



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Ward Hurlburt, MD, MPH
Chief Medical Officer/Director
Alaska Department. of Health & Social Services
3601 C St.
Suite 756
Anchorage, AK 99503

Dear Dr. Hurlburt,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

The potential risks that result from the omission of a comprehensive hearing evaluation and treatment by a licensed hearing healthcare professional include failure to detect an underlying medical cause of the hearing loss, additional hearing loss as a result of improper fitting and/or programming of hearing aids, and ear trauma sustained as the result of improper fitting and/or insertion of ear molds or hearing aids. Hearing aid sales and delivery models that circumvent the hearing healthcare professional also pose financial risks to consumers because they are more likely to purchase unnecessary or inappropriate devices.

There are many possible causes of hearing loss including: aging, cerumen impaction, ear infection, genetic disorders, head injury, ototoxic medication, Meniere’s Disease, noise exposure, otosclerosis, and acoustic/vestibular tumors. Some of these conditions may require referral for medical or surgical intervention; however, individuals who purchase hearing aids through the Internet or over-the-counter will not have the benefit of the licensed hearing healthcare provider to identify any potential problems prior to purchase.

Many state laws also recognize the importance of consumer protection and safety by placing restrictions on the dispensing of hearing aids by direct mail and/or the Internet. On October 26, 2011, the Minnesota Department of Health released a statement stressing the importance of seeing a hearing healthcare practitioner for hearing loss and advised that failure to do so “skirts state and federal legal protections and could result in harm.” You may access the full release here: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/news/pressrel/2011/hearing102611.html> .

It is our hope that the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Academy of Doctors of Audiology

Stephanie Czuhajewski, CAE
3493 Lansdowne Dr., Suite 2
Lexington, KY 40517
Phone: 866-493-5544

American Academy of Audiology

Cheryl Kreider Carey, CAE
Executive Director
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Reston, VA 20190
Phone: 800-AAA-2336

American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

David R. Nielsen, MD
Executive Vice President and CEO
1650 Diagonal Road
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703-836-4444

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Arlene A. Pietranton, PhD, CAE
Executive Director
2200 Research Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20850-3289
Phone: 301-296-5700

International Hearing Society

Kathleen Mennillo, MBA
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Phone: 734-522-7200

Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



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May 15, 2012

Donald Williamson, MD
State Health Officer
Alabama Department of Public Health
P.O. Box 303017
Montgomery, AL 36130-3017

Dear Dr. Williamson,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Alabama Department of Public Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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May 15, 2012

Paul Halverson, DrPH, FACHE
Director/State Health Officer
Arkansas Department of Health
4815 West Markham
Slot 36
Little Rock, AR 72205

Dear Dr. Halverson,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Arkansas Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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May 15, 2012

Elizabeth Ponausuia, MPH
Director
American Samoa Department of Health
LBJ Tropical Medical Center
Pago Pago, AS 96799

Dear Ms. Ponausuia,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the American Samoa Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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May 15, 2012

Will Humble, MPH
Director
Arizona Dept. of Health Services
150 North 18th Ave.
Suite 500
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Mr. Humble,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Arizona Dept. of Health Services will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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May 15, 2012

Ronald Chapman, MD, MPH
Director/State Health Officer
California Department of Public Health
P.O. Box 997377
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

Dear Dr. Chapman,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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May 15, 2012

Christopher Urbina, MD, MPH
Executive Director/Chief Medical Officer
Colorado Department of Public Health
4300 Cherry Creek Dr. South
Denver, CO 80246

Dear Dr. Urbina,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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May 15, 2012

Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA
Commissioner
Connecticut Department of Public Health
410 Capitol Ave.
MS 13-COM
Hartford, CT 06134-0308

Dear Dr. Mullen,

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May 15, 2012

Mohammad Akhter, MD, MPH
Director
DC Department of Health
899 North Capitol St., NE
Suite 4400
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Dr. Akhter,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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Academy of Doctors of Audiology

Stephanie Czuhajewski, CAE
3493 Lansdowne Dr., Suite 2
Lexington, KY 40517
Phone: 866-493-5544

American Academy of Audiology

Cheryl Kreider Carey, CAE
Executive Director
11730 Plaza America Drive, Suite 300
Reston, VA 20190
Phone: 800-AAA-2336

