always, the opening-night reception on Wednesday, Celebrate Audiology (sponsored in part by Widex), was a hit—with live music, open bar, and Texas-style fare. Attendees enjoyed mingling in the exhibit hall, meeting up with colleagues, chatting with friends, and networking with industry representatives.

The General Assembly (sponsored in part by Siemens) set the tone for a rewarding Thursday morning. The keynote address was an inspirational speech of courage and dedication to our country presented by Staff Sergeant (Ret.) Shilo Harris. In February 2007, Harris was seriously wounded when his Humvee hit an improvised explosive device (IED) while he was on patrol in Iraq. His road to recovery included a two-month medically induced coma. Harris provided an inside look at his service and recovery that was very emotionally moving for all attendees. More of the story can be found in his book, Steel Will: My Journey Through Hell to Become the Man I Was Meant to Be.

Also during the General Assembly, Academy President Erin Miller, AuD, presented the Academy Inspiration Award to Emma Faye Rudkin, recently selected as Miss San Antonio 2015. Rudkin has been partially deaf since age three, and has started an outreach program, Aid the Silent, that provides resources for children and teens on deafness and hearing loss.

Dr. Miller also presented Academy Presidential Awards to Gloria Garner, AuD; Alan Desmond, AuD; and Deborah Carlson, PhD. Dr. Garner has been a dedicated chair to the Academy’s Ethical Practices Committee. Dr. Desmond has fought tenaciously for fair validation of our vestibular codes. Dr. Carlson, a past president, has contributed innumerable hours to the Academy. We congratulate these award winners and appreciate their dedication and support to the profession.

A special announcement at the General Assembly came from the Accreditation Commission for Audiology Education (ACAE) Board of Directors, which shared good news with attendees—The University of Texas at Dallas has achieved full
program accreditation. The commission also reported on the developing status for a new program at the University of the Pacific in San Francisco, which will admit its first class of students this fall.

The AudiologyNOW! conference delivers timely and relevant content. Among its comprehensive educational sessions, three distinguished lectures were presented by the American Academy of Audiology Foundation.

- The Marion Downs Lecture on Pediatric Audiology: *The Past, Present, and Future: Developmental Outcomes for Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing* was presented by Christine Yoshinaga-Itano, PhD, University of Colorado and Marion Downs Center, and supported by The Oticon Foundation.

- The Topics in Tinnitus Lecture: *Pathophysiology-Based Treatments for Tinnitus*, was presented by Dirk De Ridder, MD, PhD, University of Otago, New Zealand, and supported by Widex USA.

- The Improving Patient Care Through Innovation in Workplace Management Session: *How the Age Wave Will Transform Health, Health Care, and Our Lives*, was presented by Dan Veto, of Age Wave, and supported by Phonak LLC.

These lectures are now available on-demand, at no cost, on www.eaudiology.org.

Credentialing and preceptor training also were well-attended hot topics throughout the conference. American Board of Audiology (ABA) Chair John Coverstone, AuD, presented sessions for both audiology students and audiologists that revealed the results of the ABA Preceptor Training Needs Gap Analysis study. The study yielded a detailed picture of the complexities of the preceptor role, the competencies required to do the job well, and the need for more uniform, comprehensive, robust, and universally available preceptor training.

For the second year in a row, the exhibit hall was open to attendees on Wednesday, the first day of conference. Nearly 200 exhibitors displayed new, innovative technology in over 250,000 square feet of the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. Best-in-Show awards were presented to ROC Advertising (small booth category), Duracell (medium booth), Sycle.Net (medium-large booth), Audifon (large booth), and Oticon (extra-large booth). Siemens was the winner in this year’s New Product Showcase category.

Planning has already begun for AudiologyNOW! 2016, April 13–16, in Phoenix, AZ. The content development is in full swing with 2016 Program Chair Joscelyn Martin, AuD, at the helm. We hope to see you there. Visit the AudiologyNOW! Web site for updated information.

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The American Academy of Audiology is the world's largest professional organization of, by, and for audiologists. With an active membership of more than 12,000 audiologists, the Academy promotes quality hearing and balance care by advancing the profession of audiology through leadership, advocacy, education, public awareness, and support of research.