

# 2021 Biden Executive Order

## Response Regarding Hearing Aids



### Over-the-Counter hearing aids

Over the counter *hearing aids* are not for sale yet. If you find something at a grocery or retail store today, that is not a hearing aid. It is a one size fits all amplifier. A true hearing aid is set for your specific hearing needs by a professional with a license because it is a **medical device**.

### Hearing Aid Pricing

Hearing aid pricing does NOT “start at \$5000 and go up from there.” Hearing aids are available at various price points. Premium hearing aids can cost a lot but you don’t have to spend \$5000 just to get treatment. Recommendations are based on the individual patient’s lifestyle, needs *and* budget.

### Mis-diagnoses

Hearing loss is not necessarily easily treated. Bypassing professional advice for an over-the-counter option may mean that you or your loved one does not get diagnosed with a disease process or acoustic tumor, earwax, eardrum issues, etc.

### Other support for hearing aids

There is support for patients that can not afford to pay for hearing aids. Depending on your state, Medicaid covers hearing aids for children and sometimes for adults. The Vocational Rehabilitation program will cover hearing aids for working adults through the state. State and federal employees often have insurance that covers hearing aids. The VA dispenses hearing aids for eligible veterans. And there are non-profit groups that will assist as well, such as the Lion’s Club and Easter Seals.

### Audiology Billing

The profession is **not** price gouging the public. Audiologist cannot bill insurances for professional fees - counseling, rehabilitation etc... Audiologists can only bill for procedures such as the hearing test. For an hour or longer hearing evaluation and counseling, Medicare will pay about \$28. How do audiologists make up for that? We hope to make it up with the sale of hearing aids. Subsequent follow ups and routine checks can be approximately 6-10 times during the first year of their hearing aid use at no charge (most of the time) to the patient under the warranty terms of the hearing aids (this again is generally not billable and not usually an out of pocket expense to the patient). Pharmacies are not going to provide this level of service to patients with hearing loss. So understand that the cost of the hearing aids is not for the device itself but for the device **AND** the corresponding service provided to you to assure that you are successful with hearing technology.

### Children

Under **NO CIRCUMSTANCE** would any medical professional ever recommend an over the counter hearing aid for a child. **Do not even consider it!** Again, these are medical devices not consumer electronics.

### Audiologists

An audiologist is a professional who diagnoses and treats hearing and balance problems. An audiologist has received a Master’s or Doctoral degree from an accredited university graduate program in audiology. Audiologists are trained to diagnose, manage and treat hearing or balance problems for individuals from birth through adulthood. Audiologists must abide by strict ethics as well.