



HEARING LOSS TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE



Wednesday, May 9, 2018

Sheraton Uptown - Albuquerque, NM

SPONSORED BY

**The GOVERNOR'S
COMMISSION
ON DISABILITY**



**The NM COMMISSION
FOR DEAF AND
HARD OF HEARING**

and The Advisory Committee for Hearing Loss Awareness

In Association with The Northeast Regional Education Cooperative (NEREC/REG#4)

Agenda

- 7:30 - 8:00** **Continental Breakfast**
- 8:00 - 8:10** **Welcome..... Karen Courtney-Peterson**
- 8:10 - 9:00** **What You Should Know About Hearing Loss.....Carol Clifford, Au. D.**
Dr. Clifford will cover best practices, tools, and techniques to identify the symptoms of a hearing loss and address key topics with hard of hearing clients/patients.
- 9:10 - 10:10** **Show and Tell..... Nathan Gomme**
Demonstration of various assistive devices and technologies available to NM residents through the state telecommunications equipment distribution program for dealing with hearing loss if and when hearing aids alone can't do the job.
Tom Sena
Andrew Williamson
- 10:10 - 10:30** **Break**
- 10:30 - 11:00** **Assistive Listening Systems, Alike but Different..... Mike Langner**
The Americans with Disabilities Act mandates that assistive listening systems are available in certain venues. This presentation will help explain which venues and review various systems currently available, what features they share, and what features are unique to each of them.
- 11:10 -11:40** **Hearing Loss Support Groups..... Mary Clark**
Learn what support and potential aural rehab is available from a variety of local and national sources for clients/patients with a hearing disability.
- 11:40 -12:15** **BUFFET LUNCH**
- 12:15 -1:15** **Psychological Impact of Hearing Loss..... Sam Trychin, Ph.D.**
Nationally known psychologist, educator, author will discuss the psychological impact of hearing loss on those who experience it, and on their family and friends.
- 1:15 -1:45** **Break**
- 1:45 - 3:00** **How I Cope and What I Should Have Been Told..... Panel: Mary Clark**
These long time hearing aid/cochlear implant users will discuss their personal experience living with hearing loss, its impact on their lives and careers, and what they learned on their own after being fitted with hearing aids.
Dr. Norm Dawson
Nathan Gomme
Dick Meyer
Jim Ogle
- 3:15 - 4:15** **Adjusting Telecoils for Hearing Loop Use..... Juliette Sterkens, Au.D.**
Telecoils and their settings differ and the sound quality from a hearing loop is only as good as the positioning and settings of the telecoils. Dr. Sterkens will talk about the do's and dont's of telecoil adjustment.

Presenters

Mary Clark

Mary Clark has had a hearing loss since birth and has worn hearing aids since she was five years old. She was mainstreamed in school and graduated with a degree in Medical Technology. Her penchant for technology has led Mary to become familiar with and use a broad spectrum of the devices that supplement hearing aids such as hearing loops and Bluetooth, alerting devices and more. Mary's Medical Technology training afforded her the opportunity for a career in both research at the Mayo Clinic in her home state of Minnesota and in the medical device industry elsewhere.

Her passion is for teaching, and Mary teaches classes at UNM on Becoming an Informed Consumer of Hearing Aids through the OSHER program administered by University of New Mexico Continuing Education. She serves on the board of directors of the Albuquerque chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) and on the national HLAA Board of Trustees.

Carol Clifford, Au .D.

Albuquerque native Dr. Carol Clifford received her Masters Degree in Audiology and Hearing Impairment from Northwestern University in 1984 and her Doctorate in Audiology in 2006 from Arizona School of Health Sciences. As part of a medical team at Rush-Presbyterian Medical Center and Rush University, Carol obtained valuable knowledge that she utilizes in all of her hearing care endeavors.

Dr. Clifford opened her first audiology practice, Professional Hearing Services, in Chicago, Illinois in 1987. For 8 years she directed a group of audiologists in the day to day practice of hearing evaluations, fitting of hearing instruments, and aural rehabilitation. Serving more than 100 physicians in the Chicago suburban area, Carol's practice specialized in medical diagnosis and non-surgical treatment of hearing loss and balance disorders for both children and adults. Returning to Albuquerque, Dr. Clifford served as Director of the Audiology Clinic for University Hospital at the University of New Mexico. At the same time, she and her husband established the nation's largest audiology network for managed care groups. Always interested in research and development of new products to aid persons with hearing impairment, Carol served as Director of Professional Education and Training for Resound Corporation from 1996 to 1998.

