

Hearing Your Best

Holiday 2016 • Vol. 16, Issue 3



INFORMATION FROM

Associated Audiologists, Inc. *"Hearing Your Best for Life"*

When His Hearing "Went to the Dogs," Veterinarian Went to Associated Audiologists

Kent Kraus, a Prairie Village veterinarian, noticed his hearing was "going to the dogs" in his mid-40s. "I was having trouble hearing the voices of my patients' owners, especially female voices," Kent said. "I had to face them and read their lips in order to understand what they were saying."

Initially, Kent went to another audiology practice where he was diagnosed with hearing loss and fit with hearing aids. "That audiologist just fit my hearing aids and sent me on my way," he said. "There was very little explanation of the problem and no mention of coming back for adjustments or follow-up."

For the next two years, Kent did hear better with those hearing aids, but he was never quite satisfied with their performance. "I just didn't realize I had any other options."

Then Kent's fiancé found the Associated Audiologists Clinic in Prairie Village. One day he stopped by to purchase new tips for his old hearing aids, but they didn't last long.

"I had knee surgery last winter, and while I was recovering, I took my hearing aids out and left them on the coffee table in the family room for the night," Kent said. Ironically, by the next morning, Franco, one of the couple's six French bulldogs, had destroyed them.

"I called Associated Audiologists and Cindy got me in right away,"

Kent said. Dave Nissen, Au.D., FAAA, Senior Audiologist, had evaluated Kent, explaining that his hearing loss was likely a combination of genetics and exposure to loud noise.

"No one at the other practice ever explained anything to me," he said. "Dr. Nissen was phenomenal!" To be sure Kent could hear while his new hearing aids were on order, Dr. Nissen also provided his patient with a set of "loaners."

When his new hearing aids arrived, Dr. Nissen not only fit and programmed them especially for Kent using real ear measures to verify their performance, but he encouraged him to return to the practice for ongoing adjustments. "I probably needed three or four follow-up adjustments to fine-tune these hearing aids, which work great!" the 51-year-old said.

But it's the combination of the latest technology and outstanding customer service that have won Kent over, making him one of the practice's biggest fans.

"Associated Audiologists is very service oriented," he said. "The staff is wonderful. They helped investigate my insurance coverage, got me in quickly and made sure I had loaners. I've been so impressed. I send everyone there. They're the kindest, most efficient people I have ever worked with."

And best of all, Kent can hear the voices of patients' owners, his fiancé, the TV, and of course, the dogs barking. "Now I keep my hearing aids in a case on the nightstand. Franco's not getting these! Being able to hear well is a real blessing!"



Kent Kraus, DVM,
with Franco

Hearing Your Best



Hear Here...

By Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, President,
Associated Audiologists, Inc.

You have probably noticed a surge lately in advertising, marketing and direct mailings related to hearing aids. We are seeing a great deal of confusion by the general public about much of this information, some of which is quite misleading. The most egregious of this material often promotes "field trials" or advertises hearing aids for "little or no cost." The old adage, "if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is," still applies.

Before hearing aids can be sold to the general public they must go through Food and Drug Administration clearance protocols. This occurs before they are released to the general public so the marketing tactic of promoting field trials is an effort to sell hearing aids, and is clearly a ploy.

In addition, the only way to get a hearing aid at little or no cost is either through a rare insurance benefit which covers the entire cost of a hearing aid, or the advertiser is promoting a low-end, basic amplifier. Obviously these manipulative tactics are concerning, especially for those who might be easily misled or are vulnerable to this type of deceptive marketing.

Associated Audiologists has always followed best practices for audiology, as well as for our marketing efforts and educational materials. The marketplace has become flooded with corporations, big box retail, franchises, and their conglomerates which are all trying to increase unit sales of their hearing aids. We now find ourselves in the "wild west," complete with ads that look like "wanted posters," implying that having hearing loss is somehow criminal.

Many of these organizations are pushing the envelope of consumer regulations, which were established many years ago before the digital age and with limited resources to monitor and enforce. We regularly see the "mess" left behind for those who have been taken in by these marketing ploys. In some cases, patients come to us reporting they hear better with their original hearing aids than newer ones purchased elsewhere.

