

# Holistic Hearing Health Care

## CLIENT-CENTRED CARE

Care which shifts the sole focus from hearing aids to treating the person and their hearing loss.

In the United States, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine reported findings of the Committee on Accessible and Affordable Hearing Health Care for Adults in a report entitled 'Hearing Health Care for Adults: Priorities for Improving Access and Affordability', released June 2016. CHHA supports these findings. Its recommendations to the Food and Drug Administration could be paralleled in Canada to the appropriate authority.

## Report Summary

- Hearing is vital to communication, health, function, and quality of life. Individuals need to be alert to their hearing health, as hearing loss can range from mild to profound and tends to increase with age, onset can be gradual, and each individual's hearing needs are unique.
- Hearing health care involves a wide range of services and technologies with ever-expanding and evolving options; however, many people do not have access to these options or cannot afford them.
- Hearing loss is a public health and societal concern; engagement and action are needed across the spectrum of relevant stakeholders, including individuals and families, professionals, non profit organizations, industries, government, and the health care community.

## Report Recommendations

Given the vital nature of hearing to communication and overall quality of life, as stated in their [report](#), the committee made the following 12 recommendations, which the FDA, other governmental bodies and professional organization can take into consideration:

The recommendations from this American report (not prioritized) provide a foundation for suggested changes to the model of hearing health care in Canada. CHHA can be instrumental in assisting government to implement these changes.

1. Improve population-based information on hearing loss and hearing health care
2. Develop and promote measures to assess and improve quality of hearing health care services
3. Remove FDA's regulation for medical evaluation or waiver of that evaluation prior to hearing aid purchase
4. Empower consumers and patients in their use of hearing health care
5. Improve access to hearing health care for underserved and vulnerable populations
6. Promote hearing health care in wellness and medical visits for those with concerns about their hearing

7. Implement a new FDA device category for over-the-counter wearable hearing devices
8. Improve the compatibility and interoperability of hearing technologies with communications systems and the transparency of hearing aid programming
9. Improve affordability of hearing health care by actions across federal, state, and private sectors
10. Evaluate and implement innovative models of hearing health care to improve access, quality, and affordability
11. Improve publicly available information on hearing health
12. Promote individual, employer, private sector, and community-based actions to support and manage hearing health and effective communication

The complete 379-page report can be accessed [here](#).