Following the birth of her children in 1998, Carol established Albuquerque Hearing and Balance. Along with the day to day practice of audiology she often serves in a consulting capacity to top hearing aid manufacturers. She also serves in an advisory capacity on the board of directors of the Albuquerque Hearing Loss Association of America chapter and the state's Hands and Voices chapter.

Mike Langner

As Langner Technical Service, broadcasting consultant Mike Langner provides services to the New Mexico Broadcasters Association, ABC Radio Network, and Audio-Video Avtel. He is currently the New Mexico Broadcasters Association Alternative Broadcast Inspection Program Statewide Inspector, an FCC sponsored government/industry partnership. Mike served for many years as the Chief Engineer for Citadel Communications' eight stations after previously being General Manager and part-owner of KHFM - Albuquerque's classical music station. On the air he has hosted numerous radio programs. Mike has been called on to present to broadcasters conventions in New Mexico, Colorado and Minnesota and, in 2011, to the 2nd International Looping Conference in Washington, DC.

Mike holds licenses and/or certification in a variety of electronic communications fields. In addition to broadcasting, Mike is familiar with public address systems and the technologies (FM, InfraRed, Induction Loops) used for the assistive listening systems now mandated by the ADA. He often donates time and, at times, equipment to nonprofits seeking to improve communication access for those, like himself, with a hearing loss, and is often called on to trouble shoot such systems for theaters, places of worship and others when requested.

Presenters

Juliette Sterkens, Au.D.

Juliette Sterkens has over thirty years of experience in the field of audiology and hearing rehabilitation. Trained in the Netherlands as a Speech-Language Pathologist, she branched out to audiology after moving to the U.S., earning a master's degree in audiology at the University of Wisconsin and a Doctorate from the Arizona School of Health Sciences. After being turned on to the technology at a Hearing Loss Association of America event, Dr. Sterkens discovered how hearing loops made a huge difference to her patients in Oshkosh, WI - They raved about how well they heard in church, in meeting rooms and local theaters. She joined her patients in being an advocate for hearing loops and over six-hundred and fifty places of worship, theaters, meeting rooms and other venues throughout Wisconsin are now looped.

Dr. Sterkens work in Wisconsin did not go unrecognized and she was invited by the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) to travel the country to educate consumers and hearing care professionals about hearing loops (thanks to a grant from a private family foundation) - she retired from her private practice and is working in that capacity for HLAA. She has lectured in the US and Canada on the benefits of hearing loops to providers, the hearing industry and consumers. A much sought after speaker on hearing loop/telecoil technology, she has presented to the national conventions of major organizations such as the American Academy of Audiology and, internationally, in Norway, England, and most recently to the International Hearing Loops & Accessibility Conference in Berlin, Germany that was sponsored by the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People .

Dr. Sterkens is a member of the National Academies of Practice and the American Academy of Audiology. For her efforts she has received the Wisconsin Speech-Language and Hearing Association's Audiologist of the Year award, the American Academy of Audiology Presidential Award, the Hearing Industry Larry Mauldin Award, AT Still University's Humanitarian Award and the University of Wisconsin's Oshkosh Alumni of the Year Award.

Samuel Trychin, Ph.D.

Dr. Trychin is an educator, an author, and a psychologist in private practice in Erie, PA. One of his specialties focuses on psycho-social interventions for people with hearing loss and their communication partners. He also specializes in emotional regulation coaching and training for people who suffer from stress-related disorders. Dr. Trychin conducts national and international education and training programs for people with hearing loss and their communication partners, and professionals who provide services to them. His programs include the application of psychological concepts, principles, and procedures to problems and issues related to hearing loss and to stress-related mental health issues.

Dr. Trychin is the Mental Health and Rehabilitation Advisor to the Hearing Loss Association of America, a member of the Governor's Advisory Council for Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Pennsylvania, a member of the Pennsylvania Northwest Regional Council of Aging, and a member of the Advisory Committee for the Western Pennsylvania Central Center for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Dr. Trychin has written 15 books, authored several professional book chapters and journal articles, and produced a variety of DVDs focused on strategies for living better with hearing loss.

As a faculty member of the Ida Institute of Denmark, Dr. Trychin works to promote a worldwide understanding of the psychosocial affects of hearing loss. Dr. Trychin has also been Professor and the Director of the Living with Hearing Loss Program at Gallaudet University and Director of Training for the Mental Health Research and Training Center for Hard of Hearing and Late-Deafened Adults at the California School of Professional Psychology in San Diego. Dr. Trychin's Living With Hearing Loss Program is a product of twenty-two years of experience working directly with hundreds of people who are hard of hearing and their family members. Additionally, many more people who are hard of hearing, their family members, and professionals who serve them have benefited from his training programs, presentations, and workshops.