We are proud that our practice gets most referrals from physicians and existing patients. Rest assured we will continue to work hard to provide our patients with outstanding service, flexibility, the largest range of quality hearing aid options, and comprehensive care. We appreciate your business and are grateful for your personal referrals. We take your confidence in our practice and our reputation seriously.

Captioning Phones Enhance Conversations

Talking on the phone is a challenge for many patients with hearing loss, but thanks to new advances in captioning services many people are now able to overcome that challenge.

And, thanks to a provision of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Federal Communications Commission established a fund that gives individuals with hearing loss access to this service at no cost to them.

These state-of-the-art phones are specially designed for anyone with any type of hearing loss. They feature large, easy-to-read screens that display written captions of the conversations in real time, along with amplified sound from the hand set or speaker phone. Some of the providers also offer mobile phone apps or computer-based options.

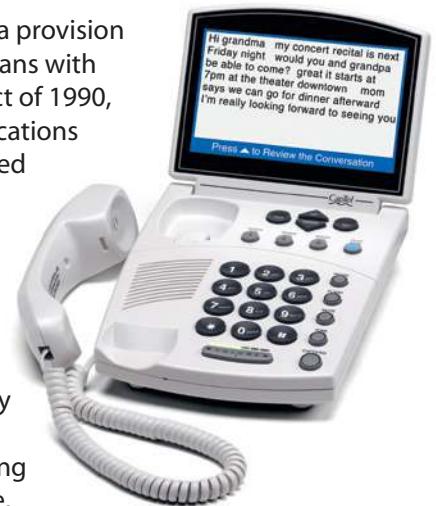
There are several providers of captioned phones. In order to qualify for these phones, a hearing care professional must certify the individual has a hearing loss that requires captions to use the phone effectively. Our audiologists can provide this certification for you, provided we have a hearing test on file within the past 24 months.

All of the captioned phone providers also offer complimentary in-home set up and personal instruction on how to use the phone. They do require a standard, land line phone connection and it is preferred to also have an internet connection, although some of the captioned phones can be used without internet.

For more information on the specific phones, you can visit the following websites:

- CapTel – www.captel.com
- CaptionCall – www.captioncall.com
- Clear Captions – www.clearcaptions.com

Or, contact your audiologist to begin the certification process.



Save Money on Year-End Medical Expenses

With 2016 nearly in the rearview mirror, it's a great time to take stock of your medical expenses and investigate your hearing health care options. As you do, consider these three questions:

1 Have you already met this year's deductible for your insurance plan?

Insurance coverage for examinations and hearing aids vary from one insurance provider to the next, even from plan to plan under one insurance. If your insurance helps cover hearing aids, you need to meet your deductible before coverage kicks in. Then, the coverage is often a percentage of the total expense, such as 70 percent.

Some insurance companies also promote "discount options," which may be purchased through a third party. Be sure you understand exactly what your plan offers. Often, these "benefits" or "discount options" limit the purchase of a specific device from a specific provider or manufacturer. They may offer a lower cost for the device only, which doesn't include service; provide only low-end devices that may not work well for your specific hearing needs; or have limited flexibility.

2 Do you have funds in a flexible spending account (FSA)? Or, do you have funds set aside in a health savings account (HSA)?

If you have a flexible spending account to save the pre-tax money to pay for your hearing aids, be sure to take advantage of this plan before the year ends. Typically, these benefits do not carry over from one calendar year to the next. If you have a health savings account, these pre-tax dollars are often available or more flexible to use at your discretion.

3 Do you have enough medical expenses in 2016 to qualify for a tax deduction?

If you itemize your medical expenses on your income taxes, hearing aids qualify. If you purchase hearing aids through our audiology practice, they qualify as medical devices and are exempt from sales tax, which may not be the case if you purchase hearing aids through retail outlets.

**End-of-year appointments fill quickly.
Call your clinic to schedule a hearing
evaluation and consult with a doctoral-level
audiologist today.**

The Associated Audiologists staff has the expertise to check and verify your coverage, as well as provide detailed estimates of hearing aid recommendations and costs. We are happy to explore and explain all your options.

STAFF NEWS

Staffing Changes at Leavenworth and Northland Clinics

Recently, Associated Audiologists has made changes in staffing at our Northland and Leavenworth Clinics to continue to provide outstanding service to you.

