



MAY 2025

The Dr. Emily Q. Wang SCOPE (Student Community Outreach Program of Excellence) Speech & Hearing Clinic

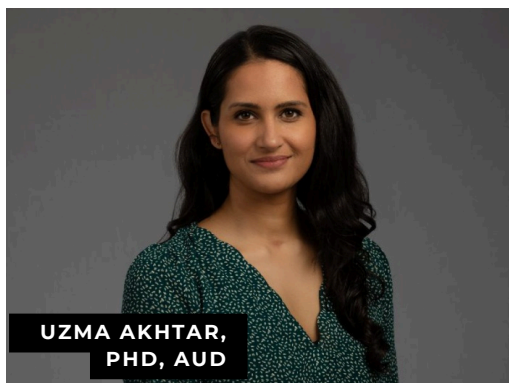


“RUSH HAS A MISSION TO BRING SERVICES TO UNDERREPRESENTED, UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS, AND WE WANT TO TRAIN CLINICIANS WITH CONSCIENCE WHO CARE ABOUT THE COMMUNITY THEY SERVE.” - EMILY Q. WANG, PHD, CCC-SLP

Dr. Emily Q. Wang, a beloved member of the Rush Communication Disorders and Sciences family, was committed in all aspects of her work to providing both exceptional patient care and student teaching and training. Dr. Wang's passion for and dedication to caring for others culminated in a vision to extend the reach of the CDS faculty to patients who were not able to easily access speech-language and hearing health care, including those who were unhoused and/or had inadequate or no insurance coverage. With a stubborn doggedness she pushed through obstacles and brought that dream to fruition—the SCOPE Speech & Hearing Clinic.

In addition to providing much-needed care to underserved populations, the SCOPE Speech & Hearing Clinic is an exceptional training ground for speech-language pathology and audiology students, a unique vehicle for faculty research, and an organizational base for CDS community-based and international volunteer efforts. CDS faculty have embraced SCOPE and the unique opportunities it provides in support of Rush's mission to improve the health of the individuals and diverse communities through the integration of outstanding patient care, education, research and community partnerships. This same energy has propelled departmental growth and focus in reaching goals set forward in the CDS strategic plan.

Under the direction of SCOPE Speech & Hearing Clinic Director, Dr. Shannon Theis, PhD, CCC-SLP, SCOPE services and outreach efforts continue to expand. And the commitment of CDS faculty and students to the success of SCOPE is an ongoing dedication to Dr. Wang's lasting vision and legacy.



"SCOPE SPEECH & HEARING CLINIC HAS PROVIDED THE IDEAL ENVIRONMENT AND PATIENT POPULATION FOR CARRYING OUT THIS IMPORTANT RESEARCH. WITH THE STATE-OF-THE-ART CLINICAL RESEARCH EQUIPMENT, DIVERSE PATIENT POPULATION, AND DEDICATED STUDENT RESEARCH ASSISTANTS, THIS STUDY BENEFITS FROM AN ECOLOGICALLY VALID APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING THE EFFICACY AND IMPACT OF OVER-THE-COUNTER HEARING AIDS IN IMPROVING OUTCOMES AND REDUCING BARRIERS TO CARE FOR OUR PATIENTS". - UZMA AKHTAR, PHD, AUD, CCC-A

Research Corner

In addition to providing clinical education as a preceptor for AuD students, Dr. Akhtar has ongoing research in SCOPE involving over-the-counter hearing aids:

I am currently working with colleagues from Northwestern University on a research study focused on over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids. As it is located in center of Chicago, SCOPE has a more diverse patient population than Northwestern University—particularly people who are underinsured or are uninsured, precisely the population who might be more likely to purchase these devices. This is closer to the target market for OTC devices. And as the research is being conducted in SCOPE Speech & Hearing Clinic, we are able to reduce barriers to allow more individuals to try OTCs. Additionally, our research aims to evaluate their efficacy and how they work for people.

