



spotlight on health care

Now Hear This: Addressing Hearing Just Became Affordable

(NAPSA)—New technology has made addressing hearing loss much easier and more affordable. That's good news, because according to the Hearing Loss Association of America, more than one in 10 Americans suffer from hearing loss—making it the largest public health issue behind heart disease and arthritis. What's more, these numbers will continue to grow amidst the nation's aging population and a new generation that is listening to music through iPods and MP3 players at high volumes.

Symptoms of hearing loss can appear gradually or quickly. You should suspect a problem if:

- you regularly ask people to repeat themselves (or think others are mumbling);
- you have difficulty following group conversations;
- you find yourself listening to your TV or radio at high volumes;
- you ask others for the details of meetings or gatherings you just attended.

If hearing loss is suspected, the best first step is to see your doctor to rule out any medical conditions that could be diagnosed and treated by your doctor. Chances are, however, that you may need a hearing aid.

Although hearing aids are the single most effective treatment for most people with mild to moderate hearing loss, alarmingly, only 20 percent of those with hearing issues ever get them. Some of the reasons for not doing so may include the high costs of some hearing aids, lack of confidence in professionals, and the inconvenience of fittings and replacing the tiny batteries. As a result, individuals wait an average of seven to 10 years before seeking help. But it doesn't have to be this way anymore.



Thanks to today's technology, digital hearing aids can be effective, discreet and affordable.

Fortunately, as in many other high-technology industries, microchips and other components have become smaller and considerably less expensive in recent years, and now a new wave of comfortable and discreet hearing aids is available for under \$100.

One of the newest is the Songbird flexfit™. "It's a behind-the-ear digital hearing aid, which means most of the components fit discreetly behind the ear, allowing the tip inserted into the ear to be very small and thus more comfortable," said audiologist Alyssa R. Needleman, Ph.D., CCC-A, FAAA. "Baby boomers find the flexfit™ especially convenient for mild to moderate hearing loss because it eliminates many of the hassles associated with traditional hearing aids. There are no in-office fittings, no batteries to replace and no maintenance."

If you think you may be suffering from mild to moderate hearing loss or would like more information about new affordable hearing aid options, call (800) 789-1830 or visit www.songbirdhearing.com. There, you can also take a free five-minute hearing test. Hearing aids are 100 percent reimbursable under most flexible spending account (FSA) plans.