American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

David R. Nielsen, MD
Executive Vice President and CEO
1650 Diagonal Road
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703-836-4444

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Arlene A. Pietranton, PhD, CAE
Executive Director
2200 Research Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20850-3289
Phone: 301-296-5700

International Hearing Society

Kathleen Mennillo, MBA
Executive Director
16880 Middlebelt Road
Livonia, MI 48154
Phone: 734-522-7200

Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Karyl Rattay, MD, MS
Director/State Health Officer
Delaware Division of Public Health
417 Federal St.
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Dr. Rattay,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

The potential risks that result from the omission of a comprehensive hearing evaluation and treatment by a licensed hearing healthcare professional include failure to detect an underlying medical cause of the hearing loss, additional hearing loss as a result of improper fitting and/or programming of hearing aids, and ear trauma sustained as the result of improper fitting and/or insertion of ear molds or hearing aids. Hearing aid sales and delivery models that circumvent the hearing healthcare professional also pose financial risks to consumers because they are more likely to purchase unnecessary or inappropriate devices.

There are many possible causes of hearing loss including: aging, cerumen impaction, ear infection, genetic disorders, head injury, ototoxic medication, Meniere’s Disease, noise exposure, otosclerosis, and acoustic/vestibular tumors. Some of these conditions may require referral for medical or surgical intervention; however, individuals who purchase hearing aids through the Internet or over-the-counter will not have the benefit of the licensed hearing healthcare provider to identify any potential problems prior to purchase.

Many state laws also recognize the importance of consumer protection and safety by placing restrictions on the dispensing of hearing aids by direct mail and/or the Internet. On October 26, 2011, the Minnesota Department of Health released a statement stressing the importance of seeing a hearing healthcare practitioner for hearing loss and advised that failure to do so “skirts state and federal legal protections and could result in harm.” You may access the full release here: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/news/pressrel/2011/hearing102611.html> .

It is our hope that the Delaware Division of Public Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

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AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
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ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Steven Harris, MD, MSc
Interim State Surgeon General
Florida Department of Health
4052 Bald Cypress Way
Bin #A00
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1701

Dear Dr. Harris,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the "health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist." The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Florida Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
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ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Vita Akapito Skilling, MD
Secretary
F.S. Micronesia Department of Health
P. O. Box PS 70
Palikir Station
Pohnpei State, FM 96941

Dear Dr. Skilling,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the F.S. Micronesia Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Brenda Fitzgerald, MD
Director
Georgia Division of Public Health
2 Peachtree St., NW
Atlanta, GA 30303-3186

Dear Dr. Fitzgerald,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Georgia Division of Public Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

James Gillan, MS, HSA
Director
Guam Department of Public Health
123 Chalan Kareta
Mangilao, GU 96913-6304

Dear Mr. Gillan,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Guam Department of Public Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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Thank you in advance for your consideration,

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Loretta Fuddy, ACSW, MPH
Director of Health
Hawaii State Department of Health
1250 Punchbowl St.
Room 325
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Ms. Fuddy,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Hawaii State Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Mariannette Miller-Meeks, BSN, MEd, MD
Director
Iowa Department of Public Health
321 East 12th St.,
6th Floor
Des Moines, IA 50319-0075

Dear Dr. Miller-Meeks,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Iowa Department of Public Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Jane Smith, RN
Public Health Administrator
Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
450 West State St.
4th Floor
Boise, ID 83702-0036

Dear Ms. Smith,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Arthur Kohrman, MD
Acting Director
Illinois Dept. of Public Health
535 West Jefferson St.
5th Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

Dear Dr. Kohrman,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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Many state laws also recognize the importance of consumer protection and safety by placing restrictions on the dispensing of hearing aids by direct mail and/or the Internet. On October 26, 2011, the Minnesota Department of Health released a statement stressing the importance of seeing a hearing healthcare practitioner for hearing loss and advised that failure to do so “skirts state and federal legal protections and could result in harm.” You may access the full release here: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/news/pressrel/2011/hearing102611.html> .

