

# NEWS RELEASE



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*For Immediate Release*

## ***hi HealthInnovations' Hearing Test Kit For Primary Care Physicians Receives U.S. Patent***

- *New hearing test kit provides an innovative way for primary care physicians to test for hearing loss, making it easier and more affordable to diagnose the condition*
- *The air conduction hearing test is available to all health professionals for \$179, a significant value compared to other hearing loss tests that can cost \$1,000 or more*
- *Many UnitedHealthcare in-network physicians and care professionals can access the test kit at no cost*

MINNETONKA, Minn. (May 4, 2015) – [hi HealthInnovations](http://hihealthinnovations.com), an Optum business and UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH) company, has received a 2015 U.S. Patent for an air conduction hearing test kit used by primary care physicians and other health professionals. The hearing test kit is an affordable and easy-to-use resource to test for hearing loss, a condition that affects more than 48 million people nationwide.

The kit performs air conduction threshold testing, which produces calibrated, controlled tones at different frequencies and intensities, enabling accurate hearing test, or audiogram, results. The hearing test kit, which can be used by physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and other licensed medical professionals, includes:

- a set of high-quality, audio-grade earphones with replacement ear tips;
- an audio-grade USB soundcard;
- easy-to-follow instruction card and link to a website to view a demo of the hearing test; and
- training and ongoing support from *hi HealthInnovations*.

Many people access the health system through their primary care physician, and consumers are more likely to talk to their primary care physician about hearing loss than they would any other medical or hearing specialist, according to a survey by AARP and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

“The *hi HealthInnovations* hearing test kit has made it more affordable and convenient for my practice to meet the hearing health needs of the patients we serve,” said Eduardo Cuevas, M.D., a primary care physician in Washington state who currently uses the test. “By helping diagnose hearing loss earlier, my patients are able to obtain the treatment they need to live as full and healthy a life as possible.”

The hearing test kit is available at no cost to many physicians and care professionals in UnitedHealthcare's national care provider network. All other care professionals can purchase the test kit for \$179 each, a significant value compared to some in-office test kits that retail for more than \$1,000.

“People wait an average of seven years to obtain treatment for hearing loss, so making testing equipment more widely available is helping enable earlier detection and treatment of this condition,” said Lisa Tseng, M.D., CEO of *hi HealthInnovations*. “Hearing loss is associated with many other health conditions, including dementia, depression and increased risk of falls, so it is important for people to get their hearing tested and, if necessary, obtain treatment.”

Physicians interested in learning more about the hearing test kit can call *hi HealthInnovations* at 1-866-334-4425. The test is compliant with ANSI S3.6-1996, a specification for audiometers established by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Hearing loss is a significant health issue in the United States and globally; more than [1.1 billion young adults are at risk of developing hearing loss](#), according to a recent study by the World Health Organization. Spurring the increase is an aging population and more frequent exposure to loud sounds that can cause noise-induced hearing loss, including the growing popularity of earbud headphones. Hearing aids can help more than 90 percent of people with hearing loss; however, hearing aids can cost up to \$8,000 a pair, making them unaffordable for many people.

*hi HealthInnovations* sells high-tech, custom-programmed hearing aids – priced from \$799 to \$999 each – directly to consumers, helping to improve access and affordability of these important devices for everyone. The company also makes available hearing aids at even greater discounts to [UnitedHealthcare plan participants](#), [other health plans](#) and [directly to employers](#).

#### **About *hi HealthInnovations***

*hi HealthInnovations* offers custom-programmed, digital hearing aids at significant discounts to the 48 million U.S. consumers with hearing loss. These innovative devices are delivered through a national staff and network of audiologists and hearing health professionals who provide hearing tests, fittings, seminars and counseling online, by phone and in person. *hi HealthInnovations* is an Optum business and part of UnitedHealth Group (NYSE:UNH), a diversified health and well-being company dedicated to helping people live healthier lives and making health care work better.

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