

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF AUDIOLOGY

Resolution: 2012-17

Subject: Mail Order/Internet Ordering of Hearing Aids

1 Whereas, hearing aids and other forms of amplification are but one part of the process of
2 intervention for hearing loss, and
3

4 Whereas, hearing aids have been shown to require modification from default settings, which
5 frequently provide the incorrect amount of amplification necessary to make sounds audible and
6 tolerable for a given individual with hearing loss, and
7

8 Whereas, face-to-face verification of the prescribed hearing aid settings, and counseling about
9 additional options for hearing loss have been shown to improve outcomes, satisfaction, and
10 compliance with the use of hearing aids, and
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12 Whereas, untreated hearing loss (as well as inadequately treated hearing loss) can exacerbate
13 depression, isolation, and other emotional issues in all adults and older adults in particular, and
14

15 Whereas, failure to appropriately treat hearing loss may result in considerable emotional,
16 psychological, and physical harm to an individual with hearing loss, due to misunderstanding or
17 failure to hear instructions or other necessary communication by a physician, co-worker, friend
18 or family member, and
19

20 Whereas, all 50 states, and the District of Columbia, have laws governing the sale and
21 distribution of hearing aids in order to protect individuals with hearing loss, and
22

23 Whereas hearing aids are, by definition, body-worn devices and are subjected to conditions
24 which create the need for ongoing maintenance and repair, and
25

26 Whereas, the majority of those repairs are now done in the audiologist's office, negating the
27 need for a hearing aid to be shipped to the manufacturer for repair, reducing the time an
28 individual is without a device, and
29

30 Whereas, the FDA recognizes hearing aids as Class I medical devices and has recognized that
31 there are certain "red flags" which indicate potentially serious medical conditions and these "red
32 flags" can only be identified through a comprehensive case history, physical examination of the
33 individual with hearing loss, and thorough audiological examination.
34

35 **RESOLVED**, that a hearing aid programmed without an evaluation performed by a licensed
36 audiologist, programmed at a remote location and mailed to an individual without verification

37 performed to assure its functioning, without counseling about other options to improve overall
38 hearing abilities, without a method of assessing proper insertion and physical fit of the aid, and
39 without a method of providing any onsite maintenance and repair will not adequately meet the
40 needs of an individual with hearing loss, and

41
42 RESOLVED, that rehabilitative amplification services including the selection, fitting,
43 verification, and maintenance of hearing aids and related devices should always be provided in
44 person, by or under the supervision of a licensed audiologist who is involved in the care of the
45 individual with hearing loss.

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