



Washington Declaration 2016 New Hearing Technologies for Hard of Hearing People

Persons who have a hearing loss constitute one of the largest categories of disability in the world. Approximately 15% of the world's adult population has some degree of hearing loss. For many of them, hearing aids can dramatically improve their lives.

Hearing aids are very important to enhance accessibility and participation in society and their affordability is crucial as noted in the Essen declaration of April 2015. Hearing aids and technology should be available and affordable. No one should be denied hearing access because of price.

Hearing aids are essential to achieving the goals of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for many persons who are hard of hearing. Under the CRPD, a person with a hearing loss has the right to a full and independent life (Article 5), to accessibility (Article 9) and to habilitation and rehabilitation (Article 25). The UN CRPD has been approved and ratified by 165 member states.

Hearing aid technology is constantly improving, but brings with it challenges. IFHOH encourages technological innovation and welcomes safe new developments that promote hearing accessibility. These new developments should ensure for the compatibility of hearing aids with cellular phones and assistive listening devices. IFHOH believes, that for the foreseeable future, the proven technology of the Telecoil must be included and activated in hearing aids and cochlear implant processors. Cellular (mobile) phones and other sources of sound, should be compatible with the Telecoil. New wireless technologies should work in parallel to the Telecoil.

IFHOH calls upon its members worldwide to work with governments and other bodies to provide hard of hearing persons access to hearing aids, assistive listening devices and new hearing technologies that are affordable, of proven quality, and professionally approved, with training and support to use them successfully.

Adopted unanimously at the IFHOH BGM – Washington DC – June 22nd, 2016
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