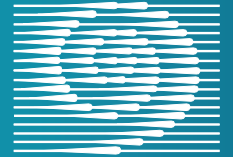


# Hearing Your Best

Summer 2015 • Vol. 15, Issue 2



ASSOCIATED  
AUDIOLOGISTS

INFORMATION FROM

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



## Treating Hearing Loss Keeps You "Tuned In" to Life!

Experts have known the positive impact that addressing hearing loss has on quality of life. Research shows that people with hearing loss who use hearing aids see an improvement in their ability to hear in many settings. They can see an improvement in their relationships at home and at work, in their social lives, and in their ability to communicate effectively in most situations.

**M**ore recently, however, researchers are discovering significant links between hearing loss and other serious health issues, including cognition, dementia, depression, falling, and overall physical and mental health.

To get a fuller sense of why it's so important to treat hearing loss sooner rather than later, consider the latest research on hearing loss and these five important health issues:

### ► **Cognition**

According to Dr. Arthur Wingfield, Brandeis University Professor of Neuroscience, "The sharpness of an individual's hearing has cascading consequences for various aspects of cognitive function. Even if you have just a mild hearing loss that is not being treated, cognitive load increases significantly. You have to put in so much more effort to perceive and understand what is

being said that you divert resources away from storing what you have heard into your memory." This means hearing loss not only affects your ability to "hear" sound accurately, but it also affects higher-level cognitive functioning.

### ► **Dementia**

A study by researchers at Johns Hopkins and the National Institute on Aging found that seniors with hearing loss are significantly more likely to develop dementia over time

than those who retain their hearing. Another study found that older adults with hearing loss are more likely to develop problems processing and remembering than older adults whose hearing is normal.

### ► **Brain Shrinkage**

Results of a study by these researchers also found that although the brain becomes smaller with age, the shrinkage seems to be fast-tracked in older adults with hearing loss.

*Continued on page 3*





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

## Hear Here...

The “roots” of audiology grew from rehabilitative services provided to veterans with hearing loss returning after WWII. Recent research is re-emphasizing the importance of rehabilitation for hearing loss, and more importantly the involvement of the brain. Research published in the Acoustical Society of America and re-summarized in Science Daily is suggesting that areas of the brain devoted to hearing can be re-organized even with early-stage hearing loss. This may play a role in cognitive decline when hearing loss goes untreated.

What researchers are finding is that portions of the brain that were originally devoted to hearing can be reassigned to other functions or atrophy. Anu Sharma, Ph.D., lead researcher, reports that when this happens the hearing areas of the brain shrink with age-related hearing loss. The centers of the brain that are normally used for higher-level decision-making are then unnecessarily involved when hearing sounds. This compensatory change in the brain increases the overall workload on our brains as we age. According to Dr. Sharma, these findings may help explain other research showing that untreated age-related hearing loss is strongly correlated with dementia.

What this all means for the public is that treating even slight hearing loss through the use of amplification, or hearing aids, may be critical to preventing changes in the brain that can lead to cognitive decline. It also means that using amplification regularly is like exercise for your brain and your auditory system, which may help prevent brain atrophy and brain re-organization.

What this means for Associated Audiologists, Inc. is that we must remain diligent in education and rehabilitation of hearing loss, tinnitus, and dizziness/vertigo. I attended a rehabilitative conference in St. Louis in May. This “brain-storming” conference provided ideas for how we can begin to implement services in our clinics to better help patients.

Keep an eye out during the next year for small group programs and opportunities within our clinics as we remain on the cutting edge to make sure you hear your best. We will focus on keeping our patients aware of ways to overcome hearing loss, tinnitus and dizziness/vertigo, and be provided with the best technology, services and tools to fully enjoy life.

## Dr. Lake Helps Restore Hearing for Audrey Elder

Though she's only 41 years old, Audrey Elder has struggled with her hearing since she was just 5. “That’s when I failed my first hearing test,” Audrey says. “I think I have missed out on a lot in my life.”



As a real estate agent who specializes in historical homes and also teaches continuing education courses on historic properties to other realtors, recently Audrey felt like the important nuances of conversations were escaping her more and more often.