Northland Clinic

Lindsey Pacey, Au.D., FAAA, Audiologist, has joined our Northland Clinic.

Dr. Pacey is highly qualified, and most recently led the audiology clinic and services at our Leavenworth Clinic. She received her doctorate of audiology from the University of Kansas-Medical Center and performed her externship with Associated Audiologists.



Dr. Pacey

Leavenworth Clinic

David Paul, Au.D., is replacing Dr. Pacey at our Leavenworth Clinic. He received his doctorate of audiology from the University of Kansas Medical Center. Dr. Paul performed his clinical externship with Associated Audiologists. In addition, Dr. Paul is a member of the Kansas National Guard and a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



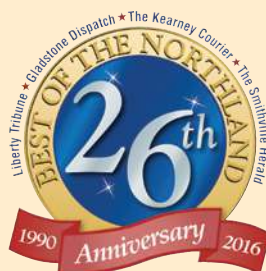
Dr. Paul

"I hope you will join me in wishing all of our audiologists the best in their new roles," said Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, President, Association Audiologists. "Dr. Pacey and Dr. Paul are both exceptional professionals of high character who will provide you with the same high-quality care and personal service that you've come to expect from our practice."

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Pacey at our Northland Clinic, call **816-442-7831**; to schedule an appointment with Dr. Paul at our Leavenworth Clinic, call **913-682-1870**.

Best of the Northland!

Congratulations to our **Northland Clinic**, which recently received a silver award from the Gladstone Dispatch and Liberty Tribune newspapers in the "Best of the Northland" competition. The award was based on a readers' poll conducted this summer.



Welcome Leesa and Brenda

Leesa recently joined our Leavenworth Clinic as the administrative assistant.

"I am excited to work with such a caring practice," she said. "From the audiologists to the staff, everyone is passionate about their work and has been an absolute joy to work with." Leesa enjoys spending time with her five grandchildren, camping and watching sporting events. Lisa Caravello, who has been assisting at the front desk in Leavenworth this past year, will be returning to her role as practice development coordinator at our Overland Park Clinic, which is closer to her home and family.



Leesa



Bren

Bren recently joined our Shawnee Mission Clinic. "I am very excited and blessed to be a part of the Associated Audiologists team," she said. Bren has two sons, Tyler, who is 19, and Logan, who is 16. She enjoys spending time with family and friends.

Congressman Yoder Co-Signs HR2519 with Rep. Jenkins

Congressman Kevin Yoder recently co-signed HR 2519, originally introduced by Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins. HR 2519, the Audiology Patient Choice Act, would improve access to audiology services, also enabling Medicare beneficiaries to have their choice of qualified audiologists to provide services without requiring a referral/order from a primary care physician. It also would cover more services not currently covered by Medicare, but which already are under the scope of audiologists' practice.

Dr. Steele Serves as National Judge

The Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA) has a proud tradition of supporting students who have entrepreneurial interests. They sponsor a national student competition open to Au.D. students from across the nation to submit business plans. They are judged on creativity, professionalism, feasibility, cohesiveness, and thoroughness/completeness. There are three judges who review applications in the early summer. These are narrowed down to finalists who then submit revisions after interviews, and then this is narrowed down to three finalists who present at the ADA convention in November held in California. **Dr. Steele** was selected as one of the national judges this year.



Dr. Hopkins-Williams Contributes to Book

Travis Hopkins Williams, Au.D., FAAA, is contributing to the web-based 2nd Edition of an Adult Audiology Casebook comprised of interesting patient cases from all stages of care. The editors of the book are Drs. Michael and Maureen Valente. The book will be used as an educational tool by students and clinicians alike to further understanding of complex cases, as well as improve best practices in the field of audiology. Currently, the book is in progress and has not been published.



Outreach Updates

Linda Erickson, Au.D., FAAA, senior audiologist with our Prairie Village and Overland Park Clinics, is now seeing patients at outreach clinics at Lakeview Village the second Friday afternoon of each month in the Medical Clinic office in Eastside Terrace; and at Claridge Court the third Monday afternoon of each month in the Health Care Clinic (third floor across from the entrance to the Health Care Center) beginning at 1:30 p.m.



