

## HEARING HEALTH CARE IN THE WORKPLACE

Hearing Loss is one of the most important unaddressed health conditions in America today, affecting more than 31.5 million Americans — most of whom are below retirement age.

Hearing loss can be very costly to individuals, businesses and society as a whole in the form of diminished job performance, isolation from relationships and an increase in overall health issues, such as anxiety and depression. With the increase in hearing loss, it becomes increasingly necessary that hearing health care become a workplace wellness priority.

### Impact of untreated hearing loss

- Workers with untreated hearing loss take **5 times more sick days** due to severe stress than those without hearing loss.
- Misunderstandings between co-workers or management due to hearing loss **decrease job satisfaction and contribute to employee mistakes.**
- Poor communication with clients due to hearing loss can cause confusion, **diminishing client satisfaction.**
- Hearing loss is linked to a **three-fold risk of falling** among working-aged people (40 to 69). Falls and fall-related injuries cost billions in health care costs in the United States each year.
- Unaddressed hearing loss often leads to **isolation, anxiety and depression.** For employers, the estimated annual economic burden of depression, sadness, and mental illness is \$348.04 per employee. More absences from work are due to depression, sadness, and mental health issues than from any other illness.
- Hearing loss is linked to heart disease. Some researchers even hypothesize that hearing loss could be an early warning against heart disease — America's number one killer — potentially presenting an opportunity for early intervention, better outcomes, and contained health care costs. Heart disease is a huge expense for American businesses.

### Testing & Treatment

Despite the growing number of employees suffering from hearing loss, far too few are seeking the hearing health care they need. Less than one-fourth of employees have had their hearing checked in the past two years; and only one in five people who could benefit from a hearing aid actually wears one.

Primary barriers to employees seeking treatment include the stigma of hearing loss, financial hardship of covering hearing aids and the general lack of awareness about the importance of prompt treatment to restore hearing before further hearing damage is done.

Fortunately when addressed early, hearing loss is largely manageable. The vast majority of people with hearing loss can benefit from hearing aids. Hearing aids will improve an employees ability to communicate effectively, hear in meetings and on the phone, understand the needs of clients, customers and coworkers. Hearing aids will also increase an employees safety, as well as, their quality of life. Eight out of ten hearing aid users say they're satisfied with the changes that have occurred in their lives specifically due to hearing aids.

### Health & Wellness Initiatives

Employers can show their support of employees' overall health and wellness by providing access to hearing benefit options, covering preventive care and treatment, and by promoting education to employees on the importance of regular hearing check-ups and prompt treatment if hearing loss is detected. By taking such actions, employers can help their employees achieve a better quality of life, while preventing the health and productivity related consequences of untreated hearing loss.

Since many medical plans do not cover hearing health care, employers can consider offering the **Comprehensive Ear & Hearing Benefits Plan** as an ancillary benefit. Our plan is at no cost to your business or your employees. This plan offers access to our staff of hearing professionals, FREE hearing screens, substantial savings on hearing aids and custom hearing protection, guaranteed trial periods for hearing aids and more.

Hearing aids are eligible expenses for health savings accounts (HSAs) and flexible savings accounts (FSAs). Employers can promote healthy hearing by integrating education on the importance of hearing health care into existing health education efforts, such as wellness newsletters and health fairs. Content for education, is available free of charge from Comprehensive Ear & Hearing. Our professionals are also available to visit worksites to offer complimentary hearing screenings and deliver educational presentations.

## Employees and Family Members Receive

- FREE hearing screens
- FREE hearing instrument demonstrations and trial use
- \$500 OFF a pair of digital hearing instruments
- FREE clean & checks on current hearing instruments
- 20% OFF hearing instrument accessories or assistive listening devices.
- 20% OFF custom hearing protection (music, shooters, occupational, swim plugs)
- 0% financing options available

*Discounts cannot be combined with other offers.*

Comprehensive  
**EAR & HEARING**  
 Zeeland • Holland • Grand Haven



Zeeland (616) 772-1986  
 Holland (616) 393-5482  
 Grand Haven (616) 847-3144

Comprehensive Services with a Caring Touch!

Hearing Benefits Card

The Comprehensive Ear & Hearing Benefits Plan is available to all members of the Chamber of Commerce in Allegan, Kent, Muskegon and Ottawa Counties. If you'd like more information on the Comprehensive Ear & Hearing Business Benefits Program or to receive benefits cards for your employees, call Deb Broemer at 616.847.3144.

ONE IN THREE AMERICANS

## IN THE WORK FORCE HAS UNTREATED HEARING LOSS...

More than **10 percent** of full time employees have a **diagnosed hearing problem** and another **30 percent suspect they have a problem** but have not sought treatment.

Of those with suspected hearing loss, nearly all report that this hearing loss impacts them on the job, with complaints ranging from misunderstanding what is being said to pretending to hear when they cannot and having trouble on the phone.

Hearing is an important part of everyday lives -- keeping us informed, safe and connected. Good communication is critical to business success for both employer and employee.

...WITH NUMEROUS

## NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Many people put off getting help for their hearing loss because they think it's insignificant — something they can deal with by simply turning the TV louder or asking friends to repeat themselves. But research has linked untreated hearing loss to significant issues such as:

- Irritability, negativism and anger
- Fatigue, tension, stress and depression
- Avoidance or withdrawal from social situations
- Social rejection and loneliness
- Reduced alertness and increased risk to personal safety
- Impaired memory and ability to learn new tasks
- Reduced job performance and earning power
- Diminished psychological and overall health

[betterhearing.org](http://betterhearing.org)

## Comprehensive EAR & HEARING

Zeeland • Holland • Grand Haven

1101 Columbus Ave. Grand Haven, MI 49417  
854 S. Washington, Suite 340, Holland, MI 49423  
300 S. State St. Suite 1, Zeeland, MI 49464



Kristin Johnston, BA, BC-HIS, Owner



Carli Van Harken, HIS, Owner



Cari Marzolf, MA, CCC-A, Audiologist

- Audiological testing • Hearing instruments • Custom sound & swim plugs
- Free hearing instrument trials • Free consultations
- Repairs and maintenance on all makes of hearing instruments
- Medical ear & hearing care and wax removal by ENT
- Medicare and most insurance accepted • Medical flexible spending account eligible

### Office Hours

Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm  
After hours appointments available by request.

*Professional Services with a Caring Touch!*