

Georgia Hearing Aid Loaner Bank (GA HALB)
Georgia Department of Public Health
Maternal and Child Health Program
Georgia Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Intervention (UNHSI) Program

The purpose of this program is to provide temporary hearing aids for children with hearing loss, who are birth to 36 months of age, while they are waiting to receive their personal amplification devices. The Georgia Hearing Aid Loaner Bank lends hearing aids for up to six months, on a onetime per child basis, for children newly diagnosed with a hearing loss. Referrals to the program must be initiated through a District UNHSI Follow-up Coordinator, who will oversee the application process and serve as a resource to the family throughout the process.

Please contact the District UNHSI Follow-up Coordinator (see contact list) in the family's home district if you have any questions.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

I. Eligibility Requirements

- A. Confirmed diagnosis of hearing loss from referring audiologist.
- B. Resident of Georgia and under the age of 36 months. Child must meet age guidelines at time of initial application.
- C. The application must be submitted to the District UNHSI Follow-up Coordinator, who will then forward to the Auditory Verbal Center.
- D. Family must be in the process of obtaining, or making arrangements to obtain, a permanent amplification system through insurance or other means. Child must be enrolled in the District UNHSI Program.

II. Required documentation for application

- A. Required documentation from referring Audiologist to be reviewed by UNHSI program coordinator or program consultant prior to hearing aid fitting.
 - i. Copy of comprehensive diagnostic audiological evaluation (including ABR, OAE, and behavioral thresholds obtained no more than 2 months prior to the hearing aid evaluation)
 - ii. Medical clearance for hearing aid fitting from an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist
 - iii. Copy of 'Fitting Recommendations'
- B. Required documentation from parent or legal guardian – Loan Application Form, see attachment.
 - i. Documentation stating the reason why the parent or legal guardian has no immediate access to hearing aids.
 - ii. Documentation of insurance coverage and/or medical assistance eligibility.
 - iii. Documentation that information was provided regarding early intervention services.
 - iv. A signed agreement stating the terms and conditions of the loan at hearing aid fitting, to be faxed back to the District UNHSI Follow-up Coordinator.

III. Length of Loan period

- A. The hearing aid will be on loan for a maximum of 6 months. There will be no extensions of the loan period. If the family needs additional loaner time while they identify funding, they can contact the District UNHSI Follow-up Coordinator for assistance with identifying other loaner hearing aid resources.

- B. Only one set of ear molds will be provided. Families will be responsible for subsequently needed ear molds.
- C. The audiologist working with the family will be responsible for finding the funding resources for the family.
 - i. The UNHSI Program/ UNHSI District Follow-up Coordinators will develop, distribute, and maintain a current list of funding resources.
 - ii. The UNHSI Program does not have funding available to assist families in purchasing hearing aids.

IV. Responsibility of the parents/legal guardians who borrow devices from the GA HALB

A parent or legal guardian who borrows a hearing aid for an eligible child shall:

1. Be the custodian of the hearing aid
2. Return the hearing aid immediately to the dispensing audiologist upon the expiration of the loan period or receipt of a suitable permanent hearing aid, whichever occurs first.
3. Be responsible for the proper care and use of the devices.
4. Be responsible for any damage to or loss of the hearing aid not covered by the hearing warranty up to \$150.00. This excludes normal wear and tear that is covered under the hearing aid warranty, but may include any shipping and handling charges incurred when repairing the hearing aid.
5. Schedule a 6-month follow-up appointment with the audiologist at the initial fitting of the loaner aid(s) for the purpose of returning the aid(s) at the end of the loan period.
6. Sign an agreement stating the terms and conditions of the loan.

V. Shipment and Return of hearing aids to the GA HALB

- A. After receiving all required documentation from the dispensing audiologist, suitable hearing aids will be shipped (insured for up to \$1,000.00) or delivered to the audiologist. The GA HALB will pay for return cost of mailing the insured (\$1,000.00) package up to \$17.00.
- B. Upon completion of the loan period the hearing aid(s) will be returned to the audiologist for shipment back to the GA HALB.
- C. Progress Report/End of Loan Period Checklist must be completed by dispensing audiologist and submitted to the District UNHSI Follow-up Coordinator. See Attached
- D. Once the device is received back at the GA HALB it will be cleaned and stored in a locked cabinet.

VI. Warranty, Insurance and Repairs

- A. All hearing aids are covered by warranty and loss and damage insurance for a period of two years. Each distributor is notified when a device is initially sent out.
- B. The fitting audiologist can return the device to the manufacturer for repair during the loan period. Warranty information will be provided by the GA HALB.
- C. Lost instruments should be reported to the UNHSI District Follow-up Coordinators.
- D. In cases of lost or demonstrated abuse of the loaned instrument, the GA HALB Program reserves the right to deny a replacement instrument.