Panelists

Mary Clark - See Presenters

Karen Courtney Peterson, Executive Director, Governor's Commission on Disability

Karen has spent the past thirty-two years working as an advocate and in the administration of agencies and programs around services to individuals with disabilities. Holding a Master's of Business Administration in Information Systems Management, she has served as the Executive Director of the NM Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Deputy Director of the NM Developmental Disabilities Planning Council and Executive Director of the Governor's Commission on Disability.

Dr. Norm Dawson, Hard of Hearing Consumer

Dr. Dawson, a retired chiropractor, received his formal post secondary education including two bachelor's and a Doctor of Chiropractic degree using American Sign Language after becoming completely deaf. He learned ASL to attend college when he was 27. After being deaf for 25 years he obtained first one and then a second cochlear implant. After retiring from his chiropractic practice he has run his own nutritional business, allowing him to continue to help people.

Nathan Gomme, Executive Director, The Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Diagnosed with a hearing loss at age two, Nathan has used every type of assistive technology over the years. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from Gallaudet University, with his experience and knowledge growing through involvement with the National Association of the Deaf, the Hearing Loss Association of America and other organizations. Appointed Executive Director of the NMCDHH after serving as the Service Coordinator and then Director of Public Policy and Advocacy.

Richard Meyer, Hard of Hearing Consumer

Dick Meyer is a retired Director of Marketing and Business Development for the international division of Abbott Laboratories. Diagnosed with a bilateral hearing loss in 1982, Dick has spent 35 years advocating for the hard-of-hearing, served as president of the Hearing Loss Association of America board of trustees, and is currently on the Santa Fe HLAA chapter board of directors and the NM Speech-Language Pathology, Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensing Practices Board.

Jim Ogle, Hard of Hearing Consumer

Retired Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) physicist Jim Ogle, was diagnosed with Meniere's disease in 1980. Eighteen years later he learned of the Albuquerque HLAA chapter and first experienced a hearing loop at their meetings. So impressed with that user friendly assistive listening technology, Jim encouraged the chapter to alert others to hearing loops, and he advocated for hearing loops at LANL. Jim founded the ground breaking Loop New Mexico Committee.

Thomas Sena , Outreach Coordinator, Relay New Mexico

Native New Mexican Thomas Sena has provided outreach for Relay New Mexico for over six years. He and his wife reside in the East Mountains where they live with their cat and two dogs. Thomas is honored to be able to wake up every day knowing that he has the opportunity to help Deaf and Hard of Hearing people better connect with their friends and family over the phone..

Andrew Bond, President of Teltex, Inc.

Mr. Bond has 32 years of experience in the electronics and technology industry with the last 20 years as owner and President of Teltex, Inc., a company he originally created as a TTY repair facility in 1997. The company has become the industry leader in assistive technologies for individuals with disabilities served by state government programs. Andrew was responsible for creating a strategic partnership with Apple to bring new and enhanced Apple products to State Programs.

SPONSORS



The Governor's Commission on Disability

The New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD) is committed to improving the quality of life of all New Mexicans with disabilities by addressing social integration, economic self-sufficiency, political resolve, physical and program accessibility, and full participation in the benefits of life and rights of all individuals.

GCD addresses physical, sensory, programmatic and attitudinal barriers to forward its mission. Such barriers may keep a person with a disability from enjoying the full aspects of community living.

GCD works to improve the quality of life of New Mexicans with disabilities through progressive systems advocacy.

GCD promotes community living and access to: employment opportunities; universal access to information; appropriate, available assistive technology; accessible education; accessible, affordable, universally designed housing (rental and single family); accessible, available transportation (rural and urban); available home and community-based services based on functional need; and, access to social and recreational settings.

GCD serves as liaison and advisor to the Governor and Legislature on disability issues.

GCD Programs include:

- Physical/Architectural Accessibility Unit
- New Mexico Technology Assistance Program
- Brain Injury Advisory Council
- Technical Assistance and Training Unit



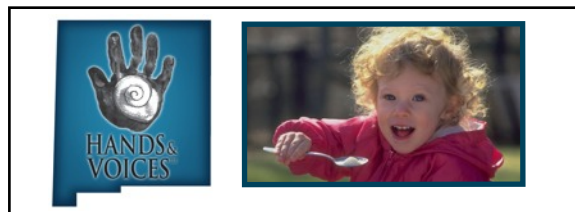
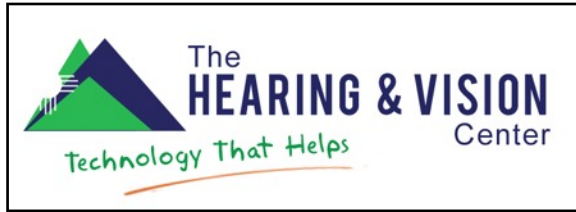
The Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing was created by Legislative action in 1991 by the New Mexico Legislature (NMSA 1978 §28-11B-2) to promote services for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Speech Disabled and Deaf-Blind people throughout New Mexico. The Commission provides several services including oversight of the Relay services and a Telecommunications Distribution Program for the state of New Mexico.