Because this is a new delivery model, we just don't know who might seek them out, what their hearing profiles look like, or how much benefit they might actually be getting. This study is structured as a randomized control trial with two groups. One group must wait before getting hearing aids; they serve as their own control. The second group is fit with hearing aids and fills out psychosocial questionnaires to evaluate what their attitudes are about hearing loss, how they can manage hearing loss, and how they feel about hearing loss and hearing aids. The goal is to see if trying the hearing aid modifies their attitude about hearing aids and hearing loss.

We also want to parse out whether or not attitudes change just from giving people the hearing aids. Preliminary results identify two groups of patients: individuals for which getting the device alone is enough and others that need provider care and professional intervention to guide them through that process. Our results suggest that even if people find that OTCs don't work for them, they are now feeling more capable of moving through the channels to get professionally fit.

We are also evaluating listening effort and how patients are using these devices. The patients have the capacity to make their own adjustments to the device settings. We are then using verification to evaluate those self-selected settings relative to validated prescription targets. While some patients are underamplifying, others are very close to targets.

And it has been very interesting for students to see these different outcomes. Students generally get a negative impression about OTC devices—either they don't provide benefit, overamplify, etc. So it is nice for them to see when it actually works from the consumer perspective.

Students in SCOPE: Anna Aupperlee

Anna, a second-year AuD student is enthusiastic about her experience in SCOPE Speech & Hearing Clinic and the amazing opportunities it provides:

I've had the chance to participate in a Hearing the Call volunteer event, and then I was placed in the SCOPE Speech & Hearing Clinic for practicum with Dr. Stoner and Dr. Worthington in Spring of my first year. It was a spectacular, immersive experience. We were seeing pediatric patients through the Young Child Clinic, through which children with developmental disorders are evaluated by speech-language pathology, audiology, genetics, and developmental psychology. We always had two students and two preceptors working together, which made for a very collaborative and fun time. It truly was a great learning experience.



One of great things about SCOPE is how it not only allows but also fosters interprofessional collaboration. I volunteered at all of the Center for the Underserved at Rush ENT (CURE) clinic sessions over this past summer. The CURE clinic, which is focused on providing care to unhoused individuals is very collaborative. We worked with the medical students and also with Dr. Jagasia, the ENT who coordinates this outreach effort. These appointments are not as structured as they are in the outpatient clinic, so as students we were able to take part in guiding multiple aspects of the appointment, which allowed everyone to contribute in some way. Ultimately, we all learned from each other as well as from our preceptor during CURE clinic. I loved CURE clinic so much that now I work as the audiology steerer for CURE, organizing the student volunteers.

Faculty Focus: Elizabeth Rotert

"SCOPE is perfect fit of training others, working with those who need it most, and continuing to share my passion with AAC."- Elizabeth Rotert, SLPD, CCC-SLP



Elizabeth Rotert, graduate of the Rush MS in SLP program, recently joined SCOPE Speech & Hearing Clinic as an instructor and clinic supervisor. She is excited about bringing together her passions to educate students and provide care to patients who encounter obstacles to care:

After obtaining an undergraduate degree in education, I taught preschool and middle school and then had an opportunity to work as an assistive technology instructor, teaching people with disabilities how to utilize alternative access technologies for computers. As an extension of that work, I started teaching speech-language pathologists (SLPs) about Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) applications.

My work with the SLPs sparked a desire to become one myself—and that brought me to Rush! I absolutely loved my time at Rush as a graduate student; I learned so much and had so many incredible learning and service opportunities.

I've always had a passion for those who don't have access to service. It is a huge component of my story. After graduation from Rush, I worked on an assistive technology team focused on providing support to individuals in areas of lower socioeconomic status. In particular, we were looking for resources for students after they graduated in order to continue the supports that they needed.

And then I made my way back to Rush—and to SCOPE! It is a perfect fit in that it allows me to work with students and to explore and implement ways to bring more AAC resources to Rush. One of my goals is to continue to research options for individuals who have aged out of school district support and don't know where to go for continued services. Ultimately, I want to establish a group support for those folks who need it the most.

