

HEARING

YOUR BEST



Information From Associated Audiologists, Inc. – “Hearing Your Best for Life”

Vol. 13, Issue 2

Dr. Steele Goes to Washington

It wasn't exactly a scene from the 1939 Frank Capra classic movie **Mr. Smith Goes to Washington**, but Associated Audiologists president, Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, did recently travel to the nation's Capital.

While there, he took part in the Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA) first-ever legislative event. Dr. Steele met with Kansas legislators Senator Jerry Moran, Senator Pat Roberts and Representative Kevin Yoder.

The ADA is working to find sponsors and co-sponsors of new legislation. Currently, Medicare beneficiaries must obtain a physician referral prior to seeing an audiologist in order to have those services reimbursed by Medicare. The new legislation would allow Medicare patients the option of going directly to a qualified audiologist for hearing and balance diagnostic tests, without a physician referral.

Studies have shown if Medicare beneficiaries had immediate access to an audiologist, more seniors with hearing loss, tinnitus and dizziness/vertigo would obtain the tests they need and receive the necessary treatment to help them continue their independent lifestyles and maintain their quality of life. Eliminating the referral requirement would improve Medicare beneficiaries' access to hearing care and, studies show, result in a cost-savings to the system.

The ADA also is requesting limited license physician status, which would allow Medicare coverage for a broader range of the services that audiologists already offer patients, but which are not currently covered when audiologists provide the service, such as BPPV

(positional vertigo) treatment and ear wax removal. In most cases, audiologists are the best qualified provider to administer these services and the most cost-effective option.

To help make hearing aids more affordable for all Americans, there also is a proposed \$500 tax credit for the purchase of hearing aids. The credit could be taken once every five years for individuals 55 and over whose adjusted gross income is \$200,000 or less.

“I think it's very important for Associated Audiologists to take the lead and provide a voice for our patients and our profession,” Dr. Steele says. “We are one of only 10 practices nationwide that took part in this event. I plan to continue to support ADA's vision of improving and updating Medicare to reflect the current practice of audiology, as well advocating for changes that would make hearing aids more affordable.”



On his recent trip to Washington D.C., Dr. Steele had the opportunity to talk with Kansas Representative Kevin Yoder about possible changes to Medicare that would impact audiologist services.



You can support these legislative initiatives too.

Contact your members of Congress and ask them to support legislation that improves access to audiologists, as well as the tax credit.

For more information, visit www.audiologist.org. Select “Professionals,” then “Advocacy.”

HEARING YOUR BEST



Hear Here...

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

*"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone
across the waters to create many ripples."*

— Mother Teresa

Some of you may know that Dr. Wise and I had the opportunity to meet Mother Teresa in 1996 and personally witness the service that she began for the poor of Calcutta. I love her quote about change because she seemed to recognize each of us can be instrumental in change. Since our audiology work there, much has changed. In fact, the only constant seems to be change, both personally and professionally.

We've experienced a great deal of change within our practice recently and there are upcoming changes in healthcare that will require leadership and vision from us. A few of these changes include transitions in our staffing that are highlighted in this newsletter.

There is always mixed emotion with personnel changes. We are both sad to say goodbye to familiar faces and rejoice in saying hello to new ones. We know you join us in wishing all the best to our staff members who are leaving; and we think you'll be excited to get to know the new "faces" at our clinics. (See staff news on page 7).

There are also significant changes in healthcare right now that are demanding more of my time as we lead Associated Audiologists, Inc. forward. Recently, I had the opportunity to meet with our legislators in Washington D.C. to begin a dialogue of updating Medicare regarding audiology services. This will take patience and diligence, but I'm convinced that these "ripples" are necessary to forge improvements.

We also recently converted to a new clinical software system and appreciated your patience during this transition. In addition, updates to HIPAA law, which we will begin implementing soon, may require some small changes when you check in.

It's important for you to know that we take change seriously and embrace it as an opportunity for continued growth and improvement. Rest assured our outstanding audiology staff members are true champions. Their leadership, vision and passion for the profession of audiology and for patient care are commendable. I'm very proud of them and you can be too. You are working with some of the best and brightest audiologists in the country who are making their own "ripples," changing and improving your lives, and their profession.



Research Shows Exposure to Loud Music at a Rock Concert Often Results in Temporary Hearing Loss for Teens

A small study by the House Research Institute revealed that 72 percent of teens reported reduced hearing after attending a three-hour rock concert.

This type of hearing loss typically disappears within 48 hours, but if it occurs repeatedly, permanent hearing loss can develop, the study authors noted.

