

# GUIDE TO BETTER HEARING



**FOR PEOPLE WITH HEARING LOSS**

REVISED MARCH 2007

# **GUIDE TO BETTER HEARING**

A publication  
of the  
**Elderly Affairs Division**  
**Department of Community Services**  
**City and County of Honolulu**



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### **Mayor's Message**

Aloha. I am pleased to present this edition of the Guide to Better Hearing, which provides valuable information on hearing issues for elderly persons, family caregivers, and the professionals who help them.

It is one of the many resources provided by the Elderly Affairs Division of the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Community Services. I invite you to call the Senior Hotline at 523-4545 or 768-7700, for personalized assistance or visit [www.elderlyaffairs.com](http://www.elderlyaffairs.com) for information and publications.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mufi Hannemann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Mufi Hannemann**  
Mayor of Honolulu

## Introduction

It is a little known fact that at least 50% of all older adults have some degree of hearing loss. Most are hard of hearing, not deaf. Among people over 60 years old, about 1 in 3 has a significant loss; among people over 80 about half have trouble hearing normal conversation.

Many people with hearing difficulty feel that nothing can be done – except to buy an expensive hearing aid. This is not true! Other techniques and devices can help in coping as well. The goal of this guide is to help you understand hearing loss, feel better about it and try to encourage you to act. Included are a short test; next steps to take; helpful techniques; and an appendix of facts, definitions, and suggestions.

Did you know that the average person waits 7 years before he/she admits to having a hearing loss and does something about it? Don't be the average person. Start calling some of the resources **NOW** to get help. Your friends and loved ones will appreciate any steps you take. Don't let hearing loss shut out the things you enjoy. Conversation, your family's voices, music – communication is so important for us all.



### **Elderly Affairs Division**

Department of Community Services  
City and County of Honolulu

715 South King Street, Suite 200  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Senior Hotline: 523-4545

768-7700 after

September 2007

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## Five Minute Hearing Test

Many people experience hearing loss gradually, often due to the normal aging process or long exposure to loud noise. Hearing loss can also be a sign of more serious health problems.

The following self quiz from the American Academy of Otolaryngology (head and neck surgeons) may help you decide if it's time to see a specialist. Score yourself on each question using this scale:

**0 points = never**

**1 point = occasionally**

**2 points = half the time**

**3 points = almost always**

- I have a problem hearing over the telephone.
- I have trouble following the conversation when two or more people are talking at the same time.
- People complain that I turn the TV volume too high.
- I have to strain to understand conversations.
- I miss hearing some common sounds like the phone or doorbell ring.
- I have trouble hearing conversations in a noisy background such as a party.
- I get confused about where sounds come from.
- I misunderstand some words in a sentence and need to ask people to repeat themselves.
- I especially have trouble understanding the speech of women and children.

- I have worked in noisy environments (such as assembly lines, construction sites, or near jet engines).
- Many people I talk to seem to mumble or don't speak clearly.
- People get annoyed because I misunderstand what they say.
- I misunderstand what others are saying and make inappropriate responses.
- I avoid social activities because I cannot hear well and fear I'll make improper replies.
- (To be answered by a family member or friend) I think this person has a hearing loss.

***Add up your points:***

**0-5 points** means your hearing is fine. No action required.

**6+ points** suggests that you should see an ear-nose-and throat specialist and an audiologist for a hearing test.

**Source:** *American Academy of Otolaryngology*

# If You Have a Hearing Loss

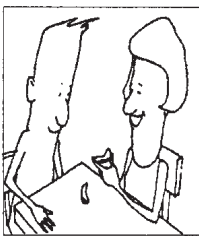
## SEEK HELP

1. If you've taken the Five Minute Hearing Test on page 1 and scored 6 or more, get a medical evaluation from an ear specialist. He will determine if you have a hearing loss, the cause of the loss, and whether medical or surgical treatment is needed. To find an ear specialist, check the Yellow Pages under "Physicians and Surgeons Otolaryngology or Otorhinolaryngology."



2. See a professionally-trained, nationally certified, state licensed audiologist. Your doctor can refer you to one or you can look in the Yellow Pages under "Audiologists." The audiologist will conduct hearing tests to determine whether to recommend one or two hearing aids and the type of aid that may work best for you.

3. If a hearing aid (or pair of aids) is recommended, the audiologist may be able to order and fit the aid, or will refer you to a hearing aid dealer to order and fit the device. You should ask about an intensive program on how to use your aid effectively.



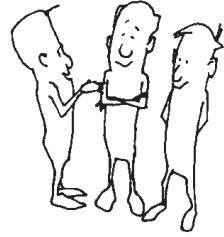
- You will want to know how to adjust it, how to fit it in your ear, and how to care for and clean it.
- You will want to know what you can expect from the aid. Will you hear sounds clearly? Will background noise intrude? Will sound be the same?

4. Many first-time hearing aid users become discouraged when they find that their new aid doesn't let them hear the way they used to. They blame the hearing aid. A hearing aid cannot restore hearing to normal. However, with help from a professional, it will allow you to make the most of your remaining hearing capability.



## ***MAKE EFFORTS TO ADAPT***

1. Visit or join a self-help group of persons who experience the same problems. They can provide information, recommendations, and support. They can tell you about services available.