“I couldn’t hear my clients or my students and in my personal life, my husband was tired of repeating himself. My hearing loss was affecting my career and my relationships.”

That’s why Audrey decided to do something about her hearing. “My husband asked his boss if he knew an audiologist who might be able to help me, and he recommended Dr. Lake at Associated Audiologists,” she says.

When Lainey Lake, Au.D., FAAA, the audiologist on staff at the practice’s Northland office conducted her comprehensive hearing evaluation, Audrey was surprised by the results. “I knew the hearing in my right ear was bad,” she says, “but the loss in my left ear was much worse than I thought. It explained a lot.”

To address her hearing loss, Dr. Lake recommended two mini behind-the-ear hearing aids programmed especially for Audrey’s needs. “Dr. Lake is a very passionate professional. She made me feel like there was something she could do to help me.”

When Dr. Lake fit Audrey with her new hearing aids, the experience brought tears to her eyes. “There was a clock on the wall in Dr. Lake’s office that I could hear ticking,” she says. “Hearing that for the first time made me cry.”

On the job and at home, everyone has noticed Audrey’s better hearing. “My hearing aids are so small, I don’t think you can even see them,” she says. “But everyone is aware that I can hear now. It has made communicating with me so much easier.”

Today, Audrey can’t imagine life without her hearing aids. “I hear the birds singing, my coffee pot brewing and cars driving by on the street, all sounds I haven’t heard in years. Dr. Lake was amazing and this has been such a blessing,” she says. “My only regret is that I waited so long to do something about my hearing loss.”

**Dr. Lake sees patients at the Associated Audiologists clinic located in the Northland at the Embassy Park Professional Building, 8350 N. St. Clair Avenue, Suite 175, Kansas City, Mo.**  
**To schedule an appointment, call 816-442-7831.**

# Dr. Steele Involved in Grass Roots Legislation

Members of Congress Lynn Jenkins, (R-KS) and Matt Cartwright (D-PA) recently reintroduced the Audiology Patient Choice Act, H.R. 2519.

**T**his bi-partisan, common-sense legislation, originally introduced in 2014, will bring Medicare in line with best practices in audiologic healthcare by improving patient access to audiology services and promoting models of care that have been proven safe, efficient and effective.

H.R. 2519 will specifically:

- ▶ Improve access to qualified, licensed Medicare providers, by allowing seniors with a suspected hearing or balance disorder to seek treatment directly from audiologists, eliminating the requirement for doctors' orders.
- ▶ Allow patients to choose from among all qualified providers

by authorizing Medicare to reimburse audiologists for the services that Medicare already covers and audiologists are already licensed to provide.

- ▶ Address the medical doctor workforce shortage confronting our country, while helping to meet the increasing demand for healthcare services by the growing Medicare population, through the inclusion of audiologists in the list of Medicare-recognized physicians (chiropractors, dentists, doctors of osteopathy, medical doctors, optometrists and podiatrists).

Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, President, Associated Audiologists, has been

very involved in this grass roots effort and appreciates your support.

The Audiology Patient Choice Act was carefully constructed to promote high-quality, cost-effective audiologic care for Medicare patients.

**Please contact your legislator today to voice your support for this legislation.**

**Visit <http://www.18x18.org/congressional-connect>.**



## Treating Hearing Loss *continued from page 1*

### ▶ **Falling**

Another Johns Hopkins study showed that people in middle age (40-69) with just mild hearing loss were nearly three times more likely to have a history of falling. Experts suggest the intensive listening effort demanded by unaddressed hearing loss may take cognitive resources away from what is needed for balance and gait.

### ▶ **Depression**

Several studies have found a link between depression and hearing loss. Johns Hopkins research also found that older adults with hearing loss were 57 percent more likely to have deep episodes of stress, depression or bad moods than their peers with normal hearing.

Other research points to connections between diabetes, heart disease and hearing loss. "At this point, we can't say that treating hearing loss will prevent dementia or lower the risk of falling, for example," explains Tim Steele, President, Associated Audiologists, Inc. "But we are seeing significant connections between hearing loss and other serious health issues. Treating hearing loss may minimize those risks and helps us be our best, no matter what our age."

