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## **Georgia Relay Sponsors Second Annual “WALK4HEARING”**

*Hearing Loss Association of America Brings Walk Back to Georgia*

ATLANTA – April 19, 2008 – Georgia Relay, the free service that makes it possible for people with hearing or speech loss to communicate with any standard phone user, is a sponsor of the second-annual Walk4Hearing on Saturday, April 19 at 10 a.m. at the Georgia Perimeter College Dunwoody Campus.

Proceeds from the event will benefit local programs for people with hearing loss and help raise awareness of the key causes and consequences of hearing loss. Organized by the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), last year’s walk attracted more than 100 walkers and raised more than \$5,000.

“Georgia Relay’s sponsorship of Walk4Hearing provides needed dollars to heighten public sensitivity regarding this vital issue,” said Michael Russell, Relay Administrator for the Georgia Public Service Commission. “More than two million Georgians are affected by hearing loss, and this event increases statewide awareness of its causes and consequences.”

At the Walk4Hearing, Georgia Relay will host a special booth with information about its many services and calling options, including CapTel®, a new telecommunications technology for people with hearing loss. Available to state residents exclusively through Georgia Relay, CapTel works like any other phone—with one important difference. Using the latest in voice recognition software, CapTel displays every word the caller says on the bright, easy-to-read text screen of the user’s specially designed CapTel phone. This way, users can hear what’s being said and read a captioned version of their conversation for added accuracy. CapTel phones are available for a limited time to Georgia residents for only \$99. For people on a limited income, free phones are also available through the Georgia Telecommunications Equipment Distribution program.

Almost 31 million Americans are hearing impaired and far too many lack access to the information and support they need to overcome communication obstacles in their daily lives. The HLAA is dedicated to providing that information and support and enabling people with hearing loss to live rich, productive lives. Walk4Hearing allows participants to register as a team or as an individual to raise money for the cause. The Atlanta walk is the second of seven walks scheduled for cities across the country this spring, including St. Louis, Grand Rapids and Milford, Mich., Longwood, Colo., Westchester and Rochester, NY, and Columbus, Ohio.

### **About Georgia Relay**

A free service administered by the Georgia Public Service Commission, Georgia Relay enables people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech disabled to carry on a conversation with any standard phone user. To make a Georgia Relay call, the person with a hearing or speech loss uses a text telephone or other assistive device to reach Georgia Relay. (A text telephone allows people with hearing or speech loss to type their side of the conversation and read the other party’s response on their phone’s text screen.) Once the Communications Assistant obtains the number to be called and a connection is made, he or she voices the Relay user’s side of the conversation and types the words spoken by the standard phone user, relaying the conversation back and forth. For more information on Georgia Relay, please visit [www.georgiarelay.org](http://www.georgiarelay.org) or call 1-866-694-5824 (v/TTY).

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