2. Take the initiative to communicate better.

- Explain to the other person that you are hard-of-hearing.
- Give tips on how they can talk to you so you can best understand - for example, getting your attention before starting to speak, always facing you, speaking towards your “good ear”, moving away from noisy objects like air conditioners.
- Ask a speaker to rephrase a sentence you’re not understanding. Don’t pretend to understand.
- Do not allow yourself to withdraw into isolation; this is always a temptation when communication is awkward.
- If you belong to a group, suggest informational programs that can introduce others to the realities of hearing loss. The more people know, the easier it is to work out adjustments in every day communication.



3. Seek out information about assistive devices.

- There are many assistive devices that can help those with mild hearing losses who have not yet been fitted for a hearing aid. Other devices go “beyond the hearing aid.”
- For information about devices, contact organizations listed in this guide such as OKAK, Hawaii Centers for Independent Living, or Assistive Technology Resource Centers of Hawaii (ATRC).

- Assistive Technology Resource Centers of Hawaii has a library where devices are available for loan. Borrowers can try out a device to help determine if the device works for them.
- Devices are available from places such as Radio Shack and Sprint Relay Hawaii. They can also be ordered from some audiologists, hearing aid dispensers, or from mail order catalogues.
- The following describe some assistive devices available.



### ***Telephone***

Amplifiers - are portable amplifiers which can be slipped over the phone or replacement handsets to increase amplification.

TTY - also known as TDD or TT, is a text telephone, a typewriter-like device that relays typed messages over the telephone.

Special telephones - are available which not only amplify sounds, but also emphasize the higher frequencies to improve clarity.


### ***TV, Radio, Stereo***


Assistive listening devices - are hard wired or wireless devices used by the person who is hard-of-hearing. Models are available for use with or without a hearing aid.

Closed caption decoders - print subtitles on the TV

screen for programs which are “closed captioned.” As of July 1993, all TVs 13" and larger sold in the United States come with decoders built in.

Video stores rent videos with closed captioning. They may be marked “closed captioned” or with the following symbols:

 A tiny symbol resembling a television screen with a tail.

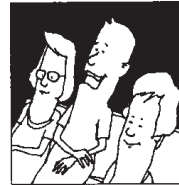
 CC in bold letters.

### ***Personal Listening Systems***

These are hard wired or wireless devices which carry sound from the speaker, radio, TV or other source directly to the listener’s ear. Some are designed for classroom use, others are helpful in one-to-one conversations.

### ***Listening Systems (Auditorium-Type)***

Many public places have special sound systems for people with hearing impairment. They consist of a transmitting system and an individual receiver. There are AM systems, FM systems, audio loop systems, and infrared (IR) systems. Some systems must be used with a compatible hearing aid.



For example, theaters often have assistive listening systems. Someone should call ahead to inquire about the availability and type of listening system possibly offered.

### ***Other Devices***



- Flashing door bells and smoke alarms
- Vibrating alarm, alarm clock, or pagers
- Telephone signaling systems

# How to Communicate With Someone Who Is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

## *ONE-TO-ONE SITUATION*

When you communicate with a person who is deaf or hard-of-hearing in a one-to-one situation, you should do the following:

### **1. Get the person's attention before speaking.**



First, call out the person's name. If he does not respond, a tap on the shoulder, a wave, a flick of the light switch, or any kind of visual or tactile signal usually does the trick.

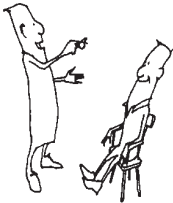
### **2. Begin the conversation with the topic of discussion.**

If the person knows the subject to be discussed, it is easier for him to follow the conversation.

### **3. Speak slowly and clearly in a normal fashion.**

Do not yell, exaggerate, or over-enunciate because exaggeration and overemphasis distort lip movements, making lipreading more difficult.

### **4. Look directly at the person when speaking.**



While talking, avoid turning away or walking around. If you must do these things, give the person a cue that you are interrupting the conversation, for example, "Excuse me while I pull your file." Then stop talking until you face the person again.

### **5. Do not place anything in or near your mouth when speaking.**

Smoking, gum chewing, and putting your hands or objects in front of your face make it difficult for people to follow what is being said. Mustaches and beards also hide the lips.

## ***IN WRITING***

Always ask a person who is deaf or hard-of-hearing if they prefer written communication. Do not think this is the only way to communicate with them. Be aware that reading and writing skills may vary widely.

### **1. Keep your message short and simple.**

Establish the topic area, avoid assumptions, and make your sentences concise. Short phrases or a few words often are sufficient.

### **2. Do not use yes or no questions.**

Open-ended questions ensure a response that allows you to see if your message was received correctly.

### **3. Face the person after you have written your message.**

If you can see each other's facial expressions, communication will be easier and more accurate.

### **4. Use visual representations.**

Drawings, diagrams, etc., help the person understand the information.

## ***COMMUNICATING WITH A PERSON WHO IS HARD-OF-HEARING***

While many of the tips above benefit hard-of-hearing individuals, it is especially important to remember the following:

- Because the hard-of-hearing person relies heavily on residual hearing, you should speak clearly and away from distracting noises.
- Turn down the volume of the radio or television (or turn it off) if necessary.
- Be willing to talk into their assistive listening devices when requested.

## ***COMMUNICATING WITH A PERSON WHO IS DEAF-BLIND***

When you meet a person who is deaf-blind, many of the tips above would still apply in addition to the following:

- Because of the requisite close proximity or physical contact during communication, distractions should be kept to a minimum, such as having little or no jewelry or perfume, having clean hands and short fingernails.
- Good lighting is crucial for the individual who has usable vision. For example, in a restaurant the diner who is deaf-blind should sit at a table with a lamp rather than in a dim corner.
- If the person who is deaf-blind indicates willingness to communicate by pen and paper, a black felt-tip marker and large print is best.