"Teens and young adults often don't realize the potential damage exposure to loud noise either from a concert or a personal listening device could cause to their hearing long term," says Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, Associated Audiologists president. "Exposure to noise over 85 decibels repeatedly can cause the tiny hair cells in the ear to stop functioning and may result in permanent hearing loss."

The study's authors said more research is needed to determine if teenage ears are more sensitive than adult ears. They added that teenagers should take advantage of sound meter "apps" available for smartphones, which provide an estimate of the surrounding noise level, and they should use ear protection when appropriate.



Join the conversation!
Find us on facebook.

www.facebook.com/hearingyourbest



In-Ear Custom Monitors Rock Hearing Protection

Before the Kansas City area national rock group Black Oxygen set off on their 96-plus show "The American Dream" 2012 USA Tour more than a year ago, they made an important appointment to protect their hearing. That appointment was with Stacey Baldwin, Au.D., FAAA, a senior audiologist with Associated Audiologists.

Dr. Baldwin fit David Lyle, vocalist/songwriter and lead guitarist, and his fellow Black Oxygen band members, Nick Lyle, his brother and drummer, and Jordan Myer, bassist, with custom in-ear monitors. The monitors were made using impressions Dr. Baldwin took of each performer's ears.

"Early on, the band members wore universal monitors, but as their popularity has grown, they have upgraded their hearing protection," Dr. Baldwin says. "I have to commend them. They have been very proactive about protecting their hearing from an early age."

The custom in-ear monitors band members now wear provide maximum hearing protection, yet make it possible for the wearer to hear all the notes they're playing clearly.

"We play rock n' roll and our music is loud," David says. "Before Dr. Baldwin fit us with our custom in-ear monitors, I would have some ringing in my ears after a show, but since I've been wearing them, I haven't noticed the ringing at all."

This means the monitors are doing a good job of protecting each band member's hearing. "The first symptom of hearing damage for most musicians is tinnitus, or ringing in the ears," Dr. Baldwin explains. "Unfortunately, most musicians wait until they have some damage to their hearing before coming to see us. They can never get their original hearing back, but with hearing protection we can prevent further hearing loss."

When Dr. Baldwin checked Black Oxygen's hearing recently, David, Nick and Jordan had normal hearing. "Most of the bands we tour with use custom in-ear

monitors. This is our profession, and we want to protect our hearing for the rest of our lives," David says. "Dr. Baldwin has been a huge help to Black Oxygen."

Associated Audiologists offers the professional audiology services necessary



to fit individuals with custom in-ear monitors and musicians' ear plugs. Custom in-ear monitors are available in a wide range of levels beginning around \$289. For more information, talk with your audiologist.

To check out the latest from Black Oxygen, visit www.blackoxygenmusic.com, or the group's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/blackoxygenmusic. Look for the group's sophomore album, "Beating Time," coming worldwide in 2013-14. On their first album, "The American Dream" radio single hit number 12 on the U.S. Billboard charts in January 2012.

ASSOCIATED AUDIOLOGISTS OFFERS MUSICIANS' PRODUCTS

Custom-fit in-ear monitors provide excellent sound quality while protecting your hearing. They can be used as on-stage monitors for performers, allowing the musician to clearly and safely hear their performance while reducing the harmful levels of loud external noise. Music lovers often prefer custom in-ear monitors. They offer brilliant sound quality built into a comfortable fitting earpiece. They can also be fit with a talk-back microphone for use in motorsports.

Musicians' products are available in many styles including:

- > **Elite Series** are premium in-ear monitors for professional musicians. The unique body heat activated canal provides the most accurate fit and ultimate comfort. These are available from single up to five drivers with dual sound bores, with a replaceable cable. Available in a wide range of colors and custom artwork.
- > **AC Series** are custom-fit in-ear monitors that provide great quality and value. Single or dual drivers are built into a solid, clear acrylic shell.
- > **CR1** is a custom-fit single driver monitor that makes a great upgrade from stock stereo earbuds.
- > **Musicians' Earplugs** are a must for regular concertgoers. These unique custom-fit earplugs come with your choice of 9, 15 or 25 dB attenuation, all with a flat response providing excellent sound clarity at reduced levels.
- > **Custom Sleeves** are available for your existing monitors or earbuds. Using your custom impression they can build a cover that houses your current electronics in a custom shell for improved comfort and sound quality.

Custom-fit hearing protection requires a consultation with an audiologist and custom ear impressions.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call any of our offices.