VII. Required Follow-Up

The parent must schedule a 6-month follow-up appointment with the audiologist at the initial fitting of the loaner hearing aid for the purpose of returning the hearing aid at the end of the loan period. The date of the 6-month follow-up appointment must be communicated to the District UNHSI Follow-up Coordinator.

A progress report from the audiologist, care coordinator, or case manager indicating the status of the parent or legal guardian's access to permanent devices should be submitted to District UNHSI Follow-up Coordinator at the end of the loan period.

VIII. Reimbursement for Audiologist

The audiologist will be reimbursed by the District UNHSI program \$150.00 per device, which includes cost for the earmold(s) and for each initial fitting of the loaner unit.

Once the fitting occurs, the following documentation must be submitted for reimbursement of fitting/ follow up fees and ear mold:

1. Copy of ear mold invoice (if applicable)
2. Copy of aided test results and real ear measurements
3. Date of loaner recipient's 6-month follow-up appointment

IX. Storage and Cleaning of Hearing Aids

- A. All devices are cleaned and working properly before being appropriately stored.
- B. All devices are to be kept in a locked storage unit.

Possible Hearing Aid Funding Resources

In response to the immediate need for hearing aid funding, Let Georgia Hear has compiled a list of possible resources that may be able to help you as you work to obtain hearing aids for your children. If you come across a resource that has been useful to your family, please email us at info@letgeorgiahear.org and we will update this document. This list is for families who do not have hearing aid coverage through their medical insurance plan and are not eligible for Medicaid, Amerigroup, Wellcare or Peachcare insurance.

Last Updated: 2/15/12

AG Bell

www.agbell.org

AG Bell is a wonderful resource and often has scholarships that can assist your family. They also keep a list of resources for financial assistance at <http://nc.agbell.org/Page.aspx?pid=588>.

These resources are included in this document, but they may update it from time to time.

Audient

<http://www.audientalliance.org/>

1-866-956-5400

AUDIANT helps low-income people nationwide access quality hearing aids and related care at a significantly lower cost.

Auditory-Verbal Center

<http://www.avchears.org>

404-633-8911

May be able to provide access to temporary loaner hearing aids. Have your audiologist contact them directly for more information.

CareCredit

<http://www.carecredit.com>

800-677-0718

CareCredit, a part of GE Capital, offers healthcare financing for consumers. Continued advancements in technology, and procedures that are often not covered or fully covered by insurance, have created new choices for care, increasing the demand for financing options. CareCredit is a healthcare credit card that can be used as a payment option for certain expenses not covered by insurance or to bridge situations when desired care exceeds insurance coverage.

Children's Medical Services

<http://health.state.ga.us/programs/cms/>
404-657-4855

This is a public health program that can offer assistance with hearing aids for those financially eligible. Their mission is to provide a comprehensive system of healthcare for children and youth with eligible chronic medical condition from birth to twenty-one years of age.

Credit-Able

<http://www.thecfii.org/index.php?/creditable/>
404-541-9055

Credit-Able's mission is to make independence affordable for Georgians with disabilities. Credit-Able provides low-interest loans through participating credit unions to enable Georgians with disabilities access to affordable financing for Assistive Technology and Home & Vehicle Modifications.

Deeming Waiver (also known as Katie Beckett)

For more information on this process, see

http://dch.georgia.gov/vgn/images/portal/cit_1210/7/34/46098632Deeming%20Waiver%20Manual.pdf. Our understanding is that families were successful in securing these funds for their children's hearing aids in the past but that this is no longer the case.

Disabled Children's Relief Fund

<http://www.dcrf.com/>
516-377-1605

Disabled Children's Relief Fund is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that provides disabled children with assistance to obtain wheelchairs, orthopedic braces, walkers, lifts, hearing aids, eyeglasses, medical equipment, physical therapy, and surgery. Recipients are children who are blind, deaf, amputees, and those who have been diagnosed with disabilities. DCRF focuses special attention on helping children throughout the U.S. that do not have adequate health insurance, especially the physically challenged.

Easter Seals Champions for Children

<http://www.championsforchildrenga.org>
1-866-584-3742

info@swga-easterseals.org

If you have been denied Medicaid and Katie-Beckett (Deeming Waiver) funding you should try this organization. Their charter is to provide direct financial assistance and support services for Georgia's medically fragile and special needs children and their families.

First Hand Foundation

<https://applications.cerner.com/firsthand/default.aspx>

(816) 201-1569

First Hand Foundation is a nonprofit organization that helps children with health-related needs when insurance and other financial resources have been exhausted. Their mission is to directly impact the health status of a young life.

