

Buying Hearing Aids - Be Aware

By Walt Hopkins BC-HIS and Better Hearing Institute

What about insurance for hearing aids?

Perhaps you have seen the recent advertisements for hearing aids that are “covered” by Humana or other supplemental insurance companies. The ads also state that, even if you don’t have their insurance, you can buy hearing aids through them at greatly reduced prices from hearing aid specialists who are their providers.

Here is an example of how this situation actually works: If The Hearing Place were a provider for Humana (or any of the other reduced price insurance companies), Humana would refer you to *us* when you responded to their advertising campaign. After testing you, we would purchase your hearing aids from Humana and would *only* be able to fit you with the *brands* and *technology levels* they provide. After you are fit with the hearing aids, you would pay Humana for the lower priced hearing aids and Humana would pay us a set fee. The problem with this scenario, and the reason The Hearing Place is not a provider for Humana or any of the other similar supplemental insurance companies, is the lower-priced hearing aids may not give you the *results* you require, even though they are high-quality budget hearing aids. Also they only provide two follow-up visits at no charge and then there is a fee for any other services. At The Hearing Place we have at least two years free repair and there is no charge for any repair or service we do in office.

At The Hearing Place we carry five major brands of hearing aids, and we have *competitive pricing* and the same *quality* as Humana, Costco, other insurance companies, and the internet. As the “Baby Boomer” generation begins to age, more and more major medical policies are including hearing aids with their coverage and The Hearing Place will be happy to bill your private insurance company.



Buying hearing aids on the internet*

The Better Hearing Institute (BHI) is warning consumers of the inherent risks associated with purchasing over-the-counter, one-size-fits-all hearing aids instead of consulting a hearing healthcare professional. Hearing loss is sometimes the symptom of a serious underlying medical problem. All 50 states require that consumers use a credentialed hearing care professional to purchase hearing aids.

BHI also points out that hearing devices that are purchased over-the-counter or Internet without the consultation of a hearing healthcare professional may result in the devices not being accurately customized to the specific hearing needs of the individual.

“Today’s state-of-the-art hearing aids should be programmed to the individual’s specific hearing loss requirements in order to provide good levels of benefit and customer satisfaction,” says Sergei Kochkin, BHI’s Executive Director. “The process requires a complete in-person hearing assessment; the training and skills of a credentialed hearing healthcare professional in order to prescriptively fit the hearing aids using sophisticated computer programs; and appropriate in-person follow-up and counseling. This is not possible when consumers purchase one-size-fits-all hearing aids over the Internet or elsewhere.”



“One size fits all”

“The best advice BHI can give anyone purchasing a hearing aid is to find a state credentialed hearing healthcare professional and to communicate openly during the evaluation, fitting and trial period to increase the likelihood that you are receiving the best possible benefit from your hearing aids,” says Kochkin. “It will make a tremendous difference in your ability to hear and in your quality of life.”

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