***Adopted from: Hawaii State Coordinating Council on Deafness (5/97)***

***For more information contact: Disability and Communication Access Board***

## **Aloha State Association of the Deaf (ASAD)**

**P.O. Box 88591**

**Honolulu, Hawaii 96830**

**Website: [www.ASADHawaii.org](http://www.ASADHawaii.org)**

### ***Description:***

- Non-profit association of and for deaf citizens of all ages.
- Sponsors the Miss Deaf Hawaii Pageant and Kuli Seniors Club.
- Publishes “Ka Kuli O Hawaii,” bimonthly newsletter.
- Sponsors cultural and social events for the deaf community.
- Biennial statewide convention.

### ***Eligibility/Cost:***

- All persons interested.
- ASAD is a state organization affiliated with the National Association of the Deaf. Annual membership fees are \$15 for an individual, \$7.50 for family members, and \$10 for senior citizens (60+). Newsletter subscription is \$7.50 for local subscription or free for members.

## **American Sign Language/ Interpreter Education Program**

**Kapiolani Community College  
4303 Diamond Head Road, Manono 116  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816**

**Phone: V/TTY: 734-9154**

**Fax: 734-9799**

**Website: <http://programs.kcc.hawaii.edu/~continuing/schedule/languages/asl/index.htm#asl>**

**Contact: Jan Fried, email: [jfried@hawaii.edu](mailto:jfried@hawaii.edu)  
Dale Peterson-London, email: [dalep@hawaii.edu](mailto:dalep@hawaii.edu)**

### ***Description:***

- Non-credit courses in American Sign Language (ASL) and the interpreting process.
- Training opportunities for people interested in professional interpreting.
- Continuing professional development for working interpreters.
- In-service training for professionals, businesses, and organizations serving people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.
- Special courses for children.



### ***Eligibility/Cost:***

- Some advanced classes require instructor's consent.
- Classes range from no cost to \$147, plus materials if applicable.

### ***Comments:***

- The Department of Education Adult Education Program also offers Sign Language courses. Check the newspapers for announcements or call the Community Education Section at 395-9451. Those who are very hard-of-hearing may want to take a Sign Language or Communications Strategies Class.



## **Assistive Technology Resource Centers of Hawaii**

**414 Kuwili Street, Suite 104  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817**

**Phone: V/TTY: 532-7110**

**V/TTY (toll free): 1-800-645-3007**

**Fax: 532-7120**

**Website: <http://www.atrc.org>**

**Contact: Barbara Fischlowitz-Leong,  
email: [atrc-info@atrc.org](mailto:atrc-info@atrc.org)**

### ***Description:***

- Information, training, outreach, and advocacy for persons with any type of disability.
- Assistive technology equipment loan banks.
- Low interest financial loans to purchase assistive technology devices and services.

### ***Eligibility/Cost:***

- Any interested consumer, family, or agency.
- No cost; extensive training available for a small fee.

### ***Comments:***

- Office hours: Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

## **Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB)**

**Standing Committee on Communication Access**  
**919 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 101**  
**Honolulu, Hawaii 96814**

**Phone: V/TTY: 586-8121**

**TTY only: 586-8130**

**Fax: 586-8129**

**Website: <http://www.hawaii.gov/health/dcab>**

**Email: [dcab@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:dcab@doh.hawaii.gov)**

### ***Description:***

- Issues and administers the Hawaii Administrative rules, Title 11, Chapter 218 “Communication Access Services for Persons who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind” (e.g., sign language interpreters, real-time captioners, computer-assisted note takers). Guidelines also include determining qualifications of interpreters and the credentialing of interpreters who do not hold national certification via state screening process.
- Serves as a public advocate for persons with disabilities by providing advice and recommendations on legislation, rules, policies, procedures (i.e., Grant Endorsements), and plans relating to disabilities and their civil rights or service needs.
- Establishes guidelines for the design of buildings and facilities by or on behalf of the State or the counties in accordance with Hawaii Revised Statutes, §103-50; approve site-specific designs where an alternate design provides equal or greater access.
- Administers the statewide program for the issuance of parking placards to disabled persons in accordance with Hawaii Revised Statutes, Chapter 291, Part III. (as of 7/26/2004)

### ***Eligibility/Cost:***

Not applicable

**Hawaii Center for the Deaf and the Blind**  
**3440 Leahi Avenue**  
**Honolulu, Hawaii 96815**  
**Phone: V/TTY: 733-4999**  
**Fax: 733-4824**  
**Email: Staff email directory listed on website**  
**Website: <http://www.hcdb.k12.hi.us>**

***Description:***

- Serves Department of Education (DOE) students who are hearing or visually impaired and their families.
- Provides DOE staff with technical assistance and training.

***Eligibility/Cost:***

- For DOE students enrolled in public school with identified vision or hearing impairment. Apply through neighborhood school; request evaluation at Center.
- No fees.

***Comments:***

- Formerly known as Hawaii School for Deaf & Blind, also the Statewide Center.
- Located between Leahi Avenue and Kanaina Street (going makai on Kapahulu, turn left at Harpo's Pizza [Kanaina Street] or left at the Kapahulu Fire Station [Leahi Avenue]).
- Parking is available on campus (Leahi Street side).
- To get there by bus: Take #2 or #13.