It is our hope that the Illinois Dept. of Public Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Academy of Doctors of Audiology

Stephanie Czuhajewski, CAE
3493 Lansdowne Dr., Suite 2
Lexington, KY 40517
Phone: 866-493-5544

American Academy of Audiology

Cheryl Kreider Carey, CAE
Executive Director
11730 Plaza America Drive, Suite 300
Reston, VA 20190
Phone: 800-AAA-2336

American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

David R. Nielsen, MD
Executive Vice President and CEO
1650 Diagonal Road
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703-836-4444

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Arlene A. Pietranton, PhD, CAE
Executive Director
2200 Research Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20850-3289
Phone: 301-296-5700

International Hearing Society

Kathleen Mennillo, MBA
Executive Director
16880 Middlebelt Road
Livonia, MI 48154
Phone: 734-522-7200

Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
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HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Gregory Larkin, MD, FAAFP
State Health Commissioner
Indiana State Department of Health
2 North Meridian
3rd Floor
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Dr. Larkin,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Indiana State Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
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ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Robert Moser, MD
Director of Health
Kansas Department of Health
1000 SW Jackson
Suite 540
Topeka, KS 66612-1365

Dear Dr. Moser,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Kansas Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
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HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Steve Davis, MD
Acting Commissioner/State Health Officer
Kentucky Department for Public Health
275 East Main St.
HS1GWA
Frankfort, KY 40621

Dear Dr. Davis,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Kentucky Department for Public Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

J. T. Lane,
Assistant Secretary
Louisiana Office of Public Health
P. O. Box 629
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0629

Dear Mr. Lane,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Louisiana Office of Public Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

John Auerbach, MBA
Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
250 Washington St.
2nd Floor
Boston, MA 02108-4619

Dear Mr. Auerbach,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Massachusetts Department of Public Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Academy of Doctors of Audiology

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Joshua Sharfstein, MD
Secretary
Maryland Department of Health
201 W Preston St.
Suite 500
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Dr. Sharfstein,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Maryland Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Sheila Pinette, DO
Director
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
286 Water St.
State House Statn 11
Augusta, ME 04333-0011

Dear Dr. Pinette,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

David Kabua
Minister of Health
Marshall Islands Ministry of Health
P.O. Box 16
Majuro, MH 96960

Dear Mr. Kabua,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Marshall Islands Ministry of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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David R. Nielsen, MD
Executive Vice President and CEO
1650 Diagonal Road
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703-836-4444

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Arlene A. Pietranton, PhD, CAE
Executive Director
2200 Research Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20850-3289
Phone: 301-296-5700

International Hearing Society

Kathleen Mennillo, MBA
Executive Director
16880 Middlebelt Road
Livonia, MI 48154
Phone: 734-522-7200

Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Olga Dazzo
Director
Michigan Department of Community Health
201 Townsend St.
7th Floor
Lansing, MI 48913

Dear Mr. Dazzo,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

The potential risks that result from the omission of a comprehensive hearing evaluation and treatment by a licensed hearing healthcare professional include failure to detect an underlying medical cause of the hearing loss, additional hearing loss as a result of improper fitting and/or programming of hearing aids, and ear trauma sustained as the result of improper fitting and/or insertion of ear molds or hearing aids. Hearing aid sales and delivery models that circumvent the hearing healthcare professional also pose financial risks to consumers because they are more likely to purchase unnecessary or inappropriate devices.

There are many possible causes of hearing loss including: aging, cerumen impaction, ear infection, genetic disorders, head injury, ototoxic medication, Meniere’s Disease, noise exposure, otosclerosis, and acoustic/vestibular tumors. Some of these conditions may require referral for medical or surgical intervention; however, individuals who purchase hearing aids through the Internet or over-the-counter will not have the benefit of the licensed hearing healthcare provider to identify any potential problems prior to purchase.

Many state laws also recognize the importance of consumer protection and safety by placing restrictions on the dispensing of hearing aids by direct mail and/or the Internet. On October 26, 2011, the Minnesota Department of Health released a statement stressing the importance of seeing a hearing healthcare practitioner for hearing loss and advised that failure to do so “skirts state and federal legal protections and could result in harm.” You may access the full release here: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/news/pressrel/2011/hearing102611.html> .