Other services includes advocacy, training, information and referral, and a library of resources.

- Oversight of Relay Services
- Operation of the Telecommunications Distribution Program
- Individual and System wide level Advocacy
- Free training on various topics including communication access in the workplace as well as sensitivity training
- A library of online videos which are language friendly
- On site library of books and DVD's that focus on subjects related to the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind community
- Cultural improvement events
- Training and Apprenticeship opportunities for interpreters

EXHIBITORS



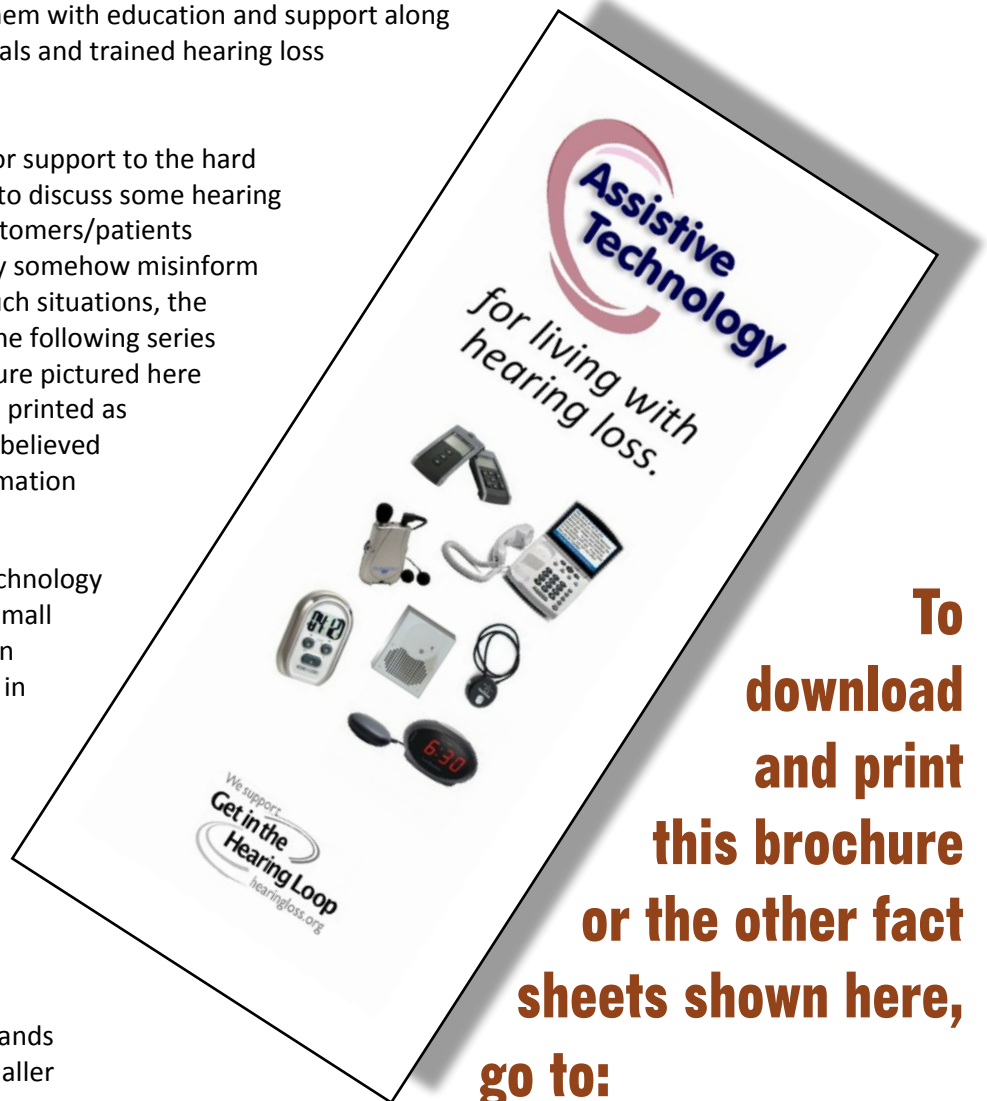
The Advisory Committee for **Hearing Loss Awareness** of the State of New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability and the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The Advisory Committee for Hearing Loss Awareness is a volunteer group that answered the call from the Governor's Commission on Disability and the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing to organize a statewide campaign to raise awareness of hearing loss and of the many technologies, services and support groups available to help those with hearing loss live fuller, more productive and more meaningful lives. Represented on the Committee are the **Albuquerque Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America**, the **Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing**, the **Committee for Communication Access in NM**, the **Department of Aging and Long Term Services**, the **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**, the **Governor's Commission on Disability**, the **Independent Living Resource Center**, the **NM Department of Health**, the **NM Department of Veterans Services**, **NM Relay**, and the **Hearing and Vision Center** plus individuals who advocate for them and provide them with education and support along with hearing care professionals and trained hearing loss support specialists.