## **Hawaii Centers for Independent Living (HCIL)**

**414 Kuwili Street, Suite 102  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817**

**Phone: Voice: 522-5400, TTY: 536-3739**

**Fax: 522-5427**

**P.O. Box 865,  
Hauula, Hawaii 96717**

**Phone: Voice: 293-9775, TTY: 293-1742**

### ***Description:***

- Provides intake, peer counseling, housing assistance, financial benefits counseling, attendant referral, outreach and public education, information and referral, transportation, individual advocacy, job development and readiness training for disabled individuals.
- Helps people obtain services so they can stay in or return to their own homes.
- Provides American Sign Language (ASL) services to persons who are deaf.

### ***Eligibility/ Cost:***

- All ages and disability groups.
- No fees.

### ***Comments:***

- This is a non-profit organization.
- Operating hours: Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Hauula, 8 a.m.-5:00 p.m.)
- On bus routes #19 and #20 in town.

## **Hawaii Services on Deafness (HSOD)**

**1833 Kalakaua Avenue, Suite 905**

**Honolulu, Hawaii 96815**

**Phone: V/TTY: 946-7300**

**Fax: 951-1050**

**Email: [reimers@hsod.org](mailto:reimers@hsod.org)**

**Website: <http://www.hsod.org>**

**Contact: Ann Katherine Reimers**

### ***Description:***

- American Sign Language/English Interpreter referral.
- 24-hour, seven-day-a-week emergency sign language interpreting.
- Advocacy and educational outreach.
- Networking and referral to other appropriate agencies.
- American Sign Language and literacy program for families affected by deafness.

### ***Eligibility/Cost:***

- Open to all.
- Fees vary, call for information.

### ***Comments:***

- This is a private, non-profit, 501(c)(3) agency.
- Most services offered statewide.
- Operating hours: Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

## **Hawaii State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped**

**402 Kapahulu Avenue  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815**

**Phone: V/TTY: 733-8444**

**Fax: 733-8449**

**Email: [olbcirc@librarieshawaii.org](mailto:olbcirc@librarieshawaii.org)**

**Website: [http://www.librarieshawaii.org/  
locations/oahu/lbph.htm](http://www.librarieshawaii.org/locations/oahu/lbph.htm)**

**Contact: Fusako Miyashiro**

### ***Description:***

- Loans books and magazines in the following formats: recorded cassette, large type, and Braille to eligible customers.
- Provides transcribing services to eligible customers; printed material may be transcribed into Braille, recorded cassette, or large type.
- Provides regular print books about disabilities, open and closed captioned video cassette tapes, CDs, and DVDs.
- Task Force on Library Services for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing to be reactivated (members include consumers who are deaf and hard-of-hearing, librarians).
- Programs include deaf awareness activities.

### ***Eligibility/Cost:***

- Materials provided by the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, are available to those who are unable to read print material due to visual or physical disabilities, as authorized in Public Law 89-522.
- No fees.

### ***Comments:***

- Wheelchair access, special parking available.
- Bus routes #2, #4, and #8 stop in front of and across the street from the Waikiki Library.
- Bus routes #13 and #14 stop at Jefferson School.

**Hawaiian Telcom Lifeline/Link-Up Service**  
**Post Office Box 2200, CSSC-HIA03**  
**Honolulu, Hawaii 96841-0001**  
**Phone: 643-3456**

***Description:***

- Residential telephone utility bill payment assistance.
- Reduced rates for individuals who meet Federal and State qualifications.

***Eligibility/Cost:***

- Household income of \$10,000 or less per year.
- Age 60 or older or certified as having a disability.

***Comments:***

- Lifeline application form can be mailed to you by calling the number above or one may visit a Hawaiian Telcom Store.

## **ISG, Inc dba Island Skill Gathering**

*Assistive Listening and Alerting Devices for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing*

**3472 Kanaina Avenue**

**Honolulu, Hawaii 96815-4225**

**Phone: V/TTY: 732-4622**

**Fax: 739-5464**

**Email: [isg@aloha.net](mailto:isg@aloha.net)**

**Website: [www.isghawaii.com](http://www.isghawaii.com)**

**Contact: Wally Soares and Valerie Miehlestein**

### ***Description:***

- ISG provides support services and product sales of an array of assistive listening and alerting devices. ISG has assistive listening devices like the Pocketalker and a Comtek FM listening system. Also, various signaling devices such as vibrating alarm clocks, visual smoke detectors, and telephone and doorbell flashers.

### ***Eligibility/Cost:***

- All sales and services are on a fee basis.

### ***Comments:***

- ISG is owned and operated by Wally Soares – a person with a physical disability, and Valerie Miehlestein— a national certified ASL/English Interpreter.
- Operating hours: Monday - Friday, 10 a.m.– 5 p.m.



**Kapiolani Community College  
Gallaudet University Deaf Center**  
c/o Kapiolani Community College (KCC)  
4303 Diamond Head Road  
Manono Building, Room 102  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816  
Phone: V/TTY: 734-9210  
Fax: 734-9238  
Contact: Sara Simmons

***Description:***

- Education programs for adults who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, their families and friends (includes preparatory program, family learning vacation, etc.).
- Lending library of books and video tapes, for deaf and hard-of-hearing people.
- Intensive College Preparatory Program for the Deaf, Academic counselor fluent in American Sign Language (ASL).
- For KCC students: Interpreting and note taking; tutoring by deaf tutors.

***Eligibility/Cost:***

- Open to the public, including all students.
- Fees vary: no fees for student services; lending library requires a deposit (returnable) for materials.

