

MAY 2012 VARIOUS TOPICS & UPDATES

"2012 CONSUMERS GUIDE TO HEARING AIDS"

This is out so get your new copy but don't throw away the old ones as only the latest platform of aids is show each year.

UNITED HEALTH CARE UPDATE (see Meeting Notes-Feb 2012)

Audiologists were in full fighting mode from the first bell and have succeeded in causing the FDA to issue a cease and desist letter for the controversial hi HealthInnovations hearing test reported on in the February Meeting Notes.

As you will recall from the February Meeting their hearing aids range from \$950 for ITE and from \$750 for BTE and have Digital-Wide Dynamic Range Compression-Directional Mics-Noise Management and Feedback Suppression

Suited for mild to moderate hearing loss (max 40 dB for 500 and 1k dB-max 65 dB @ 2k-6 dB) and only open fit candidates are eligible

Anyone demonstrating or purchasing these aids should first determine if they have t-coils for looping and should post a review to the Forum or email me to do the post for the benefit of other group members.

AUDIOTONIQ UPDATE-A tour Audiotoniq's Facilities in Austin, TX 5/4/12 (see Meeting Notes-July 2011)

Met founder and CEO, Russ Apfel

Conference with Harold Mindlin, Sales and Marketing VP

Sam, Fred and Joey (HIS)

They had their hearing aid shell and all components laid out on a table along with their suit case Audiometer which I took for a demo ride. It provides a threshold pure tone test and prints a copy of the audiogram for the user. They will be giving away 700 Professional Hearing Test Systems to PCP's in Austin, Dallas, San Antonio and Houston by the end of this year.

The condition is that the PCP's agree to provide patient testing for hearing loss. It has a touch screen and after putting on earphones and going through a tutorial you push a green dot on the screen if you heard the tone and red if not. Tones are 250-500-1k-2k-4k-6k-8k.

They have completed the design, size and testing their rechargeable battery that provides up to 20 hours of consecutive service before charging is necessary. The battery is fully enclosed in the shell that doesn't have the typical door that exposes the inside to damaging dust and moisture and eliminates having to replace a damaged or broken door. They have a stick that looks like a flash drive that is used for emergency charging situations like camping trips where electricity is not available. When the portable charger is used the hearing aids can be worn while they are being quick charged and you can even listen to media at the same time. The portable charger can recharge the aids up to 5 times before it needs regular charging which takes about 2 hours for a 20 hour charge.

They showed me how you can program your own aids on the go at any moment 24/7 with a smart phone or android containing their "App" by just answering some questions. You can save the settings and create your own personal name for the program to use whenever you are in that same or similar situations in the future. The number of programs is unlimited.

You can adjust the volume of either aid using a sliding scale at any time anywhere from the App and for those that like a pocket remote volume control one can be purchased for about \$50.

They are working on the ability to use the smart phone GPS to identify your location and automatically find and set the appropriate program you have previously saved for that location.

For on-the-spot help you go to FAQ's on the App or contact their Hearing Aid Specialist from you smart phone.

Previously, their aids were only for mild to moderate hearing loss. Now, they can be used for severe loss. I have a profound loss and tried them to determine if I could use them. The first thing I noticed was that the aids have a receiver-in-the-canal which gets the sound closer to the eardrum with out the sound having to travel through a plastic tube. The next thing I noticed was how comfortable they were. Even more than my aids which are very comfortable. I had no trouble using glasses with the aids. By adjusting the volume to the loudest setting I was able to hear the voices of all but two persons with soft voices and that was a little difficult. I mentioned that my aids utilized power domes and learned they have numerous size and style domes including power domes which they inserted and I got the familiar barrel sound but was able to hear the soft voices a little better. The conclusion was that their aids were currently not quite ready for profound losses.

They are working on the ability to listen to music from the smart phone like you would an FM radio.

While their aids do not currently have t-coils for looping situations they are aware of the looping wave crossing America and in the Georgetown area so they are looking into incorporating t-coils in the future.

What is the single most compelling thing to me about their new product? You thought I was going to say price which is close (about half of what you normally expect to pay) but even more appealing to me is the thought of not having to frequently chase down new providers as they relocate or go out of business and the ability to actually do your own basic programming with a small learning curve- on the spot 24/7.

Before I purchased I would want to read a written warranty, get a copy and description of all features and a written specifications sheet.

Audiotoniq's production assembly area is ready to go into action and the current launch date in August.

LOOPING UPDATE (see Meeting Notes Feb, 2012)

Looping technology and equipment has been around over 50 years in Europe but is accelerating like crazy in the US with 34M people with hearing loss.

Three demonstrations were just completed in the Georgetown area one of which took place in the Computer Club Annex. Responses were positive.

A slide show of the demonstration is being created by Barb Risnick (Picasa SIG) with photos by Gary Risnick (Digital Camera Instructor) and will be posted on Meeting Notes soon.

Loss of hearing is a disability regulated by the American Disabilities Act which mandates certain facilities that provide amplified sound systems must also provide a permanently installed assistive listening system of which the most effective is an inductive loop system (Looping) the cost of which cannot be passed on to the disabled.

The Computer Club is considering looping the Annex for the benefit of the Club's hearing handicapped because it is the right thing to do.

Looping demo attendees have commented how useful looping would be for the ballroom and cite the major reason for attending very few events held in the ballroom is the inability to understand words. They say the existing amplified sound system provides plenty of noise but who goes to the ballroom just to hear noise.

I have received two separate reports that an offer had been made to loop the ballroom free of charge which Pulte turned down citing too much red tape. No details or confirmation and hard to believe any such an effort would appear to be another award winning effort for Sun City and sell a lot of homes for Pulte.

In the May issue of Sun Rays Jim Romine mentioned 10 currently asked questions by residents and not one of the 10 had to do with the inadequate sound system for hearing handicapped. Either Jim is not "hearing" or we are not asking.

SAM'S CLUB NOW MARKETS HEARING AIDS-ROUND ROCK

Walk In - Find the store's Hearing Aid Center

Meet Wendy Williams, HIS (Hearing Instrument Specialist) Tx License 80419 (Formerly with Cooks Hearing in Georgetown)

Take a free no obligation baseline pure tone hearing test including an evaluation by Wendy and receive a free copy of the test.

Get fitted and demo hearing aids in store or purchase with a 90 day-100% money back return policy

Products:

- Digital Liberty Hearing Aids \$999-\$1,799
- 5 Styles-64 or 32 channels-Custom/Tube/Earmolds
- 1-3 Year extended warranties
- Out of warranty repair and tube replacement
- Programmable T-coil option **ALWAYS DETERMINE IF A HEARING AID HAS T-COIL FOR LOOPING ASSISTIVE SOUND SYSTEMS BEFORE BUYING**
- Liberty Personal Sound Amplification Devices \$79-\$599

If you visit the store and try their hearing aids post a product review on the Forum or email me of your experience and I can post your comments for the benefit of the group.

Give me a copy of your test results and GET IN THE PROFILE GROUP.

PROFILE GROUP UPDATE

- 33 members and growing
- A special and separate group within Hearing Solutions for members that wear aids.
- The purpose is to share information with others in the special group about their aids, providers, fitters, including levels of hearing loss and member ratings of their aids, providers and fitters.
- A spreadsheet is maintained and distributed periodically with all the information, so each participant can see where they stand in hearing loss severity by comparison, can see what others hear with and what they think about them, etc.
- SAMPLE WORKSHEET
 - To get into the Profile Group call Gary Shepard or email hearing@sctxcompclub.org.