Some who provide services or support to the hard of hearing may be reluctant to discuss some hearing loss matters with clients/customers/patients out of concern that they may somehow misinform that individual. To help in such situations, the Committee has developed the following series of fact sheets and the brochure pictured here that can be downloaded and printed as handouts for those who it is believed could benefit from the information they contain.

The brochure on assistive technology is available online in both a small format that can be printed on standard letter size paper or in an expanded version to be printed on legal size paper.

Samples of the various fact sheets shown in this booklet all fit on standard size paper. There is also a legal size version of the paper on buying hearing aids that expands on the information in the smaller sized document.



**To
download
and print
this brochure
or the other fact
sheets shown here,
go to:**

<http://www.gcd.state.nm.us/deaf-and-hard-of-hearing.aspx>

HEARING LOSS

Frequently Asked Questions



How common is hearing loss?

About 20 percent of Americans, 48 million, report some degree of hearing loss. At age 65, one out of three people has a hearing loss. At 75 and older, half have a disabling hearing loss. Estimates are that 60 percent of the people with hearing loss are either in the work force or in educational settings.

What causes hearing loss?

Causes of hearing loss include a genetic predisposition, ear disease, noise exposure (including music, industrial, military and more), ototoxic medicines, head trauma, and others. As we age, our ears are exposed to a lifetime of noise such as lawnmowers, telephones, industrial machinery, leaf blowers, chain saws, industrial noise, hair dryers, firearms, and recorded and loud music. Many of these sounds occur at loud and potentially injurious levels. Although some people are born with hearing loss, most acquire hearing loss later in life.

What are ototoxic medications?

Certain medications are called "Ototoxic" (oto = ear, toxic = poison). They can cause temporary or permanent damage to the inner ear. Some ototoxic drugs include medications used to treat serious infections, cancer, and heart disease. Check with your doctor if you notice a ringing in your ears or a decrease in hearing while taking a medication. Your pharmacist is a good resource to help identify drugs that could affect your hearing.

What can I do to protect my hearing from noise induced hearing loss?

Noise-induced hearing loss is 100 percent preventable. Potential damage to the inner ear from noise is determined by the loudness of the sound and the amount of time you are exposed. You can protect your hearing by wearing hearing protection or avoiding noises at or above 85 decibels. These include lawnmowers, snowblowers, motorcycles, firecrackers, and loud music.

If I had hearing loss, wouldn't my doctor have told me?

Unfortunately, only a small fraction of physicians routinely screen for hearing loss. Since many people with hearing loss hear much better in quiet environments (like your doctor's office), it may not be obvious to your physician. A trained hearing professional can determine the severity of your hearing problem, whether or not you could benefit from a hearing aid, and which type would be best for you.

How do I know if I have a hearing loss?

You should have your hearing tested if you: Require frequent repetition; have difficulty following conversations involving more than 2 people; think that other people sound muffled or like they're mumbling, have difficulty hearing in noisy situations such as conferences, restaurants, malls, or crowded meeting rooms; have trouble hearing children's and women's voices; have your TV or radio turned up to a high volume; answer or respond inappropriately in conversations; have ringing in your ears; intently watch people's faces when they speak with you (possible lip reading).

What are the most common causes of hearing loss?

The most common cause is exposure to excessive noise and other causes are genetics, birth defects, infections of the head or ear, aging, and reaction to drugs or cancer treatment. Hearing loss is often progressive – meaning it gets worse with time.

Will a hearing aid restore my hearing?

No hearing aid can restore hearing to “normal”. Hearing aids are designed to let you hear soft sounds that you could not hear before while preventing loud sounds from becoming uncomfortably loud. They are designed to improve your ability to understand speech even in noisy environments although such environments can still be challenging.