***Comments:***

- Located on the Diamond Head Campus of KCC.
- On bus routes #3 and #58.
- Open Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**Ohana Kokua ‘Ano Kuli (OKAK)**  
**“Helping Family for Hard-of-Hearing People”**

**c/o Kapiolani Deaf Center**  
**4303 Diamond Head Road**  
**Honolulu, Hawaii 96816**

**Phone: V/TTY: (808)734-9210**

**Fax: 734-9238**

**Email: [tgraham@aloha.com](mailto:tgraham@aloha.com)**

***Description:***

- Self-help and educational organization for persons who are hard-of-hearing and their family and friends.
- Meetings held on Saturday mornings once every two months at the Hawaii Center for the Deaf and the Blind (HCDB) Library, Building F, 3440 Leahi Ave. Email Tom Graham [tgraham@aloha.com](mailto:tgraham@aloha.com) for more information.
- Activities include guest speakers (health professionals, technology representatives, educators, etc.), informational video presentations and group discussions, all aimed to help ease problems associated with hearing losses.

***Eligibility/Cost:***

- Open to everyone.
- No meeting fee; yearly membership dues are \$15

***Comments:***

- OKAK is a registered non-profit organization but does not have any permanent office or staff for daily operations.
- OKAK is affiliated with Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200, Bethesda, Maryland 20814, [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org)

**Sprint Relay Hawaii**  
**Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS)**  
**925 Dillingham Blvd.**  
**Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-4506**  
**Phone: TTY: 711 or (866)-835-8169 Toll Free**  
**Voice: (800)-357-5168 Toll Free**  
**Fax: (866)-410-4256**  
**Email: relayhawaii@sprint.com**

***Description:***

- Relay Hawaii's TRS provides a way for those who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or who have a speech disability to communicate through traditional, internet or video relay services. Dial 711 or the toll-free numbers to connect to a relay agent.

**Voice Carry-Over (VCO):** 711 or 1-877-447-5992

For people who have a hearing loss but are able to speak directly to a hearing person, the Relay Agent types everything said to the VCO caller.

**Hearing Carry-Over (HCO):** For people who can hear but have no audible or intelligible speech, the HCO user types their responses and agent voices/ speaks to a hearing caller; HCO user listens directly to response.

**Speech-To-Speech (STS):** 711 or 1-877-447-8711

Trained local agents serve as the person with a speech disability's voice to repeat responses.

**Video Relay Service (VRS):** American Sign Language (ASL) users communicate through a qualified video interpreter via computer with video conference capability at [www.hawaiivrs.com](http://www.hawaiivrs.com) or through dedicated video phone.

**Sprint IP Relay:** A free service that combines TRS with the ease and ubiquity of the Internet, allowing users to make calls from any PC or se-

lected Web-enabled Internet wireless devices without using traditional TTY equipment. To connect using a website, go to *www.sprintip.com*. To connect AIM® (AOL Instant Messenger), send a 10-digit number to the screen name SprintIP. Both access methods will connect the caller to an experienced Sprint Relay agent.

**Sprint IP Wireless Relay:** A new service that allows customers who are deaf, hard of hearing or who have a speech disability to use wireless relay services on their BlackBerry phones and any standard or mobile telephone user to make a relay call.

***Eligibility/Cost:***

- Relay Hawaii Equipment Distribution Program (RHEDP) provides equipment rental for free to customers with a certified hearing loss (75 decibels or greater) or communication disorders. Although not based on financial need, must complete an application form. Only one piece of equipment will be issued per telephone line.

**University of Hawaii School of Medicine  
Speech and Hearing Clinic  
1410 Lower Campus Drive  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822  
Phone: V/TTY: 956-8279  
Fax: 956-5482**

***Description:***

Diagnostic and Therapeutic services:

- Speech/language services: aphasia, voice, articulation, stuttering, esophageal, cleft palate, reading, auditory training, and aural rehabilitation.
- Hearing services: basic testing and evaluation, cochlear implant counseling, programming, and therapy.

***Eligibility/Cost:***

- Donations requested for service.

***Comments:***

- The Speech and Hearing Clinic is the Clinical Education component of the UH Division of Speech Pathology and Audiology.
- Undergraduate and graduate level students, under supervision, conduct speech/language and audiological evaluation and therapy services.
- Scheduling follows the UH school year (closed state holidays, winter and spring breaks): clinic hours are Monday - Friday, 7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Testing and hearing evaluations are also available from audiologists in private practice. Consult the Yellow Pages under "Audiologists."

## **Vocational Rehabilitation & Services for the Blind Division**

### **Department of Human Services**

#### **Deaf Services Section**

**707 Richards Street, PH5**

**Honolulu, Hawaii 96813**

**Phone: V/TTY 587-5650**

**Fax: 587-5664**

**Email: [emacdonald@dhs.hawaii.gov](mailto:emacdonald@dhs.hawaii.gov)**

**Website: [www.hawaiiivr.org](http://www.hawaiiivr.org)**

**Contact: Eleanor MacDonald**

#### **Administration Offices**

**601 Kamokila Boulevard, #515**

**Kapolei, Hawaii 96707**

**Phone: V/TTY: 692-7723**

**Fax: 692-7727**

**Email: [cyoung@dhs.state.hi.us](mailto:cyoung@dhs.state.hi.us)**

**Contact: Carol Young**

#### ***Description:***

- Provides services to help people with physical or mental impairments attain successful employment outcomes.
- Individualized services include: assessment, vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance, rehabilitation technology services (including assistive devices and services), supported employment, job placement, and follow-up.
- Services for clients who satisfy the division's comparable benefits or personal resources requirements include: personal attendant services, reader services for persons who are blind, interpreter services for persons who are deaf, diagnosis and treatment of physical/mental impairments, voca-

tional and other training, transportation, maintenance, occupational licenses, tools and equipment, and other goods and services.

