Men Who Want to Stay Active, Feel Younger, and Remain Socially and Professionally Engaged Should Address Hearing Loss, BHI Advises

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WASHINGTON, May 23, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Hearing health affects a man's lifestyle, and if he wants to stay active, feel younger, and remain socially and professionally engaged, he should address any hearing loss he may be experiencing. This is the overriding message that the Better Hearing Institute [1] (BHI) is delivering to men around the country in support of National Men's Health Week [2], which leads up to and includes Father's Day. This year, National Men's Health Week runs from June 10 through June 16.

To help men address their hearing health and determine if they need a comprehensive hearing test by a hearing healthcare professional, BHI is offering the free, quick, and confidential online BHI Hearing Check at www.hearingcheck.org [3].

Studies show that men who address their hearing loss—with the use of hearing aids or other appropriate treatment and accommodations—most often improve their quality of life because it helps them maintain a more engaged, active lifestyle at both work and home. Fortunately, the vast majority of people with hearing loss can benefit from hearing aids. In fact, eight out of ten hearing aid users say they're satisfied with the changes that have occurred in their lives specifically due to their hearing aids.

For decades, research has shown an association between unaddressed hearing loss and a whole range of physical, mental, and emotional conditions—from depression, anxiety, and strained relationships to cognitive decline, difficulty learning new tasks, and even falling. A national BHI study, in fact, uncovered income loss as an under-recognized consequence of leaving hearing loss unaddressed. People with untreated hearing loss, the study found, lose as much as $30,000 in income annually, depending on their degree of hearing loss. But the use of hearing aids was found to reduce the risk of income loss dramatically—by 90 to 100 percent for those with milder hearing loss, and from 65 to 77 percent for those whose hearing loss was severe to moderate. The study also found that people with severe hearing loss who do use hearing aids are twice as likely to be employed as their peers who do not use them.

In recent years, considerable information has emerged on the link between hearing loss and several common chronic diseases that men suffer—including heart disease, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, Alzheimer's disease, and depression. While research is still needed to fully understand the association between hearing loss and these illnesses, this relatively new information makes it all the more important that men take the BHI Hearing Check [3] and include hearing health as part of their routine medical care.

BHI reminds men that that there are simple things they can do to protect their hearing. Listening to smartphones and MP3 players only at a low volume, and wearing earplugs in noisy environments—like sporting events, clubs, concerts, or when using power tools and riding motorcycles—are examples.

As part of its efforts to promote National Men's Health Week [2], BHI is encouraging hearing healthcare professionals nationwide to organize hearing screenings in their communities; host health fairs; disseminate men's health information; and publicize National Men's Health Week [2].

For more information on National Men's Health Week, visit www.menshealthmonth.org [2]. For more information on why healthy hearing is an important part of a man's overall health and quality of life, visit www.betterhearing.org [1].

A Technological Transformation

Many men enjoy and keep pace with the latest in consumer electronics. It's surprising, then, to find that so many men are not fully aware of the technological revolution that has occurred in the hearing aid marketplace in the past few years. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness of recent advances holds many back from dealing with their hearing health.

To be informed healthcare consumers, men need to realize that today's state-of-the-art hearing aids are highly effective, sleek, and sophisticated wearable electronics that can help them stay actively connected—not only to life, but also to their other prized electronics, from smartphones to home entertainment systems.

Here are five little-known facts about today's modern hearing aids that active, youthful-minded men should know:

(1) They're virtually invisible. Many of today's hearing aids sit discreetly and comfortably inside your ear canal, providing both natural sound quality, and discreet and easy use.

(2) They automatically adjust to all kinds of soundscapes. Whether it's the rustling of sheets and whispers on the pillow that you're after, easy conversation in a crowded restaurant, or the chirp of crickets on a late summer's evening, recent technological advances have made hearing aids far more versatile than ever before—and in a broad range of sound environments.

(3) You can do water sports and sweat while wearing them. Waterproof, digital hearing aids have arrived. This new feature is built into some newly designed hearing aids for those concerned about water, humidity, and dust. This feature suits the active lifestyles of swimmers, skiers, snowboarders, intensive sports enthusiasts, and anyone working in dusty, demanding environments.

(4) They love your smartphone, home entertainment system, and other prized

electronics. Wireless, digital hearing aids are now the norm. That means seamless connectivity—directly into your hearing aid(s) at volumes that are just right for you—from your smartphone, iPod, television, and other beloved high-tech gadgets. What's more, you own the volume. No one around you needs to be affected.

(5) They're always at the ready. A new rechargeable feature on some newly designed hearing aids allows you to recharge your hearing aids every night, so they're ready, ramped up, and waiting for you in the morning. There's no more fumbling with small batteries. Just place the hearing aids into the charger at night, and they're ready to go in the morning.

For a step-by-step breakdown of what to expect, ask, and look for when visiting a hearing healthcare professional and purchasing a hearing aid, download *Your Guide to Buying Hearing Aids at* www.BetterHearing.org [1]*, under publications.*

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Links:
[1] http://www.betterhearing.org/
[2] http://www.menshealthmonth.org/
[3] http://www.hearingcheck.org/