It is our hope that the Michigan Department of Community Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Academy of Doctors of Audiology

Stephanie Czuhajewski, CAE
3493 Lansdowne Dr., Suite 2
Lexington, KY 40517
Phone: 866-493-5544

American Academy of Audiology

Cheryl Kreider Carey, CAE
Executive Director
11730 Plaza America Drive, Suite 300
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AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
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ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Margaret Donnelly, JD, MSW
Director
Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
912 Wildwood
P.O. Box 570
Jefferson City, MO 65109

Dear Ms. Donnelly,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

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AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
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ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Mary Currier, MD, MPH
State Health Officer
Mississippi State Department of Health
570 E. Woodrow Wilson Dr.
P.O. Box 1700
Jackson, MS 39215-1700

Dear Dr. Currier,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the "health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist." The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Mississippi State Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

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AMERICAN
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ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Anna Whiting Sorrell, MPA
Director
Montana Department of Health and Human Services
PO Box 4210
Helena, MT 59604-4210

Dear Ms. Whiting Sorrell,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Montana Department of Health and Human Services will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

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AMERICAN
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ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Laura Gerald, MD, MPH
Director/State Health Director
North Carolina Division of Public Health
1931 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1931

Dear Dr. Gerald,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the North Carolina Division of Public Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Academy of Doctors of Audiology

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Terry Dwelle, MD, MPH
State Health Officer
North Dakota Department of Health
600 East Boulevard Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58505-0200

Dear Dr. Dwelle,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the North Dakota Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Academy of Doctors of Audiology

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AMERICAN
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ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Joann Schaefer, MD
Director/Chief Medical Officer
Nebraska Division of Public Health
P.O. Box 95026
Lincoln, NE 68509-5026

Dear Dr. Schaefer,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Nebraska Division of Public Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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Thank you in advance for your consideration,

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HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

José Montero, MD, MPH
Director
New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services
29 Hazen Dr.
Concord, NH 03301-4604

Dear Dr. Montero,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
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ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Mary O'Dowd, BA, MPH
State Health Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
PO Box 360
369 S. Warren St.
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360

Dear Ms. O'Dowd,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the "health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist." The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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Many state laws also recognize the importance of consumer protection and safety by placing restrictions on the dispensing of hearing aids by direct mail and/or the Internet. On October 26, 2011, the Minnesota Department of Health released a statement stressing the importance of seeing a hearing healthcare practitioner for hearing loss and advised that failure to do so “skirts state and federal legal protections and could result in harm.” You may access the full release here: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/news/pressrel/2011/hearing102611.html> .

It is our hope that the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Academy of Doctors of Audiology

Stephanie Czuhajewski, CAE
3493 Lansdowne Dr., Suite 2
Lexington, KY 40517
Phone: 866-493-5544

American Academy of Audiology

Cheryl Kreider Carey, CAE
Executive Director
11730 Plaza America Drive, Suite 300
Reston, VA 20190
Phone: 800-AAA-2336

American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

David R. Nielsen, MD
Executive Vice President and CEO
1650 Diagonal Road
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703-836-4444

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Arlene A. Pietranton, PhD, CAE
Executive Director
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Rockville, MD 20850-3289
Phone: 301-296-5700

International Hearing Society

Kathleen Mennillo, MBA
Executive Director
16880 Middlebelt Road
Livonia, MI 48154
Phone: 734-522-7200

Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Catherine Torres, MD
Secretary
New Mexico Department of Health
1190 Saint Francis Dr.
Santa Fe, NM 87502-6110

Dear Dr. Torres,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the New Mexico Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Tracey Green, MD
State Health Officer
Nevada State Health Division
4150 Technology Way
Suite 300
Carson City, NV 89706-2009

Dear Dr. Green,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Nevada State Health Division will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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Thank you in advance for your consideration,

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
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HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Nirav Shah, MD, MPH
Commissioner of Health
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12237-0001

Dear Dr. Shah,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the New York State Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Theodore Wymyslo, MD
Director
Ohio Department of Health
246 N. High St.
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Dr. Wymyslo,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Ohio Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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Thank you in advance for your consideration,

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Terry Cline, PhD
Commissioner of Health
Oklahoma State Board of Health
1000 North East 10th St.
Room 305
Oklahoma City, OK 73117-1299

Dear Dr. Cline,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Oklahoma State Board of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Academy of Doctors of Audiology

Stephanie Czuhajewski, CAE
3493 Lansdowne Dr., Suite 2
Lexington, KY 40517
Phone: 866-493-5544

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Cheryl Kreider Carey, CAE
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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Melvin Kohn, MD, MPH
Director/State Health Officer
Oregon Public Health Division
800 NE Oregon St.
Suite 930
Portland, OR 97232