HEARING YOUR BEST

Are you living with dizziness or balance problems?

Approximately one-third of those between 65 to 75 years of age report that dizziness and imbalance affect the quality of their lives. With modern medical advancements, much can be done to help. In fact, 90 percent of the time these disorders can be successfully treated with proper diagnosis.



If you are experiencing dizziness or imbalance, you may not need to “learn to live with it.”

If you answered “Yes” to any of the questions to the right, you may have an equilibrium disorder. Sam Bittel, Au.D., FAAA, director of the Vestibular Clinic, sees patients at our Shawnee Mission and Overland Park clinics; Tammy Gonzales, Au.D., FAAA, vestibular audiologist, sees patients at our Shawnee Mission, Overland Park and Manhattan clinics.

Have you ever experienced...

- ☐ Vertigo or dizziness?
- ☐ A feeling of motion or spinning with quick head movement?
- ☐ A feeling of motion or spinning when changing positions?
- ☐ A sense of unsteadiness or a fear of falling?
- ☐ Difficulty maneuvering in the dark?
- ☐ Your feet not going where you want them to?
- ☐ Discomfort looking at moving objects?
- ☐ Frequent falls?

To schedule an appointment with one of them or to learn more, call Shawnee Mission at 913-403-0018; Manhattan at 785-539-7361; or Overland Park at 913-498-2827.

In some cases, a physician referral is necessary.

Getting Your Zzzzzzs Could Improve Tinnitus

Many people suspect that their tinnitus is loudest when they are in bed while trying to fall asleep. Though the actual loudness of tinnitus does not vary much during the day, there are times when tinnitus appears more noticeable. Tinnitus can be most intrusive at bedtime because there is little environmental noise to mask tinnitus, and less to occupy your attention.

Tips for getting a better night's sleep (good sleep hygiene) to better prepare for sleep:

- > Set a bedtime and a wake-up time. You should be tired enough to sleep at your set bedtime. Exposure to sunlight may help you wake up.
- > Do not nap during the day.
- > Get regular exercise during the day to promote sleep and improve relaxation.

- > Avoid caffeine and alcohol several hours before bedtime.
- > Use sound to prepare for sleep or while awake during the night:
 - Select soft, peaceful sounds, such as nature sounds, music, white noise or motor noise (fan, humidifier, etc.).
 - Consider a pillow speaker or timer if the sound bothers others.

Improve relaxation and reduce worrying at bedtime:

- > Schedule “worry time” sessions. This is time dedicated solely to thinking about those issues that worry you.
- > Keep a pen and paper next to your bed to write down any additional concerns that you may have.
- > Consider using relaxation techniques, such as progressive muscle relaxation, meditation or imagery training.

Improve the bedroom environment:

- > Turn the face of the clock away from you so it is not distracting.
- > Keep the bedroom cool and dark for sleeping – set the temperature for 58 to 68 degrees.
- > Avoid having a television or computer in the bedroom.
- > Your mattress, pillows and blankets should all be comfortable.

If tinnitus disrupts your sleep or daily activities, talk with one of our tinnitus specialists. Laura Flowers, Au.D., FAAA, and Susan Smittkamp, Au.D., Ph.D., FAAA, see tinnitus patients at our Shawnee Mission office, 913-403-0018. Sam Gillespie, Au.D., FAAA, sees tinnitus patients at our Manhattan office, 785-539-7361.

To take advantage of our summer battery sale, use the below coupon.

Get More Life from Your Hearing Aid Batteries



Hearing aids have made significant advances in recent years, but many of those advances require more power, and more powerful hearing aid batteries.

The professional line of batteries carried by Associated Audiologists are mercury-free and provide superior performance compared with over-the-counter batteries you might purchase in drugstore chains, at shopping clubs or online.

These professional batteries work best with the digital technology and wireless connectivity features found in high-performing hearing aids. This means that although less expensive batteries are available, you may end up spending more to power your hearing aids for an equal amount of time. In addition, less expensive batteries can negatively affect the performance of your hearing aids. Be sure to talk with your audiologist about which batteries work best with your hearing aids.

Battery Sale

HALF PRICE

Sizes 10, 13, 312 – one 48 pack *per person*.

Size 675 – one 40 pack *per person*.

While supplies last.

