

## HCRI Overview

Ronald L. Webster, Ph.D. founded Hollins Communications Research Institute (HCRI – www.stuttering.org) in 1972 to champion the cause of stuttering through scientific discovery and treatment innovation. Under Dr. Webster's direction, Roanoke, Virginia-based HCRI, a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization, has become an international leader in stuttering research and the development of innovative, scientifically based therapy approaches.

The Institute offers 17 stuttering therapy programs annually, each of which lasts 12 days, where participants work with specially trained clinicians and learn how to retrain speech muscles to produce fluent speech for a lifetime.

## The HCRI Difference

Unlike other stuttering treatment providers, HCRI's proprietary therapy has been developed in-house by research scientists who are internationally recognized experts in the investigation and treatment of stuttering.

These Ph.D.-credentialed team members have tested and retested HCRI's therapy system with thousands of persons who stutter. This has led to exciting new discoveries, ongoing therapy refinement, and the development of new, specialized treatment tools that enhance fluency outcomes.

HCRI's work has led to the definition of specific behaviors that replace the distorted muscle activities that occur with stuttering. HCRI scientists have created new ways to use technology in therapy that make the learning of lasting fluency skills easier. The precision and sophistication of HCRI's stuttering treatment is unmatched.

- 93% of program participants acquire fluency by the end of their 12-day treatment program.
- 98% of program participants say they would recommend HCRI to others.
- Follow-up studies show that 70% to 75% retain fluent for the long term.

## Clients

HCRI has treated more than 5,800 people aged 10 to 73 from across the U.S. and 23 other countries. Clients include broadcaster John Stossel of Fox News; Annie Glenn, wife of Senator and Astronaut John Glenn; Lester Hayes of the Oakland Raiders; and Arthur Blank, co-founder of Home Depot and owner of the Atlanta Falcons.

## Developments Underway

Dr. Webster and the HCRI team are on the verge of key discoveries that could remarkably change the way stuttering is viewed and treated. They are studying the physical features of stuttering and analyzing clues that may isolate the cause – that could lead to a cure.

Underscoring the importance of the Institute's approach, the *New England Journal of Medicine* published the results of a groundbreaking study in February, 2010 by the National Institutes of Health that confirmed a genetic link to stuttering. HCRI was a key partner in this national research initiative.

In addition, HCRI has introduced a next-generation treatment program that offers the capability to significantly expand treatment access via the internet to benefit more people in more places than ever before possible.

## HCRI Recognition

- The Virginia General Assembly unanimously passed a house joint resolution commending HCRI for its pioneering research and stuttering therapy innovation.
- HCRI's stuttering treatment program was the distinguished recipient of the First Award for Scientific Merit at a national convention of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.
- The National Naval Medical Hospital and Walter Reed Army Medical Center have selected HCRI as one of their preferred providers for stuttering therapy.
- HCRI media coverage includes *New York Times*, *Nightline*, *20/20*, *Newsweek*, *People*, *Parade*, *Sports Illustrated*, the *Today* show, *CBS Morning News*, and *Good Morning America*.
- Dr. Webster, who is also a licensed clinical psychologist, received the *Outstanding Contributions in the Application of Psychology* award from the Virginia Psychological Association.

## About Stuttering

There are 66 million people worldwide, including three million in the U.S., who suffer from stuttering. The disorder inhibits social growth, hampers education and career aspirations, and produces emotional scars that can last a lifetime. Stuttering is deeply misunderstood, with many believing that persons who stutter are less intelligent – or have mental problems. HCRI research has demonstrated that stuttering has a physical basis and is not caused by mental or emotional issues.