As the area's leaders in audiologic care, we use state-of-the-art technology and work with the world's leading hearing aid manufacturers to provide you with an individualized hearing solution to keep you "tuned in" to life.

**To schedule an evaluation with your audiologist, call the office nearest you.**



## WHO'S YOUR Audiologist?

For our 35,000 patients, the answer is Associated Audiologists.

But what makes our practice a standout?

**"F**or more than 30 years, Dr. James A. Wise dedicated himself to advancing audiology as a medical profession here in Kansas City, and across the nation," Dr. Steele says. "As a result, we have one of the most highly trained, professional staffs in the region. All 16 of our audiologists have earned doctoral degrees," Dr. Steele adds. "We're very proud of them."

Beyond that, the audiologists are all licensed professionals who can recommend, prescribe and fit hearing aids in accordance with regulations from the Food and Drug Administration and state laws. We also have experts in dizziness and balance problems and tinnitus/sound sensitivity.

"We value our staff's education and experience because we know the professional you work with can greatly affect your success with hearing aids," Dr. Steele says.

Because there are literally hundreds of hearing aids available with a wide variety of features, your audiologist not only can use advanced diagnostic testing to determine your type of hearing loss, but can use this information to determine the best hearing aid solution for your specific needs and budget.

"Digital hearing aids utilize tiny computer processors," Dr. Steele explains. "They can be programmed, but if they are not adjusted correctly for your specific hearing loss, you could purchase a hearing aid and not receive the full benefit. An audiologist who follows best practices and utilizes the correct verification equipment has the expertise to program your hearing aids for your individual hearing needs."

Our audiologists specialize in a multitude of areas, including prescribing, fitting and adjusting hearing aids and other hearing assistive devices. In addition, we teach listening skills and strategies, provide custom hearing protection and musicians' monitors, diagnose and manage tinnitus and misophonia (sound sensitivity), and diagnose and treat dizziness and balance disorders.

All of our audiologists also follow a code of ethics from the American Academy of Audiologists and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. This demonstrates their commitment to the field, and to your audiology care.

And finally, our audiologists use specialized diagnostic and verification equipment, including real-ear probe microphone and speech mapping measures. It is reported that only 15 percent of all audiologists use this additional technology, but these sophisticated tests independently verify how well your hearing aids function in your ears.



## Share Your Experience!

Your feedback helps us improve our performance and provide five-star service to our patients. That's why we have recently started collecting patient reviews electronically at all of our clinics.

Leaving a review is easy. Your audiologist may ask you to leave us a review, or you may receive an e-mail message with a request to review us. The process is simple and also can be shared on Google+, YellowPages.com or SuperPages.com. Just note, to leave a review on Google+, you must have a gmail account, and must be signed in.

**We hope you'll take a few moments to share your experience!**





## A FAMILY AFFAIR!

# Why the Krebs Family Depends on Associated Audiologists to Hear Their Best

Doug, Sue, Natalie and Daniel Krebs have been depending on Associated Audiologists for more than 20 years to help them hear their best.

**"B**oth of our children, Natalie and Daniel, were born with moderate to severe, high-frequency hearing loss," explains Doug. Natalie, now 28, was diagnosed with a hearing loss when she was almost 3 years old. Daniel, now 25, was diagnosed at about 7 months old.

The family was living in Connecticut at the time and both children were fit with hearing aids. But it wasn't until they relocated to the Kansas City area in 1994 for Doug's job that they found an audiology practice where they felt at home.

"A neighbor referred us to Associated Audiologists," Sue says. "We noticed a difference in the care the kids received right away. Everyone we came in contact with was so compassionate and very accommodating. Dr. Wise and Dr. Steele always went the extra mile to help our kids."

Because Natalie was a little older when her hearing loss was diagnosed, Sue says she struggled with developing her communication skills. "One doctor even told us Natalie would never be able to attend public school, but she proved them wrong."

