

HMD Alliance Newsletter

EMPOWERING OURSELVES

We will soon be entering into the holiday season, a time of year where hidden mobility disabilities can be particularly challenging. The growth in online shopping means that we can usually avoid those long walks and gruelling standing in line required by in-person shopping. But there is still how we participate in the wide range of family and community events where people mingle standing up. If you haven't already done so, talk with a friend or family member about how you can socialize with the least physical pain. And then email us with your ideas and we will share them in the December newsletter.

Together we can make a difference!

Encourage New Members!

We can advocate more effectively the larger our Alliance is.

Invite friends and family to join!

Reaching Broader Audiences

We need your help in identifying potential advocates for removing **distance barriers** in all areas of public life. What contacts do you have that could be helpful in reaching out to:

- Government departments responsible for accessibility policy
- City planners
- Architects
- Walkable cities initiatives

Let the Alliance know and we will act!

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TIPS FOR AIR TRAVEL

Part 3: Getting On and Off the Plane

In the last newsletter, we talked about getting onto the plane when you can enter from a jet way. Sometimes you are faced with climbing stairs. In this case, be honest with yourself about how many stairs you can climb without beginning to feel additional pain or shortness of breath. If you are likely to have difficulty, let the airline know that you would like to be boarded using a hydraulic lift (sometimes called a ambulift) that moves you from the ground to the opening where the catering cart attaches to the plane.

When it comes to deplaning, keep in mind that the airline's responsibility for you ends when you step into the Jet way or onto the tarmac. Make sure that you don't leave the plane until wheelchair assistance has arrived, even if you get pressure to "just step off" or "just walk up the jet way." Airline crew legally cannot leave you alone on the plane so they may try a number of methods to "dislodge" you so that they can leave. If you do step out onto the jet way before the wheelchair arrives, you may well find yourself standing and waiting there alone for some time.

In most airports, you have the right to receive wheelchair assistance all the way out to your ground transportation. Be alert to attempts to leave you before that point – for example, at an elevator or escalator to baggage claim, or at the baggage claim carousel. If you get out of the wheelchair (or off the cart), you may find yourself facing a long way to get your baggage and find local transportation.

The key is to keep focused on minimizing walking, climbing, or standing!

Educating the Public

We have had an opportunity to present data on hidden mobility disabilities at two international conferences recently:

- Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity (in Honolulu)
- American Public Health Association (in Atlanta)

Conference participants were very interested and said that they had never thought about "distance walked" as a barrier.

Educate others!

Visual cues are excellent for self-advocacy & to educate others.

12 Core Members
94 Supporting Members