Exp. 9/30/2013



GET MORE LIFE FROM YOUR BATTERIES

- ▶ Before putting your batteries in your hearing aid, remove the sticker and expose them to the air for at least 60 seconds. This charges the battery and can help you get 25 to 30 percent longer life from your batteries.
- ▶ Turn your hearing aids off at night, and when not in use. Opening the battery door completely may also help extend battery life and allow contacts to stay dry.
- ▶ Batteries frequently have a longer shelf life when stored at room temperature. Don't keep them in the refrigerator and keep them out of direct sunlight or heat.
- ▶ An inexpensive battery tester is a good way to check your hearing aid battery's life.
- ▶ Always keep spare batteries with you.

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. © 2013 by Associated Audiologists, Inc. If you have comments or suggestions, please direct them to:

Editor: Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA

Contributors: Jim Wise, Traci Ring, David Nissen, Larry Ruder, Stacey Baldwin, Laura Flowers, Sam Bittel, Erica Smith, Dana Jacobson, Sam Gillespie, Tammy Gonzales and Susan Smittkamp, all Fellows of the American Academy of Audiology.

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

Happy Anniversary!



Several members of the Associated Audiologists team are celebrating milestone anniversaries with us this summer and fall. "We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated and professional team to serve our patients," says Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, president of Associated Audiologists. "We appreciate all they do and encourage you to drop by and congratulate them on a job well done!"

Celebrating 15 years with the practice are:

> Dave Nissen, Au.D., FAAA.

Dr. Nissen came to Associated Audiologists following his graduation from the University of Central Missouri. He has worked at the practice's Prairie Village office throughout his career here.

> Traci Ring, M.S., FAAA.

Traci also joined Associated Audiologists following graduation from the University of Central Missouri. Over the years, she has seen patients at our Olathe and Shawnee Mission offices.

Celebrating five years with the practice are:

> Erica Smith, Au.D., FAAA.

Dr. Smith is the audiologist dedicated to our Leavenworth practice. She performed her clinical externship with us and joined the practice after her graduation. Dr. Smith has been instrumental in establishing the Leavenworth office.

> Dana Jacobson, Au.D., FAAA.

Dr. Jacobson also joined Associated Audiologists following completion of her clinical externship with the practice at the University of Kansas Medical Center. She sees patients at our Overland Park office and oversees the practice's philanthropic efforts.

> Laura Flowers, Au.D., FAAA.

Dr. Flowers came to Associated Audiologists after working as a clinical audiologist with Washington University School of Medicine. She helped establish the practice's tinnitus treatment program and sees patients at our Shawnee Mission office.

> Sam Bittel, Au.D., FAAA.

Dr. Bittel serves as the director of the practice's Vestibular Clinic. He joined Associated Audiologists and helped develop the clinic after completing his two-year residential training at the American Institute of Balance and the National Balance Centers. He sees patients at our Shawnee Mission and Overland Park offices.

> Cindy Seberger, administrative staff with Associated Audiologists, has worked at the practice's Overland Park office during most of her tenure. However, with Susan Hulett's recent departure, Cindy has now joined our Prairie Village office at the front desk.

Celebrating one year in Manhattan:

> Sam Gillespie, Au.D., FAAA,

will celebrate the one-year anniversary of our Manhattan office opening in September. Dr. Gillespie has done a terrific job of establishing this clinic and serving his patients in this community. In addition to diagnosing and treating hearing loss, he has expertise in diagnosing and treating tinnitus. Tammy Gonzales, Au.D., FAAA, vestibular audiologist, also sees patients in the Manhattan office to diagnose and treat dizziness and balance disorders.

Overland Park Fire Department Offers Alerting Devices

If you live in Overland Park, Kansas and have a significant hearing loss, the Overland Park Fire Department offers free alerting devices in case of fire. The devices include sound, strobe and shaking alerts. **For more information, contact Tricia Roberts with the Overland Park Fire Department at 913-895-8403.**

For more information
about hearing loss, visit



www.hearingyourbest.com.

STAFF NEWS

Please join us in welcoming our two new externs to Associated Audiologists! They are Krysta Beaver, a student at the University of Kansas; and Chelsea Granheim, a student at Wichita State University. They will be working with us in the coming months, receiving hands-on experience from our audiologists. They both anticipate completing their doctoral degrees in audiology in May 2014.



Best of luck to Susan Hulett, a member of our administrative staff from our Prairie Village office! After nearly 22 years with Associated Audiologists, Susan recently left us to return to her home state of New York to be with family. Susan has been a valuable member of our team and we will miss her greatly.

Look for Tanja Porter, administrative staff, at our Overland Park office front desk. She also is assisting with scheduling patients in our Vestibular Clinic. Tanja has been with the practice for 16 years and was most recently at our Shawnee Mission office.