- Vocational Rehabilitation has a Deaf Services Section on Oahu that provides specialized services to persons who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.

***Eligibility/Cost:***

- Presence of a mental or physical impairment which constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment.
- Services are required for the person to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.
- No cost.

***Comments:***

- Call the office to schedule an orientation or meeting with a counselor. After you have been determined eligible, you will work with a counselor to develop a plan that identifies the job goal and services and resources required to reach your goal. When you are employed, the counselor will follow your progress to assure that you are doing well.
- Operating hours: Monday - Friday, 7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

## A p p e n d i x

# Facts About Hearing Loss

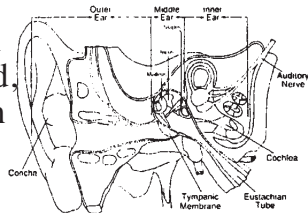
Hearing loss is often so gradual that many people don't realize it is happening until they have lost 40-50% of their hearing. Some people losing their hearing often continue to hear some sounds as well as they ever did, while other types of sounds just get harder and harder to hear.

One of the simplest, fastest, and most accurate ways for a person to tell whether or not they have a hearing loss is simply to ask their spouse or a friend. Nine times out of ten the answer is correct.

Hearing impairment refers to any degree of loss of hearing of loudness or of pitch. Those with some hearing loss are hard-of-hearing. Deaf refers to hearing loss of profound degree.

Not all hearing losses are the same.

- Damage or obstruction in the outer/middle ear causes reduction in sound loudness.
- Damage to the inner ear auditory nerve causes reduction in sound loudness, distorts sound, as well as clarity. People with this kind of loss may confuse words such as watch/wash, pin/tin, hem/hen. They may say "I can hear you but I can't understand you."



If you are 55 years or older, you may have some hearing loss associated with aging. This is called "prebycusis."

In general, this kind of hearing loss:

- is permanent because nerve cells have degenerated,
- usually affects both ears equally and loss is greater for high-pitched sounds,



- is more common and more severe for men,
- tends to gradually worsen with age,
- decreases loudness sensitivity, and
- affects speech discrimination ability.

Only 5-10% of hearing problems in adults can be treated medically or surgically. About 75% of elderly people with hearing loss could benefit from hearing aids but don't use them.

## **How Hearing Loss Impacts You and Others**

Family dinners and gatherings, where everyone is talking at once, create a particularly difficult hearing environment. At these types of occasions, a person usually feels a wonderful sense of being a part of it all. But as a person's hearing gets worse, he feels that he goes from being **In** it, to being **At** it, to being **Out** of it!

Eventually, people get to the point that it's easier to withdraw and avoid conversation than to get people to speak up.

Grandchildren are one of the greatest joys in life for many older folks, yet they are absolutely the hardest to hear and understand. Hearing grandchildren and hearing in church are the two main reasons people get hearing aids in the first place.

Many people want to work later in life, and some people have to. Hearing loss is not always well understood or tolerated in the workplace, especially in part-time workers. Hearing loss is frequently mistaken for lack of intelligence, senility, or just plain "slowness." But once people can hear again, surveys show that the other people in the workplace forget the problem ever existed!

## **Making Adjustments**

Our minds automatically adjust what we think of as “normal” as our hearing gets worse. People find themselves missing words that they’re sure they could hear easily if people would just speak a little louder (or a little slower).

Most folks with a moderate hearing loss have particular difficulty understanding: certain people (usually women, children, or people with soft voices); certain sounds (usually the letters “S” & “F”); and in certain environments, i.e. where there is excessive background noise. In many other environments these same people feel that they hear perfectly well.

## **Using Hearing Aids**

Hearing aids do not allow a person to hear the way they did when they were young, and they never feel perfectly natural in the ear. Wearing hearing aids is a little like wearing shoes. You never forget that they are on your feet, and you’re glad to take them off at the end of the day. But if they fit comfortably, you’re glad to have them!

### **Types Of Hearing Aids**

**Analog Hearing Aids:** The analog technology, developed over 20 years ago, processes sound in a linear fashion, which generally works well as long as there is limited background noise.

The primary limitation to linear hearing aids is that whenever background noise is present, they become less effective. These hearing aids have an annoying tendency to amplify the background noise as well as the speech that the wearer wants to hear. This aggra-

vates many hearing aid wearers and is the primary complaint of long time users.

**Digital Hearing Aids:** In the last 15 years better technology has been developed, most of it directed toward (1) improving the precision with which the hearing aids can be adjusted to address the exact hearing loss of its user; (2) improving the understanding of speech in the presence of noise; and (3) developing hearing aids that are smaller, to the point of being almost invisible.

The introduction of the computer made it possible to interactively adjust hearing aids while actually being worn by the user. This revolutionized the hearing aid business. Hearing aids that are “programmable” make the sound of speech more “natural” and more clearly understandable for many users. Their major advantage is that they allow for continued “on the spot” adjustment of the hearing aids when and if the user’s hearing loss changes over time (which is common).

### **Dual Microphone Technology**

Of particular value to hearing aid wearers has been the development of dual microphone technology. With two microphones the hearing aid can tell whether sound is coming from the front or the rear of the user. This is valuable because the background noise can be identified and its amplification reduced while at the same time focusing on the sound that is coming from in front, which is of course what the user really wants to hear. Dual microphones provide a very real improvement of speech understanding in the presence of noise, and they are available in both linear and digital hearing aids.