Volunteer Events

CDS faculty and students have continued to extend the reach of SCOPE Speech & Hearing Clinic through myriad volunteer opportunities. Recent events have included:

McGaw YMCA Children's Center

The McGaw YMCA Children's Center, located in Evanston, offers year-round, full-day early learning programs for infants through preschool. Rush SLP students and faculty came together in November 2024 to perform pediatric speech-language screenings at the Center.



Hearing the Call Chicagoland

Rush AuD students and faculty were excited to be able to join in on the third Hearing the Call Chicagoland event, held in December 2024. Buoyed by the success of the first two events, which took place in SCOPE, volunteers hit the road and joined Dawn Heiman, AuD, the Entheos support team, and Widex and Oticon representatives at Dr. Heiman's practice, Advanced Audiology Consultants. At this event, students and clinicians worked together to perform diagnostic evaluations, fit patients with appropriate amplification, complete electroacoustic analyses and real-ear measurements, and provide instrument orientations. Volunteers came together to provide care to uninsured and underinsured patients who were identified in SCOPE and in Dr. Heiman's practice. We continue to be so appreciative of the generosity of Entheos and of the opportunity that this relationship with Hearing the Call provides for our patients, as well as for our students and faculty. It is life-changing!

Video link:
[Patient Story](#)



[VISIT THE SCOPE SPEECH & HEARING CLINIC WEBSITE HERE](#)

Volunteer Events

Chicago Public Library: Listen Up! Research Initiative

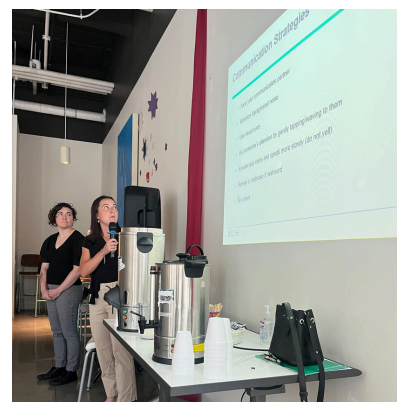


In June 2024, Rush AuD and SLP graduate students partnered with the ListenUP Research Collaborative from UIC to host a hearing screening event at the West Town Branch of the Chicago Public Library. The students also developed an interactive educational activity focused on learning about sound with tuning forks!



Center on Halsted Educational Outreach and Hearing Screening

In January 2025, Rush Audiology students Sarah Fondel and Sara Perez crafted and delivered an educational presentation on hearing aids and hearing loss and ototoxicity to LGBTQ+ seniors at the Center on Halsted. Sarah and Sara took questions and explained the potential impact of Illinois House Bill 2443, which requires insurance providers to cover hearing aids for all Illinois residents. As this law took effect in January 2025, audience members were encouraged to consider what new options might be available to them regarding amplification coverage. The students, joined by Dr. Worthington, then performed hearing screenings for attendees and answered their questions about hearing loss and communication strategies.



**HAVE AN IDEA FOR A COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENT?
LET US KNOW AT CDS_SCOPE@RUSH.EDU**

Support for SCOPE Speech & Hearing Clinic

Foundation for Hearing and Speech Resources (FHSR)

"The support from FHSR allows us to continue to support our Pediatric Hearing Aid program, providing earmolds and hearing aids for children with hearing loss who can't afford them." - Megan Worthington, AuD, CCC-A

In July 2024, SCOPE Speech & Hearing Clinic received an extremely generous donation from the Foundation for Hearing and Speech Resources (FHSR) to support rehabilitative efforts for pediatric patients with hearing loss. FHSR (fhsr.org) is an Illinois-based non-profit organization that provides educational programs, outreach efforts, and social events to support children and young adults with hearing loss and help them reach their potential. Several Rush alumni, faculty, and current AuD students are actively involved in FHSR as board members and interns, and Rush SAA has volunteered at several FHSR social events. Most recently, Dr. Worthington was named to the FHSR Board of Directors. CDS faculty welcome this partnership and are truly grateful for FHSR's generosity and support.



How Can You Get Involved?

Want to support SCOPE Speech & Hearing Clinic with a donation?
rushgiving.com/scope

Want to volunteer your time or supplies?
Email us at CDS_SCOPE@rush.edu