Daniel found middle school a challenging time to be wearing hearing aids, but a recommendation from Associated Audiologists helped. "That was when my audiologist suggested

I switch to in-the-canal hearing aids," Daniel says. "They are much smaller and less noticeable, making it easier for me to go about my day and focus more on hearing in the classroom."

And even though Doug's job literally took the family from Kansas City to Europe for seven years, they maintained a home here and continued to see Associated Audiologists. "We returned to Kansas City every summer, and when we did, we made sure the kids could get in to see Dr. Wise or Dr. Steele," Sue says.

When Natalie and Daniel headed off to college, they returned to Associated Audiologists on breaks and during summers for their check-ups and fittings.

"I think the thing that stands out to me about Dr. Steele and Dr. Wise is that they were very honest with our kids about the challenges they would face because of hearing loss, but they also were very encouraging," Doug adds. Today, both children are college graduates and have successful careers.

That's why when Doug and Sue began to experience hearing loss themselves in their early 50s, they knew exactly who to see. "I have a high-frequency hearing loss, but it's probably related to noise exposure and listening to too many rock concerts when I was younger," Doug admits.

Sue's hearing loss is unique to the family. "My hearing loss is probably the least severe and in the mid-range tones, but it affects my ability to hear speech and communicate," she says.

Both Doug and Sue wear tiny behind-the-ear hearing aids, and add that neither of them has a hearing loss comparable to their children's.

"This experience has given me some appreciation for what our kids have been through all their lives," Doug says. "Everyone at Associated Audiologists really cares about our family and how they are doing. That level of interaction is rare in today's world. They're just remarkable!"

Daniel says the practice has been an important part of his life. "I've had a great relationship with Associated Audiologists. They have been incredibly helpful and understanding," he says. "I've grown to appreciate how much Associated Audiologists has done for me over the years."

"I have seen audiologists in Belgium, California and Boston, but I never felt they measured up to the care I received from Associated Audiologists," Natalie says. "They are extremely knowledgeable and I trust them. They're not just a business. They care. They have my best interests at heart."

Sue agrees and adds, "Our family would have struggled so without them. It's a great comfort to know Associated Audiologists is here when we need them."



## STAFF NEWS

### Dr. Smith Welcomes New Family Member

**Erica Smith, Au.D., FAAA**, and her husband, Eric, recently welcomed a new addition to their family, baby Norah Lea Smith. Born June 10, 2015 this is the Smiths' first child. With the birth of her baby, Dr. Smith is leaving our Leavenworth Clinic to spend time with her family. **Lindsey Pacey, Au.D., FAAA**, recently joined the practice and is dedicated to caring for our Leavenworth area patients. Best of luck to the Smith family!



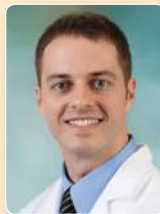
### Welcome Jessica!

**Jessica Hayward** is the newest member of the Associated Audiologists Administrative Team, assisting Dr. Pacey in our Leavenworth Clinic. Jessica is the spouse of an active-duty Army soldier. They have a 12-year-old daughter who will be in the seventh grade next year. The couple has traveled the world during their 12 years in the military. Jessica enjoys fishing, hiking, swimming, doing yard work and traveling. Please help us welcome Jessica to our Leavenworth office!



### Congratulations Dr. Gillespie on Five Years!

**Sam Gillespie, Au.D., FAAA**, Senior Audiologist, is celebrating his fifth year with Associated Audiologists. Dr. Gillespie performed his externship with the practice, then joined the group as our audiologist dedicated to serving the Manhattan community. He has been instrumental in establishing this successful office.



### Dr. Erickson Earns Doctorate

**Linda Erickson, Au.D., FAAA**, Senior Audiologist with our Overland Park and Prairie Village Clinics, recently earned her doctorate of audiology from A.T. Still University. An experienced audiologist, Dr. Erickson is a member of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association; the Kansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association; and the Kansas City Society of Audiology.