How can a hearing aid help me hear better?

Hearing aids help you hear better by taking in sound through a microphone, boosting and modifying those to match the pattern of your hearing loss and then sending it to your ear canal. This will allow you to hear sounds of those frequencies your unaided ear cannot hear. In addition to amplification, the hearing healthcare provider can adjust many settings that can be modified to improve your ability to understand speech – even in noisy environments. Using multiple settings, you can select which one works best in various surroundings.

What, besides hearing aids, is available to help me hear better?

There are devices that will help you hear without hearing aids such as amplified telephones, or personal sound amplifiers, as well as alerting systems that use flashing lights instead of sound to let you know when something requires your attention. Other devices work with your hearing aids through a secondary receiver called a telecoil – or T-coil. There are many more devices that will help you hear better when using your T-coil in your hearing aids. These are called “assistive listening devices.” You can learn about them from the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

If I have a hearing loss, will it go away?

Some types of hearing loss may only be temporary and go away with time or changes in medication and some can be reversed by medical intervention. In the vast majority of cases your hearing will get worse as time passes. Early recognition and treatment can help slow down or prevent associated problems from developing such as cognitive decline or deteriorating personal relationships.

If my hearing loss is mild, can I wait to address it?

Unaddressed hearing loss not only affects your ability to hear sounds accurately, but it also puts a strain on your listening ability. Over time, the ability to listen accurately can decline, especially if your hearing loss continues to worsen. The sooner you seek amplification and you begin to adjust to hearing with hearing aids, your degree of success will be much higher.

The Advisory Committee for

Hearing Loss Awareness

of the State of New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability - Toll-Free: 1-877-696-1470 • Local: 505-841-4464 • Website: www.gcd.state.nm.us and
the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing - Toll-Free: 1-800-489-8536 • Local: 505-383-6530 • Website: www.cdhh.state.nm.us

HEARING AIDS

Frequently Asked Questions



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How will hearing aids help me?

Hearing aids can make a dramatic improvement in what you're able to hear and understand. They help you hear better by taking in sound through a microphone, boosting and modifying it to match the pattern of your hearing loss and then sending it to your ear canal. This will allow you to hear sounds at those frequencies your unaided ear cannot hear. In addition to simple amplification, hearing healthcare providers will adjust many settings to improve your ability to understand speech – sometimes even in noisy environments. Using multiple settings you can select which one works best in various surroundings. Millions would not wear them if they didn't feel they were benefiting from them.

How do I know which hearing aid will be best for me?

There are many factors that will determine which hearing aid will be best suited for you. They include the nature and severity of your hearing loss, your lifestyle and the activities you regularly enjoy, your job, your eyesight and dexterity, how comfortable you are with technology, the size and shape of your outer ear and inner ear canal and cost. Work with your hearing healthcare professional to choose the right ones for you.

What hearing aid brand is the best?

There are over half a dozen major hearing aid brands sold in the U.S. and all are held to the same rigorous quality standards set by the federal government. Some features are only found on certain brands, but your hearing healthcare professional will help you decide which hearing aids would be best for you.

Will I need a hearing aid for both ears?

If you only have hearing loss in one ear – one hearing aid will suffice. Most often, hearing loss affects both ears so you will benefit more with two hearing aids. Today, about two-thirds of new users opt for dual hearing aids, and as a group they report a higher level of satisfaction than purchasers of a single hearing aid.

What is a teiecoil?

A telecoil is a small copper coil inside many hearing aids that, when activated, allows the hearing aid to connect wirelessly directly to the microphone of a public address system that features an audio frequency induction loop system (hearing loop) or, with a neckloop, to an infrared or FM assistive listening system.

What is a neckloop?

Neckloops are a personal use version of a hearing loop that plugs into any electronic sound producing device and, in effect, turns hearing aids into headphones.

What is Bluetooth®?

Bluetooth is a technology offered with some hearing aids that can connect wirelessly to a variety of sound sources such as a TV, a computer, a cellular phone or other electronic sound sources but only one user to one sound source. For example it will not connect users to a public address system. Often a separate device is needed for Bluetooth connectivity, usually at additional cost.

Should I go to an audiologist or a hearing aid dispenser?

Audiologists and Hearing Aid Dispensers are licensed to fit and sell hearing aids in New Mexico. Both are trained in testing hearing and in fitting and adjusting today's hearing aids. Audiologists have a doctor's degree in audiology and are also trained to interpret test results from a medical perspective and to use additional testing to determine the need for medical treatment. Dispensers are trained to recognize problems that require referral to either a medical doctor or an audiologist but they are fully qualified to fit and adjust your hearing aids. You may also ask your primary care provider or people you know who have had experience buying hearing aids for their recommendations.