For a complete list of the outreach locations our audiologists visit, see our website, www.hearingyourbest, and select "Outreach Services" located at the bottom of the page.

How Dr. Dorner is Making a Difference for Children

Danielle Dorner, Au.D., FAAA, vestibular audiologist, volunteers three hours a week, at minimum, in 6 Henson and 6 Hall at Children's Mercy Kansas City at the Adele Hall campus for the Child Life Department. These are inpatient units that provide services to children within the cystic fibrosis, diabetes, neurology, and orthopedic departments.



"My role is to provide support for the families and children," Dr. Dorner said. Sometimes this means playing games with the patients, hanging out and watching a movie, providing the parents relief to run errands so they know their child has company, or holding children whose guardians can't be there.

"My goal is to make sure every family feels like we have created an emotionally and physically comfortable environment and that we serve as a home away from their home. Being in the hospital can be scary, and research shows children who are in good spirits have a faster recovery time," she said.

These children are confined to their rooms/beds, so Dr. Dorner takes crafts to them and comes up with fun projects that accommodate their physical, emotional, and/or developmental limitations.

Children's Mercy is always looking for volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, visit www.childrensmercy.org, and select "Donate and Volunteer."



Practice Awards Scholarships at KSHA

Associated Audiologists, Inc., was once again proud to sponsor the audiology student research competition at the Kansas Speech Language Hearing Association meeting. This year the program and presentations were held in Topeka, Kan. Pictured left to right are: **Stacey Baldwin, Au.D., FAAA**; recipient Julie Bangert, University of Kansas; recipient Rebecca Burdine, Wichita State University; **Linda Erickson, Au.D., FAAA**; and **Lindsey Pacey, Au.D., FAAA**. The winners of this competitive award each received scholarships from Associated Audiologists, Inc.

In addition, Associated Audiologists had a significant presence at this year's conference. **Danielle Dorner, Au.D., FAAA**, presented on pediatric vestibular evaluation and treatment and **Travis Hopkins Williams, Au.D., FAAA**, presented on utilizing technology to accurately measure hearing aid performance and function.

Stacey Baldwin, Au.D., FAAA, and **Lindsey Pacey, Au.D., FAAA**, also had integral roles in organizing the conference for hearing and speech professionals from across the state.



**ASSOCIATED
AUDIOLOGISTS**

We are on a mission:

To improve lives through
comprehensive audiology care.

Falling once doubles the chances of falling again, and falling has serious and costly consequences:

- One out of five falls causes a serious injury such as broken bones in the wrist, ankle, or hip and head injuries.
- Each year, 2.5 million older people are treated in emergency departments for fall injuries.
- Over 700,000 patients are hospitalized each year because of a fall injury, most often because of a head injury or hip fracture.
- More than 95 percent of hip fractures are caused by falling, usually by falling sideways.
- Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries.

Falls Pose a Serious Risk for Older Adults

According to the Centers for Disease Control, one out of three older adults falls each year, but less than half tell their physician.

"Falling can have some very serious consequences, no matter what your age," said Danielle Dorner, Au.D., FAAA, Vestibular Audiologist. "But a fall can be especially dangerous if you are 65 or older."

If you are on Medicare, your primary care provider should ask if you have fallen in the past year, if you feel unsteady or if you worry about falling. If you answer "yes" to any of those screening questions, your provider should consider you at increased risk of falling.

In addition, if you have fallen twice in the past 12 months, or have fallen once in the past 12 months and sustained an injury, your provider

must perform a falls risk assessment, which should include one or more of the following:

- Medication review
- Home fall risk review
- Postural blood pressure
- Vision assessment

If your provider determines that you are an increased risk for falling, ask if you might need a comprehensive vestibular evaluation, which could detect dizziness or balance problems.

"If you have a vestibular issue, such as benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV), we can diagnose and treat the condition in the clinic, usually in one visit," Dr. Dorner said. "If you have another condition such as vertigo, dizziness, lightheadedness or balance problems, there are a number of well-researched, successful, and widely used treatments and management strategies available to effectively treat these disorders."

If the evaluation doesn't find a problem with the vestibular system, your provider may recommend physical therapy and vitamin D supplementation to reduce the risk of falls.