Dear Dr. Kohn,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Oregon Public Health Division will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Eli Avila, MD, JD, MPH
Secretary of Health
Pennsylvania Department of Health
625 Forster St.
8th Floor West
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Dr. Avila,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Pennsylvania Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Lorenzo González-Feliciano, MD, MB
Secretary of Health
Puerto Rico Departamento de Salud
PO Box 70184
San Juan, PR 00936-8184

Dear Dr. González-Feliciano,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Puerto Rico Departamento deSalud will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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Phone: 734-522-7200

Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Stevenson Kuartei, MD
Minister of Health
Palau Ministry of Health
One Hospital Road
P.O. Box 6027
Koror, PW 96940-0845

Dear Dr. Kuartei,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

The potential risks that result from the omission of a comprehensive hearing evaluation and treatment by a licensed hearing healthcare professional include failure to detect an underlying medical cause of the hearing loss, additional hearing loss as a result of improper fitting and/or programming of hearing aids, and ear trauma sustained as the result of improper fitting and/or insertion of ear molds or hearing aids. Hearing aid sales and delivery models that circumvent the hearing healthcare professional also pose financial risks to consumers because they are more likely to purchase unnecessary or inappropriate devices.

There are many possible causes of hearing loss including: aging, cerumen impaction, ear infection, genetic disorders, head injury, ototoxic medication, Meniere’s Disease, noise exposure, otosclerosis, and acoustic/vestibular tumors. Some of these conditions may require referral for medical or surgical intervention; however, individuals who purchase hearing aids through the Internet or over-the-counter will not have the benefit of the licensed hearing healthcare provider to identify any potential problems prior to purchase.

Many state laws also recognize the importance of consumer protection and safety by placing restrictions on the dispensing of hearing aids by direct mail and/or the Internet. On October 26, 2011, the Minnesota Department of Health released a statement stressing the importance of seeing a hearing healthcare practitioner for hearing loss and advised that failure to do so “skirts state and federal legal protections and could result in harm.” You may access the full release here: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/news/pressrel/2011/hearing102611.html> .

It is our hope that the Palau Ministry of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Academy of Doctors of Audiology

Stephanie Czuhajewski, CAE
3493 Lansdowne Dr., Suite 2
Lexington, KY 40517
Phone: 866-493-5544

American Academy of Audiology

Cheryl Kreider Carey, CAE
Executive Director
11730 Plaza America Drive, Suite 300
Reston, VA 20190
Phone: 800-AAA-2336

American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

David R. Nielsen, MD
Executive Vice President and CEO
1650 Diagonal Road
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703-836-4444

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Arlene A. Pietranton, PhD, CAE
Executive Director
2200 Research Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20850-3289
Phone: 301-296-5700

International Hearing Society

Kathleen Mennillo, MBA
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May 15, 2012

Michael Fine, MD
Director
Rhode Island Department of Health
3 Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5097

Dear Dr. Fine,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Rhode Island Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

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May 15, 2012

Catherine Templeton, JD
Director
South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
2600 Bull St.
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Mr. Templeton,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

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May 15, 2012

Doneen Hollingsworth
Secretary of Health
South Dakota Department of Health
600 East Capitol St.
Pierre, SD 57501-2536

Dear Ms. Hollingsworth,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the South Dakota Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

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SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
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May 15, 2012

John Dreyzehner, MD, MPH, FAC
Commissioner
Tennessee Department of Health
3rd Floor, Cordell Hull Bldg.
425 5th Ave. North
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Dr. Dreyzehner,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Tennessee Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

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AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

David Lakey, MD
Commissioner
Texas Department of State Health Services
PO Box 149347
Austin, TX 78714-9347

Dear Dr. Lakey,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the "health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist." The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Texas Department of State Health Services will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Academy of Doctors of Audiology

Stephanie Czuhajewski, CAE
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ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

W. David Patton, PhD, MPA
Executive Director
Utah Department of Health
P.O. Box 141000
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-1000

Dear Dr. Patton,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Utah Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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May 15, 2012

Karen Remley, MD, MBA
State Health Commissioner
Virginia Department of Health
109 Governor St.
13th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Dr. Remley,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the "health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist." The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Virginia Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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May 15, 2012

