



NJAHHP Statement - Fall 2011

The NJ Association of Hearing Health Professionals (NJAHHP), NJ Academy of Audiology (NJAA), and NJ Speech Language Hearing Association (NJSHA) are greatly concerned about the recent announcement from a major health insurance company that it will be selling hearing aids directly to consumers via the Internet without consultation of licensed audiologists and hearing aid dispensers to test and properly fit the medical devices. Not only is it questionable for an insurance company to be profiting from the sale of hearing aids to its members, removing licensed hearing health professionals from the testing and fitting process compromises the health and safety of hearing impaired patients.

With no professional guidance, assessment or examination by hearing aid specialists, consumers run the risk of purchasing ineffective or ill-fitting devices that can further damage their hearing. Equally concerning is these patients will not be monitored for serious hearing problems or undergo important follow-up care that is central to good hearing health. Audiologists and hearing instrument specialists are trained and licensed to know what to look for to ensure patient safety and appropriate care for hearing loss. Their personalized attention and clinical knowledge cannot be replaced by an automated and uncalibrated on-line hearing test.

In the interest of quality patient care, NJAHHP, NJAA, and NJSHA are waging a strong campaign to mitigate the direct sale of Internet hearing aid devices by insurance companies to New Jersey consumers. As hearing health professionals, the time is now for us to stand up against this precarious delivery system that eliminates vital face-to-face consultation with hearing professionals and thereby compromises the benefit, performance and value patients will receive from their hearing instruments. To join us in this effort, contact Libby Vinson at NJAHHP@gmail.com or 609-392-3800.