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**The American Academy of Audiology Recommends a Hearing Check During May’s National Better Hearing Month**

Americans impacted by hearing loss hits record numbers

**RESTON, Va., April 16, 2018—**May is National Better Hearing Month and the American Academy of Audiology is encouraging the public to make an appointment with an audiologist if they suspect hearing loss for themselves or any of their loved ones.

According to a 2016 study by the National Institutes of Health NIDCD, approximately 15 percent (37.5 million) of American adults aged 20 to 69, have some trouble with hearing and approximately 28.8 million could benefit from the use of hearing aids. As the baby boomer population ages, more Americans are forced to face hearing health challenges. Growing numbers of younger Americans (including millennials and GenX’ers) are also reporting hearing problems.

While age is still the greatest factor in hearing loss, many younger people also experience hearing problems due to exposure to loud music and noises including occupational noise. Among adults aged 70 and older with hearing loss who could benefit from hearing aids, fewer than one in three (30 percent) has ever used them.

“Although technology has progressed extensively and hearing aids are no longer the bulky contraptions of years past, some people still feel a stigma with them,” stated Jackie Clark Ph.D., president of the American Academy of Audiology. She explained that many hearing aids are not even detectable.

“Audiologists are the experts in hearing health,” Clark said. “Hearing aids are not always the only or recommended solution, which is why it’s important to see an audiologist to further determine the appropriate treatment.” Sometimes the cause is temporary or a symptom of another illness or disease. An audiologist will run various tests to determine the cause and will be able to recommend treatment. The Academy represents more than 12,000 audiologists across the country and has an extensive “[Find an Audiologist” directory](http://memberportal.audiology.org/Directories/Find-an-Audiologist), whereby consumers can locate audiologists based in geography and specialty areas.

Some signs of hearing loss may include:

* Suddenly having to turn up the volume of the television, radio, or stereo and having

other family members complain that the volume is too loud.

* Difficulty understanding people speaking to you and asking people to repeat themselves.
* Difficulty with phone conversations and understanding the other person.
* Sudden inability to hear the door bell, the dog barking, and other household sounds.
* People telling you that you speak too loudly.
* Ringing in the ears.

School-aged children with hearing loss will sometimes exhibit poor school performance because they can’t understand the teacher assignments or classroom interactions. If hearing loss has been present from a young age, they often don’t recognize the loss and can’t identify the problem.

“Hearing loss is a problem with people of all ages,” said Clark. “If you or any of your family members experience difficulty in hearing, you should make an appointment with an audiologist.”

In furthering working to help the public recognize hearing loss, the American Academy of Audiology will work with HearX Group, technology organization out of South Africa, to launch a hearing screening app this summer, hearScreen USA. The app will revolutionize access in the hearing health industry across the U.S. by leveraging the current use of smart phone users (estimated by Statista at 224.3 million in 2017.) Based on technology developed by the University of Pretoria, South Africa, the app provides accurate detection of hearing loss in under three minutes.

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The American Academy of Audiology is the world's largest professional organization of, by and for audiologists. The active membership of more than 12,000 is dedicated to providing quality hearing care services through professional development, education, research, and increased public awareness of hearing and balance disorders. For more information or to find an audiologist, go to [www.howsyourhearing.org](http://www.howsyourhearing.org).