## **Hearing Aid Appearance**

Hearing aids seem to get a little smaller every year. Many hearing aids today are so small that it's hard to see them in a person's ear, even when you're looking for them.

As a general rule, the worse the hearing, the larger the hearing aids because of the need for more power in the circuit. But very few first time users have hearing bad enough to require easily noticeable hearing aids. For most first time users, the very small hearing aids now available will do an excellent job.

Hearing aids require a considerable amount of skill to fit. If the physical fit is too tight, they hurt; too loose, they squeal. If the hearing aid is too powerful, it is too loud; too weak, it doesn't help enough.

Even with hearing loss we are very sensitive to changes in loudness, softness, pitch, and clarity. While hearing aids are quite easy to get used to and take care of, over the years you are probably going to see your hearing aid provider more often than your optometrist, dentist, or family doctor.

## **Getting used to new hearing aids**

Getting used to new hearing aids starts the moment you receive them and continues until they're comfortable and you're glad you've bought them. Hearing aids should improve your hearing right away and be comfortable. If they're not, they need to be adjusted immediately. Try to get your concerns addressed before you become discouraged, frustrated or angry.

During your first 30 days you should find yourself slowly becoming more and more comfortable with the way hearing aids feel in your ears and find it quite easy to recognize the improvement they give you in under-

standing speech. In other words, you should feel that they are doing what you bought them to do.

There should be no discomfort, irritation, aching, or soreness, even after extended wear. Remember, hearing “better” means different things to different people. Your individual reaction to new hearing aids will determine what adjustments need to be made after you receive them.

Over 70% of hearing aids require some adjustment in tonal quality or fit during and following delivery. This is the only way to assure the highest level of comfort and effectiveness. Consider this adjustment process normal. In some cases clinical tests may be helpful to provide an analytical measurement of hearing improvement. You may want to check with your hearing aid provider to see if these tests might help.

Many hearing aid dispensers allow a 30 day trial period for hearing aid buyers. If you are not happy with your hearing aids, talk to your hearing aid providers and give them a chance to make you happy. Try to be patient. If you get to the unfortunate point where you feel you cannot be satisfied with the hearing aids or the provider, you can get your money refunded less a small service fee. The sales agreement should explain this in detail (see page 36).

## Definitions

**Assistive device** - any device or piece of equipment which is used in everyday life to make tasks easier. For persons with a hearing impairment, these include hearing aids and other devices like telephone amplifiers.

**Hard-of-hearing** - a term used for individuals who have *difficulty* understanding speech or language with or without hearing aids. Individuals who find it *impossible* to understand speech or language with or without hearing aids are deaf.

**Hearing aid** - a miniature electronic amplifier which can be fitted in or behind the ear. It can increase sound intensity and expand the range of tones heard to compensate for hearing loss. All hearing aids have a microphone to pick up sound, an amplifier to make sound louder, a loudspeaker (receiver) to deliver the sound into the ear, and batteries to power the electronic parts.

**Open captioned** - subtitles seen on the television screen, like in foreign movies.

**Close captioned** - subtitles seen only when a telecaption adapter (or decoder) is built in or attached to the television set.

**T (telecoil) switch** - a switch in some hearing aids which enables the user to hear better on the telephone. A T-switch may be needed to use some of the sound systems available in many theaters and other public places.

**TTY (Teletypewriter), TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf), TT (Text Telephone) or T** - refers to a text telephone which is a typewriter-like device that relays typed messages over the telephone. Although TT is the official federal terminology used, TTY is the preferred acronym used by the Deaf community.

## Who's Who In Hearing?

### Otolaryngologist or Otorhinolaryngologist (ENT)

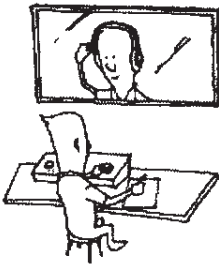
A physician specializing in ear, nose, and throat problems, who is often called an ENT. He will diagnose the presence of any medical problems and recommend treatment which may include surgery or medication.

An otorhinolaryngologist who specializes in disorders of the ears is called an otologist.

### Audiologist

A professional trained to:

- identify and evaluate impaired hearing,
- determine the need for hearing rehabilitation, and
- establish programs to help people make best use of their residual hearing.



Audiologists are on staff in some offices of ENT physicians to provide hearing tests, or are affiliated with clinics and hospitals. Most audiologists in private practice provide a spectrum of comprehensive services that include hearing testing, hearing aid selection/fitting/adjustments and purchase. In addition, follow-up services such as recommending assistive listening devices, providing auditory or speech reading training, and counseling are available.

Audiologists have graduate degrees and are certified by the American Speech Language-Hearing Association, designated by the letters CCC-A, or AuD (Doctor of Audiology), certified by the American Academy of Audiology. They are also licensed in the State of Hawaii. Licensure is issued and monitored by the Board of Speech and Pathology, State Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs.

## Hearing Aid Dealer

(also called hearing instrument specialist)



A person who tests hearing and selects, fits, and services hearing aids.

In Hawaii, dealers must be licensed to operate. Licensure is issued and monitored by the Board of Hearing Aid Dealers and Fitters, State Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. Dealers may be certified by the National Hearing Aid Society. Most dealers are in business for themselves. A hearing aid is a major purchase and you would be wise to check with knowledgeable organizations such as OKAK (page 21) before purchasing and aid. You will want someone with a proven track record and who will be around for service over the long haul.