Congratulations to Lainey Bruhn, Au.D., our extern this past year at Associated Audiologists. Dr. Bruhn recently received her doctorate in audiology from the University of Kansas. She has accepted a position with a private practice in Charleston, S.C., and is moving there. We know you join us in wishing Dr. Bruhn all the best.



Our Hearing Your Best newsletter recently received a bronze award in the Healthcare Advertising Awards competition, external newsletter category. The winners were selected by a national panel of judges from more than 4,000 entries, making this one of the 10 largest of all advertising awards competitions in the world.



For the latest news about the Associated Audiologists staff and what we're doing, be sure to like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/hearingyourbest.

Technology Update

If you have trouble hearing conversations on the phone, listening to the TV or hearing in other challenging listening environments, several hearing aid manufacturers now have devices that may help you. These innovations are digital accessories that can wirelessly connect your hearing aids to your TV, mobile phone, MP3 player, personal computer and many other devices.



Widex has recently introduced the first ever home telephone which can also be adapted for office/multi-phone use that works directly with Widex Clear and Dream hearing aids. This new phone allows users to easily use the telephone with their hearing aids and hear in both ears simultaneously.



SOME OF THESE ACCESSORIES AND THEIR MANUFACTURERS INCLUDE:

- > Phonak iCom
- > Widex Dex products, compatible with Dream and Clear 440 hearing aids
- > ReSound Unite Accessories
- > Oticon Streamer
- > Starkey iMobile

For more information about this latest technology or other accessories, contact any of our offices or talk with your audiologist today.



PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 2257
KANSAS CITY, MO

Hearing Your Best for Life

hearingyourbest.com

P.O. BOX 19087
Lenexa, KS 66285

Return Service Requested

Important
information
about hearing
and balance
health from your
audiologist.

HEARING YOUR BEST

Associated Audiologists Programs Hearing Aids Just for You

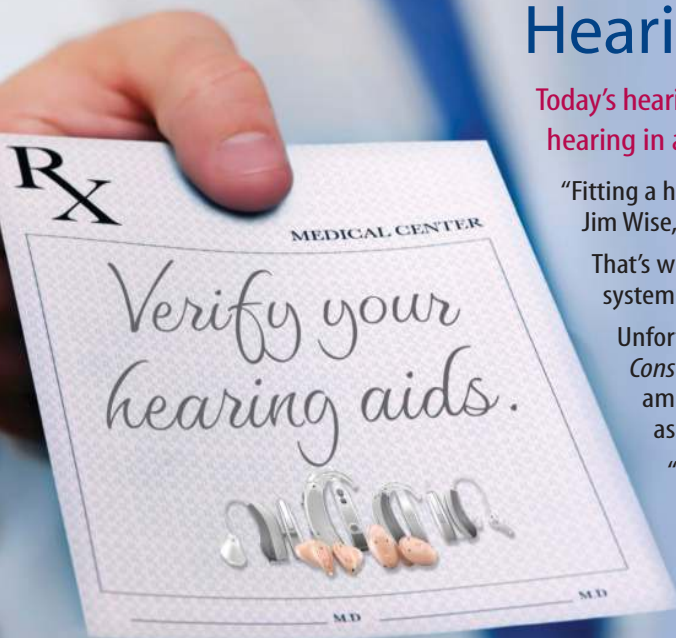
Today's hearing aids are tiny, sophisticated computer processors that can improve your hearing in a wide range of listening situations, but only if they're programmed right.

"Fitting a hearing aid correctly takes precision and a highly qualified audiologist," explains Jim Wise, Ph.D., FAAA, president emeritus, Associated Audiologists.

That's why Associated Audiologists verifies every hearing aid fit using a special instrument system called AudioScan Verifit.

Unfortunately, not all hearing aid providers follow this best practice of care. According to *Consumer Reports*, 66 percent of hearing aids they evaluated for a 2009 article either amplified too little or too much. The publication went on to recommend that patients ask if their audiologist uses fitting/testing technology as a standard of care.

"We believe it's important to obtain objective measurement and verification for each hearing instrument we fit," Dr. Wise says. "Technology such as Verifit is the 'gold standard' of fitting for a hearing aid and with it, we can directly measure your hearing aid's performance while it's in your ear. It helps determine if your hearing aid is programmed exactly for your hearing loss so that you can enjoy today's digital hearing aid technology to the fullest."



We look forward to meeting your hearing and balance healthcare needs.