Dr. Dorner sees patients at our Overland Park and Northland clinics. She provides comprehensive, state-of-the-art diagnostic testing and treatment for patients experiencing dizziness and imbalance problems.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Dorner, call 913-498-2827.



UPDATE

2016 Red Scarf Project

In 2016, Associated Audiologists' patients, along with Sarah Mediavilla, Au.D., FAAA, audiologist, and Terri Phillips, medical transcriptionist and claims assistant, will be donating hand-knitted or crocheted scarves to the Red Scarf Project. Last year the group donated 27 scarves!

The Red Scarf Project is a multi-faceted charity program that benefits foster children once they "age out" of the system and go to college. The organization accepts donations of hand-knitted or crocheted red scarves, which are given to the college-age students on Valentine's Day each year. They also provide these students with an emergency fund donation program and book money. The project has delivered over 20,000 scarves to foster youth in college and training programs across the U.S. since they began the Valentine Day packages in 2005.

Terri will be collecting red scarves at our Shawnee Mission Clinic. Associated Audiologists also is assisting with this project by covering the cost of shipping for the scarves.

If you knit or crochet, or know someone who does and would like to participate, contact Terri for more information at 913-403-0018.

You can find project details and patterns at:
<http://www.fc2success.org/how-you-can-help/red-scarf-project/>.



CLINIC CORNER

Question:

Will wearing hearing aids make my ears "lazy?"

Answer:

No. Wearing hearing aids provides stimulation to your ears and your brain. Research has shown that individuals with hearing loss have better outcomes later on if they use hearing aids to stimulate their auditory systems. These individuals understand words better and have higher rates of hearing aid satisfaction. Hearing aids are the best way to consistently stimulate your auditory system, and should be used even with mild hearing loss.

If taking your hearing aids out makes it seem like you are hearing poorer than before, it is a hallmark sign that your brain has acclimated to wearing hearing aids and is using the information they provide. What most people notice is the stark difference in how they hear when they wear their aids versus removing them. This is a perceptual consequence of spending the day hearing what you should be hearing. It's just like removing your glasses—your prescription hasn't changed, but your brain realizes you aren't seeing the way you should.



Find us on facebook.

www.facebook.com/hearingyourbest

Hearing Your Best is published regularly by Associated Audiologists, Inc. All materials are created by our audiologists solely for the education of our patients and referring physicians. Any reproduction must be approved in writing by our editor. © 2016 by Associated Audiologists, Inc. If you have comments or suggestions, please direct them to:

Editor: Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA

Contributors: David Nissen, Stacey Baldwin, Dana Jacobson, Sam Gillespie, Susan Smittkamp, Linda Erickson, Sarah Jo Mediavilla, Travis Hopkins Williams, Lisa Battani, Lindsey Pacey, Danielle Dorner and David Paul, all Fellows of the American Academy of Audiology.

Northland
8350 N. St. Clair Ave.,
Suite 175
Kansas City, MO
64151
816-442-7831

Overland Park
12541 Foster St.,
Suite 220
Overland Park, KS
66213
913-498-2827

Prairie Village
7301 Mission Rd.,
Suite 140
Prairie Village, KS
66208
913-262-5855

Shawnee Mission
8800 W. 75th St.,
Suite 101
Shawnee Mission, KS
66204
913-403-0018

Leavenworth
1001 Sixth Ave.,
Suite 105
Leavenworth, KS
66048
913-682-1870

Manhattan
1133 College Ave.,
Building A, Suite 101A
Manhattan, KS
66502
785-539-7361

If you no longer wish to receive our newsletter, please e-mail lisa@hearingyourbest.com.



hearingyourbest.com



Hearing Your Best for Life

hearingyourbest.com

P.O. BOX 19087
Lenexa, KS 66285

Return Service Requested

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 6412
Kansas City, MO

Important
information
about hearing
and balance
health from your
audiologist.

Hearing Your Best

The Gift of Better Hearing

If your hearing aids are four to eight years old, you may be a candidate for new hearing aid technology, and special pricing on certain hearing aid models.

Talk with your audiologist to see if you are eligible to take advantage of this offer.

It's our gift for you this holiday season and new year!

Offer cannot be combined with insurance.

