

Tina Penman

What got you interested in the field of audiology?

My passion for playing piano and being a part of high school choirs is how I initially became interested in audiology. The acoustics of sound and the processing of music was fascinating to me, spurring my interest in science and psychology and motivating me to pursue a degree in Behavioral Neuroscience at Northeastern University. During my time at Northeastern, I joined [Delta Zeta Sorority](#) and our philanthropy was “Speech and Hearing.” My proudest accomplishment as Philanthropy Chair was bringing Miss America 1995, the first Miss America with a cochlear implant, to campus because it blended our interest of women in leadership with our philanthropy. Delta Zeta is one of many experiences that inspired me to graduate with my Clinical Doctorate in Audiology. The rest is history.

What is one thing you enjoy about your role as a Regional Research Administrator at the [National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research \(NCRAR\)](#) at the Veterans Affairs Portland Health Care System?

Serving our Service members and Veterans is meaningful and rewarding because it allows me to directly serve those who served our country. It’s the closest to Active Duty service that I’ll ever get. I have a unique role where I interact with the both the [Hearing Center of Excellence](#) (under the Defense Health Agency) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). It is important these cross-agency discussions exist because the agencies need information from each other to provide the best healthcare, particularly during the Service member-to-Veteran transition. Regarding technology such as telehealth, mobile and wearable technology, and even blockchain, the sky is the limit for healthcare applications, research, and education. Telehealth has the potential to make healthcare more accessible to patients. Not just patients who are physically unable to attend a healthcare appointment, but also patients who experience triggers and flashbacks when entering society and leaving the security of their own home.

The other piece to acknowledge that the healthcare practices, research, and education in the VA and DoD for our Service members and Veterans are tailored to this specific population. However, quite often these practices, research findings, and materials have relevance to the general patient population as well. For example, the VA was a pioneer and early adopter of electronic medical records back in the 1970s and years afterwards, the use of electronic medical records became a general practice across other healthcare settings.

You serve on the Board for [Blockchain in Healthcare Today \(BHTY\)](#) and Blockchain in Healthcare Global (BiHG). What excites you most about this technology?

To be clear, this is something I have pursued as a hobby, separate from my affiliations and employers. Blockchain technology has a potential to transform healthcare delivery models, the methodology and recruitment strategies used for research, and reimbursement

models for providers. The blockchain space is a gathering of enthusiasts, including professionals from fintech, business, law, government, media, and experts from all subject matters, including healthcare. Right now, the focus is on the journey, not the destination, because blockchain technology is still in the early stages. It is exciting to be pioneering the blockchain in healthcare space together with forward-thinking leaders across the world.

You're also an advocate of social media in health care. How is social media helping you with your work?

As an early adopter of Facebook and Twitter (@[TinaTheAuD](#)), many years have been spent on developing my online presence for professional networking. Now, I'm diving more into other platforms emerging that have a social media-esque feel that are used more in the professional space, such as LinkedIn and ResearchGate.

Having an established digital presence on social media is just as important as having an in-person presence at a conference or meeting. A strong digital presence gives the perception that a person is well-versed, open to connecting and sharing with others, and all joking aside, a real person that actually exists.

Social media has changed the way we communicate with others. Audiologists are communication experts and it's especially important for us to understand how these communicative platforms work. The better we understand the way our patients communicate in their day-to-day lives, the better we can help them with rehabilitation. Also, social media provides opportunities for outreach. Remember Laurel vs. Yanny? That went viral because of social media. It was an unexpected opportunity that allowed us to proudly promote who we are as audiologists, what we do, and the reasons why.

What personality traits have been the most useful in advancing your career?

Positive energy and endless determination can go a long way. As an audiologist, researcher, administrator, and adjunct professor, I strive to be a cheerleader for my colleagues who are doing the science and writing grants, my fellow audiologists who treat many patients every day in the clinic, fellow volunteers who graciously donate time and resources, students who will change the world, and dire causes that need attention. Positive energy and a good sense of humor is important because it's contagious and prevails, even when the going gets tough.

Being an opportunist has also helped me advance my career. As a former Board member and current member of the [Junior League of Portland](#), it's a privilege to belong to an organization that promotes the development of women leaders and engagement in our local community. We have a rich history of almost 110 years in the Portland community with a [long list of significant accomplishments](#). One of our members advocated for lowering the age of identification of infant hearing impairment in the early 1990s. This resonated with me as an audiologist and was a reason why I joined in 2010. Another project I'm working on is the promotion of [iHEARu](#). We believe that social and

communication opportunities should be enhanced for all. This app empowers users to identify and seek ear-friendly spaces in the Portland business community.

Anything to add?

It's a true honor and privilege to be receiving this award. As a millennial, it's important for me to highlight that we bring a lot to the table. We are advocates for charitable causes we believe in, loudly and proudly, due to nationwide events we experienced when growing up, for better or for worse. We embrace technology because we experienced how the internet and smartphones changed our lives as students. We pursue part-time side hustles to make a bigger impact for the causes that are meaningful to us. Thank you again for this award.