### Dr. Baldwin Celebrates 10 Years

Just 10 short years ago, **Stacey Baldwin, Au.D., FAAA**, Senior Audiologist and Clinical Systems Manager, joined Associated Audiologists, Inc. Dr. Baldwin has developed a special expertise over the years in hearing protection, as well as diagnosing and managing hearing loss. She has been involved in local and regional professional associations and has cared for hundreds and hundreds of patients at our Overland Park Clinic. Congratulations Dr. Baldwin!



### New TV Ads Celebrate 30th Anniversary

To mark the **30th anniversary of Associated Audiologists**, we recently unveiled a new series of television advertisements featuring several of our patients, including J.C. Fisher, The Texas Tenors; Oleta Adams, vocalist; Kerry Reardon, former Kansas City Chief; Leon Butler, owner of Brookside Optical; and Maxine Rodriguez. The ads air on KCTV-5 and KSHB-41, often during news times. Be sure to check them out and let us know what you think!

### David Paul Begins Externship

**David Paul** has joined the practice as an extern. He is gaining valuable experience in hearing aid technology and fitting, tinnitus diagnosis and management and vestibular evaluation and treatment.

David is a veteran who became interested in audiology while deployed overseas. After returning to the states, he applied and was accepted to the program at the University of Kansas Medical Center. He expects to graduate with a doctorate in audiology in May 2016. David is originally from Emporia, Kan., and earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kan. Please join us in welcoming David to our practice as he completes his training.



# Associated Audiologists is Proud Sponsor of Orchestra on the Oregon Trail!

Associated Audiologists is proud to sponsor this year's Orchestra on the Oregon Trail, an all-day experience with music and events for all ages

**Sunday, Sept. 6** at Alcove Spring Historic Park, located six miles south of Marysville, Kan. Alcove Spring was the stopping place for many wagon trains that traveled the trail. The Topeka Symphony Orchestra and the natural wonder of Alcove Spring will combine as a tribute to a wilderness traversed by the pioneers.

As part of their 70th season, the Topeka Symphony Orchestra will perform an Old West concert complete with musical themes from western movies, the sounds of the pioneer days and songs that highlight the American spirit. Gates open at 1 p.m., and the orchestra will perform on the main stage at 6 p.m.

For more information visit <https://oooot.org>  
or call 844-252-6830.



**ASSOCIATED  
AUDIOLOGISTS**

**We are on a mission:**

To improve lives through  
comprehensive audiology care.



## CLINIC CORNER

It's no secret that summer in the Midwest is hot and humid. That can be tough on your hearing aids! In fact, moisture is one of the leading causes of hearing aid malfunction.

**Electronic dehumidifiers, such as the Global Dry and Store system, can improve hearing aid performance** by offering a safe and protective place to keep your hearing aids while removing unwanted moisture. This results in longer life for your hearing aids, fewer repairs, better sound quality, and may relieve itchy, irritated ears.

The Global Dry and Store system combines three essential elements needed for effective drying: heat, moving air and a desiccant that drives the relative humidity lower and captures the moisture released. These devices are easy to operate. Each system can store up to four hearing aids. UV light helps disinfect the hearing aids. Dry and Store is powered by an AC adapter. Better models include a germicidal lamp that sanitizes hearing instruments. The unit automatically shuts off when the cycle is completed. There are non-electric units available as well.

These devices range in price from \$20 to \$110, depending on the level of sophistication.

**For more information about Dry and Store systems, talk with your audiologist.  
For your convenience, we carry the Dry and Store systems in our offices.**

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Editor: Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA

Contributors: Traci Ring, David Nissen, Stacey Baldwin, Laura Flowers, Sam Bittel, Dana Jacobson, Sam Gillespie, Susan Smittkamp, Linda Erickson, Sarah Jo Mediavilla, Travis Hopkins Williams, Lisa Battani, Lainey Lake, Lindsey Pacey and Danielle Dorner, 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



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information  
about hearing  
and balance  
health from your  
audiologist.

## Hearing Your Best



**In celebration of our 30th anniversary,** remember that hearing aid batteries are 50 percent off throughout the remainder of the year. Our professional grade batteries are mercury-free, high-quality, tax-free and are strong enough to power the latest hearing aid technology.

**To get the most from your batteries, follow these tips:**

- ▶ 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!

**Batteries**  
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