Mercedes Dullum, MD
Commissioner of Health
Virgin Islands Department of Health
1303 Hospital Ground, Ste 10
St. Thomas, VI 00802-6722

Dear Dr. Dullum,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Virgin Islands Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Academy of Doctors of Audiology

Stephanie Czuhajewski, CAE
3493 Lansdowne Dr., Suite 2
Lexington, KY 40517
Phone: 866-493-5544

American Academy of Audiology

Cheryl Kreider Carey, CAE
Executive Director
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Reston, VA 20190
Phone: 800-AAA-2336

American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

David R. Nielsen, MD
Executive Vice President and CEO
1650 Diagonal Road
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703-836-4444

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Arlene A. Pietranton, PhD, CAE
Executive Director
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Rockville, MD 20850-3289
Phone: 301-296-5700

International Hearing Society

Kathleen Mennillo, MBA
Executive Director
16880 Middlebelt Road
Livonia, MI 48154
Phone: 734-522-7200

Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Harry Chen, MD
Commissioner of Health
Vermont Department of Health
108 Cherry St.
P.O. Box 70
Burlington, VT 05402-0070

Dear Dr. Chen,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

The potential risks that result from the omission of a comprehensive hearing evaluation and treatment by a licensed hearing healthcare professional include failure to detect an underlying medical cause of the hearing loss, additional hearing loss as a result of improper fitting and/or programming of hearing aids, and ear trauma sustained as the result of improper fitting and/or insertion of ear molds or hearing aids. Hearing aid sales and delivery models that circumvent the hearing healthcare professional also pose financial risks to consumers because they are more likely to purchase unnecessary or inappropriate devices.

There are many possible causes of hearing loss including: aging, cerumen impaction, ear infection, genetic disorders, head injury, ototoxic medication, Meniere’s Disease, noise exposure, otosclerosis, and acoustic/vestibular tumors. Some of these conditions may require referral for medical or surgical intervention; however, individuals who purchase hearing aids through the Internet or over-the-counter will not have the benefit of the licensed hearing healthcare provider to identify any potential problems prior to purchase.

Many state laws also recognize the importance of consumer protection and safety by placing restrictions on the dispensing of hearing aids by direct mail and/or the Internet. On October 26, 2011, the Minnesota Department of Health released a statement stressing the importance of seeing a hearing healthcare practitioner for hearing loss and advised that failure to do so “skirts state and federal legal protections and could result in harm.” You may access the full release here: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/news/pressrel/2011/hearing102611.html> .

It is our hope that the Vermont Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Mary Selecky,
Secretary of Health
Washington State Department of Health
P.O. Box 47890
Olympia, WA 98504-7890

Dear Ms. Selecky,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Washington State Dept. of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

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AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Henry Anderson, MD
State Health Officer
Wisconsin Division of Public Health
PO Box 2659
Madison, WI 53701-2659

Dear Dr. Anderson,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Wisconsin Division of Public Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

Please contact us anytime if we can be of service in providing additional information and resources about this important issue.

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Enclosure: Joint Statement on Consumer-Administered Hearing Tests and Direct-to-Consumer Hearing Aid Sales



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Marian Swinker, MD, MPH, FAC
Commissioner/State Health Officer
West Virginia Bureau for Public Health
350 Capitol St.
Room 702
Charleston, WV 25301-3712

Dear Dr. Swinker,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



May 15, 2012

Wendy Braund, MD, MPH, MSE
State Health Officer
Wyoming Department of Health
6101 Yellowstone Road
Suite 420
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Dear Dr. Braund,

We are writing you today to ask for your assistance in advising consumers who suspect that they have hearing loss to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation by a licensed hearing healthcare professional prior to purchasing hearing aids over-the-counter or through the Internet. National and international professional organizations dedicated to hearing healthcare issued the attached joint statement in February 2012 related to this issue. The statement highlights both the “health and efficacy concerns about the use of consumer-administered hearing tests and the direct sale of hearing aids to the consumer without the involvement of a licensed hearing health professional – an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or otolaryngologist.” The joint statement further notes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is also recommended for adults prior to a hearing aid purchase.

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It is our hope that the Wyoming Department of Health will issue a similar notice to consumers in your state. As you may know, the month of May has been designated nationally as Better Hearing and Speech Month and will provide an excellent opportunity for you to communicate this important information to your constituents.

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