

HEARING SOLUTIONS SIG – APRIL 9, 2015

APR – Hearing Aids / iPhone plus BBB Protection for Hearing Aid Purchasers

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Steve Fought – Retired – Military Jet Pilot and College Professor/Dean; presently serves on the Georgetown City Council and several important committees; and lives in Sun City.

HEARING AIDS PROGRAMED BY IPHONES

As a former Jet Plane Pilot, Steve was responsible for listening & deciphering commands from 8 or more voices at one time. After years of service, his ability to distinguish certain words and different voices began to diminish, thus his first hearing aid. Hearing aid technology has advanced tremendously from his first aid until today.

Even though he was happy with his first aid, his latest ReSound 6.0 is quite amazing. Steve only wears one aid, and it can be controlled by his iPhone 6 Plus. Nearly all settings on his aid can be adjusted from his phone, using the available Apple app. Adjustments like volume, treble & bass, mute, T-coil, switching to iTunes, etc. can be controlled from the phone. One can receive phone calls directly through the ReSound 6.0 aid via Blue Tooth; it has a microphone and many others features.

When using Blue Tooth, the aid's battery life last about 3 days but 7-9 days when not using Blue Tooth. There is about a 2 second delay of audio from the phone to the hearing aid caused by syncing phone to aid. Occasionally a call is disconnected or breaks up but advantages override these small inconveniences.

Cost was \$1800 for the ReSound aid. Size of iPhone 6 Plus is large and doesn't fit in his shirt pocket. The ReSound 6.0 aid can be controlled by iPhone 5 or 6. Beltone also makes an aid that links with the iPhone – no details are known.

Alan Bligh – Master's Degree in Consumer Science from Texas Tech University; 37 years serving the public with the Better Business Bureau; member of Hearing Solutions SIG.

BBB PROTECTING THE PUBLIC & HEARING AID PURCHASERS

Some hearing aid companies misrepresent what a hearing aid can do for you; some recommend new aids when you don't need them. What can you do?

Top solution - get your hearing checked by an audiologist or visit an ENT specialist if you suspect a medical cause of hearing loss. How to find an audiologist or dispenser –

- Word of mouth from satisfied customers, but remember what is good for one person may not be the answer for you.
- Inquire about certifications or degrees of training and how long they have been at a certain location or with a certain company. My companies close or a person leaves – then you don't know what to do.
- Ask if professional is salaried or works on a commission.
- Look for most modern equipment that will help you. Be suspicious of provider just offering one hearing aid.
- Be wary of social media - some are plants, especially if they use a company name over & over.
- Ask for the Brand & Model of aids the company sells. Don't rely on recommendations of company staff – research on your own. Don't go by price of aid alone. Accessories might be costing more than the hearing aids.
- Some are rating COSTCO and a good place to go
- Check for previous complaints with the BBB.

Should you have a complaint regarding your purchase of hearing aids –

- Many times the patient doesn't give the aids enough time to work. There is an adjustment period when you begin hearing again. You hear many sounds you have not heard in a long time & some are irritating.
- First, go back to the person you are working with to be checked and for adjustments. Make a list of your daily routines and the situations that are good or bad and give to your audiologist. **Texas requires a 30 day trial period.**
- Usually vendors want you to be satisfied and will work to make you happy.
- If not satisfied, you can ask for a refund if you have already paid for the aids. The refund policy should have been stated in writing before paying for the aids.
- You can file a complaint with the BBB. <https://www.bbb.org/consumer-complaints/file-a-complaint/get-started>

Be aware of all scams, such as these main tactics schemers use –

- Something for nothing pitch. Don't give your social security number to those that contact you via phone or to anyone contacting you.
- Don't open the door to an unknown person. You can usually tell when you get a solicitor's phone call, don't answer; don't reply to internet offers. Mail, telephone, and online are where scams are.
- Opportunity meetings – be wary of these. They make you feel obligated. Check these companies out.
- Grandmother Scam – get a phone call. Ask you for money real quick. Wire the money. Sometimes they use name of your family gotten from Face Book.
- Home repair schemes. Contractor asks for money up front then never comes back.
- Some play on your sympathy like charities – they raise money and don't distribute it.
- Credit card fraud is rampant.

State Committee of Examiners in the Fitting and Dispensing of Hearing Instruments -
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/fitters/default.shtm>

Texas Licensing Requirements for Hearing Aid Dispensers -

<http://www.asha.org/Advocacy/state/info/TX/Texas-Hearing-Aid-Dispensing-Requirements/>

NOTE:

Ototoxicity - Medicines That Cause Hearing Loss

Research to determine if you are taking a drug that could cause your hearing loss.