How long do hearing aids last?

Hearing aids typically have repair, loss and damage warranties ranging from one year to four years with additional coverage often being offered. Hearing aids are usually stated to last from 3 to 5 years, but with proper care and maintenance hearing aids can last longer. Technology is constantly being upgraded, and as new features become available, new hearing aids may offer a big improvement in hearing, so replacement is not limited to when hearing aids "fail".

Does health insurance cover hearing aids?

Some private health care plans cover the costs of audiologic tests, a hearing aid evaluation, and even partial or full coverage of a hearing aid, while others may cover only a hearing exam or no hearing care costs. New Mexico law requires some policies to cover them for children 18 or under.

Where can I find financial help to buy hearing aids?

Here in New Mexico, for those who qualify, help is available from Medicaid, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and, for Veterans, from the Veterans Administration. Most health insurance programs offer coverage for minor children. Suggestions for other resources to explore can be found at <http://www.hearingloss.org/content/financial-assistance-programs-foundations>.

Where can you file a complaint?

In the unlikely event that you are unhappy with your hearing aids or your hearing care provider and are unable to reconcile your differences, you can file a complaint on line with the New Mexico Attorney General's office at www.NMAG.gov or call toll free: 1-844-255-9210. Any complaint must be against the individual provider and not the company for which he/she works.

**Hearing Loss Awareness**

of the State of New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability - Toll-Free: 1-877-696-1470 • Local: 505-841-4464 • Website: www.gcd.state.nm.us and
the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing - Toll-Free: 1-800-489-8536 • Local: 505-383-6530 • Website: www.cdhh.state.nm.us

Buying Hearing Aids (What to expect)

Audiologists and Hearing Aid Dispensers (sometimes called Hearing Instrument Specialists) are licensed to fit and sell hearing aids in New Mexico. Both are trained in testing hearing and in fitting and adjusting today's hearing aids. Audiologists have either a masters or doctoral degree in audiology and are also trained to interpret test results from a medical perspective and to use additional testing to determine the need for medical treatment. Dispensers are trained to recognize problems that require referral to either a medical doctor or an audiologist but they are fully qualified to fit and adjust your hearing aids. You may also ask your primary care provider or people you know who have had experience buying hearing aids for their recommendations.

THE HEARING EVALUATION

A screening or hearing exam -Hearing screenings are quick pass/fail tests to find out if you need a full hearing evaluation. Hearing exams (assessments) determine the degree of hearing loss, the type of hearing loss, and the configuration of hearing loss and are conducted in a soundproof booth and must be conducted prior to your being fitted with hearing aids. A hearing exam will include testing your comprehension of spoken words.

Your audiogram -The audiogram is a graph that displays the results of the hearing exam. Pure tone audiometry is used to obtain hearing thresholds (softest level heard) at different pitches and the thresholds are represented on the audiogram for the right ear and the left ear. If the exam reveals a hearing loss, the threshold results determine the degree, type, and configuration of the hearing loss. The audiogram also typically displays the results from speech audiometry testing. This consists of speech threshold testing-the softest level at which speech can be understood and speech recognition testing which measures how well speech is understood. Speech audiometry provides important information in addition to pure tone audiometry.

Your type of hearing loss - Your provider should explain which of the three types of hearing loss you have:

Sensorineural Hearing Loss occurs when the hearing organ, the Cochlea, and/or the auditory nerve is damaged or malfunctions so it is unable to accurately send the electrical information to the brain. Sensorineural Hearing Loss is almost always permanent.

Conductive Hearing Loss occurs when there is a problem with the Outer or Middle Ear which interferes with the passing sound to the Inner Ear. It can be caused by such things as too much earwax, an infection in the ear, a punctured eardrum, a fluid build-up, or abnormal bone growth in the Middle Ear such as Otosclerosis. It is more common in children and indigenous populations.

Mixed Hearing Loss occurs when both Conductive Hearing Loss and Sensorineural Hearing Loss are present. The sensorineural component is permanent, while the conductive component can be either permanent or temporary.

What the hearing care provider will review with you

- The results of the hearing examination displayed on the audiogram
- Why you sometimes can "hear" but not "understand"
- If you are a hearing aid candidate and expectations from hearing aid use
- Your life style and how hearing loss affects your daily life

It is beneficial to bring a significant other to the hearing evaluation.