Hearing Tests are conducted by *both* audiologists and hearing aid dealers and are recorded on what is called an *audiogram*, which is used in recommending an aid.



## Hearing Aid Dispenser

Anyone who sells hearing aids - whether it be a physician, audiologist, or hearing aid dealer.

According to a federal law, dispensers must get a written statement from the customer signed by a physician stating that the customer's hearing has been medically evaluated (within six months of the hearing aid sale) and that the patient is considered a candidate for a hearing aid. The customer can waive a medical examination but the dispenser must advise the patient that waiving it is not in the patient's best health interest.

It is highly recommended that you look for a dispenser who offers a 30-day trial period. This will give you sufficient time:



- 1) to test your hearing aid in everyday situations to see if it would be a worthwhile purchase and,
- 2) to get adjustments and modifications to meet your needs.

There is a non-refundable deposit (amount varies) for each hearing aid ordered. Hearing aids can be returned if you are not satisfied - however, they need to be returned within the date specified in the trial agreement. The deposit is not returned.

Almost all new users need training and help with adjustments. Some dispensers charge extra for this, others include it in the purchase price. Dispensers make minor adjustments and repairs, and send the aid back to the manufacturer for repair if something should go wrong.

# Useful TTY Numbers

**TTY** - also known as **TDD** or **TT** - is a typewriter-like device that relays typed messages over the telephone. Anyone can use a TTY to communicate directly with anyone else who has one, or through the relay service with someone using a regular telephone.

- TTY, TDD, or TT after the telephone number means that it has a TTY attached.
- V means Voice, which indicates that is a regular phone number.
- V/T, V/TDD, or V/TTY means that the number is both a regular phone number and a TTY number.

## *Neighbor Island Calls*

**Relay Hawaii Service (TRS)**..... 1-711(TT)

*Useful TTY Numbers (Pick up a free TRS User & Listing Guide at Phone Marts for other numbers).*

**Emergency** ..... 911 (V/T)

### **Department of Emergency**

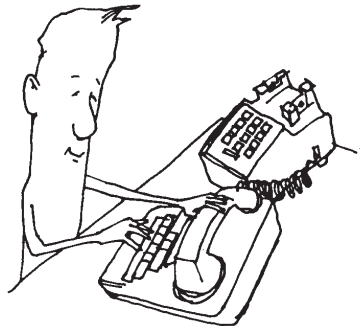
**Management** ..... 527-5476 (V/T)

**Social Security Administration** ... 1-800-288-7185 (TTY)

1-800-325-0778 (TTY)

**HandiVan** ..... 454-5045(TTY)

For information about services available to older adults, call the Senior Information and Assistance Hotline at 523-4545 (V) or 768-7700 after September 2007 or contact by using Relay Hawaii TRS.



## Websites

**<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov>**

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)

**<http://www.entnet.org>**

American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, Inc. (AAO-HNS)

**<http://www.asha.org>**

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

**<http://www.ata.org>**

American Tinnitus Association (ATA)

**<http://www.shhh.org>**

Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc. (SHHH)

**<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu>**

Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center

Also, check the links on websites of individual agencies listed in this publication.

**Do you have a hearing impairment?  
How to prepare for a disaster  
SAVE YOURSELF!**

*Set up a warning system and emergency plan  
before a disaster happens*

- Let people around you know you cannot hear emergency sirens or evacuation orders!
- Find a person or several people to **help** you **anytime**, day and night. Write their names and phone numbers here:

Name	Home	Work	Cell phone

- Make sure you have **transportation** for evacuation.
- Make a **survival kit** with extra emergency supplies:
  - Your medications
  - Food (non-perishable) and water
  - Flash light and batteries
  - New hearing aid batteries
  - First aid kit
  - Extra clothes
  - Paper and pencil
- Learn how to use devices that help you: (check what you have now)
  - Flashing lights for telephone and door
  - Amplifiers for telephone handset
  - Visual smoke alarms
  - Vibration pagers
  - TTY or text telephone
  - Closed Caption switches for TV
- Teach your **family** and **friends** how these devices work. Make sure to give them **your** TTY and cell phone numbers.

## Do you know someone who's DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING?

How do they know when there's a disaster that's about to happen?

You can **HELP** family members or friends who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing prepare for a disaster...

*Help set up a warning system **before** a disaster happens:*

- Find a person or people to **help** warn the person who is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing at home and at work. Write their names and phone numbers here:

Name	Home	Work	Cell phone

- Be sure there will be help anytime, day and night.
- Arrange for **transportation** in case of evacuation.
- Make a **survival kit** with extra emergency supplies:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medications                     | <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food (non-perishable) and water | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra clothes    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flash light and batteries       | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper and pencil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New hearing aid batteries       |   |

- Be familiar with alerting devices for the persons who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing that can help warn of disasters:

- Flashing lights for telephone and door
- Amplifiers for telephone handset
- Visual smoke alarms
- Vibration pagers
- TTY or text telephone
- Closed Caption switches for TV

- When you first learn of a pending disaster, **alert** your family member or friend who is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing to turn on their closed captioned TV for news alerts.
- When you hear the emergency siren warning signals, contact your Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing family member or friend by TTY or telephone relay service (dial 1+511 and have the TTY phone number and the name of the person you're calling) to provide information and to assist during possible evacuation.
- You can help people living in your apartments or condominiums by helping them find a designated person to contact them.