

Information Requested by Membership

Resources for Hearing Loss

This past summer the Consortium surveyed practices and members on a variety of topics. Over 54 percent stated they would like resource information to assist patients, employees, or family members who are experiencing a hearing loss.

The **Direct News** interviewed Nikki Bergman, M.A., CCC-A, an Audiologist with the Hearing Center of Lansing who offered detailed information shown in this article.

Nikki emphasized hearing loss can:

- Increase an individual's aging process
- Dramatically affect work and personal relationships
- Lead to an environment of isolation
- Create a significant loss within the learning experience

Types of Hearing Devices

Nikki stated, "The majority of hearing devices are manufactured within the United States with a significant portion of research and development being handled overseas."

Hearing devices range from traditional behind the ear devices to behind the ear devices with a receiver/speaker in the ear canal. There are also custom devices ranging in size from an in-the-ear device, which fills up the entire concha bowl to tiny aids that fit completely deep in the ear canal. There is also an extended wear device (two to three month battery life), which is implanted deep into the ear canal. She added, in general, a dual set of hearing devices range from \$1,200 to \$8,000.

Nikki commented, "With forthcoming technological improvements, devices will be undergoing dramatic design and quality upgrades in the coming years."

Surgical Options

- Baha – a bone anchored hearing device
- Cochlear – implant which has electrodes directly implanted into the cochlea
- Esteem - uses the mechanical energy of the middle ear bones to drive the processor thereby sending a signal to the cochlea

Association Resources for the Hearing Impaired

- [Hearing Loss Association of Michigan](#) – best contacts are chapters across Michigan
- [Michigan Department of Rehabilitation Services](#) – Lansing, MI and access across the state
- [Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#) – Washington, D.C.
- [United States Department of Veteran Affairs](#) – Washington, D.C. and at each medical center and most clinics
- [National Association of the Deaf](#) – Silver Spring, MD
- [American Tinnitus Association](#) – Portland, OR
- [Gallaudet University](#) – Washington, D.C.

Medical Accreditation Associations for the Hearing Impaired

- [American Academy of Audiology](#) - Reston, VA
- [American Academy of Otolaryngology](#) - Head and Neck Surgery, Alexandria, VA
- [Association of Medical Professionals with Hearing Losses](#) - Miamisburg, OH
- [American Speech, Language, and Hearing Association](#) - Rockville, MD
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) - Atlanta, GA and Washington, D.C. – Search: Noise induced hearing loss, early detection, and occupational safety

Resources for Varied Audiences: Children to Adults

Those who seek to remain **gainfully employed** should work closely with their health provider, as well as the Michigan Department of Rehabilitative Services, their physician, and designated audiologist.

For **veterans**, you will need your discharge papers (DD-214), as well as any relevant medical documents which indicate hearing loss due to a military incident or engagement.

School aged children should check with their school district about hearing test services, in consultation with health insurance their parents or guardians have access to. This would most likely include a physician and designated audiologist.

Mature adults, should review their health plan coverage and interact closely with their physician and designated audiologist.

Electronic Communication Techniques for Hearing Impaired

Known as the Text Telephone (TTY), this unit is also known as a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TTD).



The TTY or TTD is a special device that allows people who are hearing impaired, deaf, or with speech impairments use the telephone to communicate, by allowing them to type messages back and forth between two devices. These can be connected to traditional telephone handsets, as well as cellular units.

Another approach is through a Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS). This relay service acts as an intermediary between the disabled and non-disabled. The non-disabled speaks the message to a relay operator who will then type the message to the call's recipient. The non-disabled without a TTY can call the disabled individual and automatically be routed to the relay operator. The caller speaks the message and the operator types it to the TTY recipient.

According to Susan Boswell, a spokesperson with the Alexander Graham Bell Association for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, "With the advent of email and video (Skype) many individuals are shifting to these communication approaches."

Basic Facts: National Hearing Loss Statistics

- Men are more likely than women to experience hearing loss.
- One in five Americans have hearing loss in at least one ear which equals 48 million people and far exceeds previous hearing care industry estimates of 25 million.
- 20% of the US population ages 12 years and older have hearing difficulties severe enough to impact communication.
- There is a direct link between age and hearing loss: about 18% of American adults between the ages of 45 and 54, 30% of adults between ages 65 and 74, and 47% of adults ages 75 and older have hearing impairments.
- In the United States, three out of every 1,000 children are born deaf or hard-of-hearing.
- About 26 million Americans between the ages of 20 and 69 have high frequency hearing loss due to exposure to loud noises at work or in leisure activities.
- About 60% of deployed military service men and women have noise induced hearing loss (NIHL), tinnitus (ringing in the ear), and other hearing injuries.
- Impairment of auditory activity and tinnitus are more likely to occur in Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans than post-traumatic stress syndrome.
- High levels of cotinine, the chemical that indicates exposure to tobacco smoke and second-hand smoke has been directly linked to higher risks of some types of hearing loss.
- Diabetic and cardiovascular conditions have been associated with hearing loss.
- Research indicates a link between early onset dementia and more serious dementia with even a mild hearing loss.

Leading Michigan Universities with Academic Hearing Programs

- Central Michigan University – Mt. Pleasant
- Northern Michigan University – Marquette
- Wayne State University – Detroit
- Western Michigan University - Kalamazoo