HEARING AID SELECTION

Based on your hearing test results, the interview about life style and expectations for hearing, personal preferences (e.g. invisible) and your budget, your hearing healthcare provider will suggest hearing aids that will suit you best.

Types of hearing aids - There are several styles of hearing aids hearing aids available including behind-the-ear, open fit, in-the-ear and

completely-in-the-ear. There are different options and benefits to each style. Your preference for a particular style is an important factor in deciding which hearing aids to be fit with.

Features - What features are available can vary depending on the style and, among others, will include:

- Directional microphones that focus on sounds in front of you
- Telecoils that allow the hearing aids to connect wirelessly to various devices
- Bluetooth® technology that allows hearing aids to connect wirelessly to various devices
- Remote controls
- Special settings for listening to music, to reduce background noise, and others
- Rechargeable batteries

In office trial - Providers may (when possible) offer you the opportunity to try on and experience how a hearing aid feels and sounds before purchase.

DISPENSING

Fitting - When your new hearing aids are ready, your provider will show you:

- How to place the hearing aids correctly in or behind your ears
- How to access different programs (called memories) in the hearing aids that have been customized for your lifestyle.
- How to use the remote control or streaming device (if there is one)
- How to install and charge batteries
- How to clean, store and care for your hearing aids

Trial period – In New Mexico, a minimum of 45 days after purchase is allowed for you to try out your hearing aids before the sale becomes final. Some offices of as many as 90 days.

COUNSELING AT TIME OF DISPENSING

In addition to instructions on hearing aid operation, you should be given counseling on:

- How to deal with the buildup of ear wax in your ears and on your hearing aids
- How to best adjust to hearing sounds in your environment
- Strategies that will help you hear better in various settings and when to use the programs that have been selected for you
- Encouragement to come back in for more adjustments and fine tuning to fit your needs after you've tried them
- Services available to you from state agencies and other organizations
- What support groups are available locally or at the national level

FOR YOUR PROTECTION

SALES CONTRACT - When you purchase hearing aids, state law requires that you receive a contract that contains, among other things, the make and model of the hearing aids sold, full financial terms of the sale, and a trial period of at least 45 days.

RETURNING YOUR HEARING AIDS - State law also requires that if you return the hearing aids during the mandated trial period, you must be given a refund within 30 days of the return date less any "agreed-upon charges and fees as specified in the written contract."

COMPLAINTS – In the unlikely event that you are unhappy with your hearing aids or your hearing care provider and are unable to reconcile your differences, you can file a complaint on line with the New Mexico Attorney General's office at www.NMAG.gov or call toll free: 1-844-255-9210. Any complaint must be against the individual provider and not the company for which he/she works.



The Advisory Committee for

Hearing Loss Awareness

the State of New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability - Toll-Free:1-877-696-1470 ● Local: 505-841-4464 ● Website: www.gcd.state.nm.us
New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing - Toll-Free:1-800-489-8536 ● Local: 505-383-6530 ● Website: www.cdhh.state.nm.us

Resources

Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

www.cdhh.state.nm.us - (505) 383-6530

Department of Aging and Long Term Services

www.nmaging.state.nm.us - (800) 432-2080

Department of Veterans Services

www.nmdvs.org

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

www.dvr.state.nm.us - (505) 836-1774

Governor's Commission on Disability

www.gcd.state.nm.us - (505) 476-0412

Hands & Voices, NM Chapter

www.hvnm.org - (505) 357-0344

The Hearing & Vision Center

www.hearingandvisioncenter.com - (505) 222-0608

Hearing Loss Association of America

www.hearingloss.org - (301) 657-2248

Albuquerque Chapter

www.hlaabq.com - (505) 219-1962

Santa Fe Chapter

(505) 603-2994

New Mexico Association of the Deaf

www.deafnewmexico.wixsite.com/nmad

New Mexico Centers for Independent Living

www.nmsilc.org/centers-independent-living-network

Albuquerque (505) 266-5022

Carlsbad (575) 361-7557

Hobbs (575) 399-3905

New Mexico Speech-Language and Hearing Association

www.nmsha.net - (505) 899-6674

New Mexico Technical Assistance Program

www.tap.gcd.state.nm.us - (877) 696-1470

Presbyterian Ear Institute

www.presbyterianearinstitute.org - (505) 224-7020

Relay New Mexico

www.relaynm.org - (866) 744-7471

Teltext

www.teltext.com - (888) 515-8120 - V/TTY

“When someone in the family has a hearing loss, the entire family has a hearing problem.”

Mark Ross, Ph.D

“Assistive listening devices are the wheel chair ramps for the hard of hearing.”

Anonymous