Foundation for Sight and Sound - Help America Hear Program

http://www.foundationforsightandsound.org/help_america_hear_program.html

631-366-3461

The Foundation for Sight and Sound, through its *Help America Hear Program*, provides hearing aids for men, women, and children with limited financial resources.

Friends of Man

<http://www.friendsofman.org/index.php>

303-798-2342

Friends of Man helps people of all ages with a large variety of needs including hearing aids.

Georgia Families

<http://www.georgia-families.com/>

1-888-423-6765

Georgia Families is the program for people in Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids that guides them in choosing a health plan and a Primary Care Provider. Most Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids members must enroll in Georgia Families and choose a health plan and a provider.

Georgia Lions Lighthouse Foundation

<http://www.lionslighthouse.org>

800-718-7483

In 2010, the Lighthouse served over 7,500 uninsured and low-income Georgians. With the help of this foundation, 986 people received 1,810 hearing aids through their new digital aid program. To be eligible for services, patients must be uninsured or underinsured and fall below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. The majority of Lighthouse patients, 66 percent, fall below 100% of the FPG.

Georgia PINES

www.gapines.info

404-298-4882

Georgia Parent/Infant Network for Educational Service. This is our statewide early intervention program for families of children birth to five years of age with diagnosed hearing impairment and/or vision loss. They *may* have access to *loaner* aids for your child.

Hearing Charities of America

<http://www.hearingcharities.org/programs/direct-support/hearing-aid-resources.html>

The purpose of Hearing Charities is to support those impacted by speech and hearing disorders by expanding awareness, volunteerism, and philanthropy in the communities Hearing Charities serves. The above link is a list of available resources for hearing aids.

The HIKE Fund, Inc. (Hearing Impaired Kids Endowment Fund)

<http://www.thehikefund.org/>

Supported by Job's Daughters International, the HIKE Fund provides hearing devices for children with hearing loss between the ages of newborn and twenty years whose parents are unable to meet this special need financially. Approximately 100 children are provided with hearing devices each year through this fund.

Katie Turner Memorial through UGA College of Education Foundation

Contact Carol Ann Raymond / Clinic Director
593 Aderhold Hall
Athens, GA 30602
706-542-4598

This is a foundation to aid in paying for children's (0-18 years old) hearing aids, assistive listening devices, FM systems and other related costs. This would include high cost devices such as hearing aids or lower cost devices such as bed shaker alarms. It is sponsored by the Turner family in memory of their daughter Katie.

Medicaid

You may want to consider applying your child for Medicaid to see if he/she would qualify. If you or someone in your family needs health care, you should apply for Medicaid even if you are not sure whether you qualify. Some income and assets do not count against you. For example, owning your home will not stop you from getting Medicaid. You may find a Medicaid application at the following Web sites: DFCS: www.dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov; DCH: www.dch.ga.gov; DHR: www.dhr.georgia.gov; and Georgia Health Partnership: www.ghp.georgia.gov (click on the member information tab).

Check out the brochure "[Understanding Medicaid](#)" below for more information:

http://www.georgia.gov/vgn/images/portal/cit_1210/34/9/31944892UnderstandingMedicaid.pdf

For Information on Applying for Medicaid, see
http://www.georgia.gov/00/channel_title/0,2094,31446711_33935684,00.html

Miles 4 Major

<http://www.miles4major.com>
miles4major@gmail.com
678-986-0679

Miles-4-Major is a non-profit organization that raises awareness and financial support for families who have young children with hearing loss and are in need of hearing aids. The application for funding is available on their website.

Miracle-Ear® Children's Foundation

<http://www.miracle-ear.com/childrenrequest.aspx>
1-800-234-5422

The Miracle-Ear® Children's Foundation serves and supports children who have a hearing loss by providing no-cost hearing aids and hearing support services to children whose families have incomes that are significantly limited and who are unable to afford the high costs of quality hearing instruments. Applicants must be 16 years of age or younger and have a hearing loss that requires amplification. Applicants must have an income level which does not allow the family to receive public support. \$20,000-\$50,000 gross.

Oticon Loaner Bank

http://www.oticonusa.com/Oticon/Professionals/Pediatrics/National_Loaner_Bank.html

Oticon is a hearing aid company and their Loaner Bank is specifically for children age birth to 3 years of age. It is a loaner program and is designed for short-term use. You must apply for this service through a private audiologist.

PeachCare for Kids

www.peachcare.org
877-427-3224

If you apply for Medicaid for your children and learn they are not eligible, ask about PeachCare for Kids. You can apply online. In 2010 the monthly income level for young children is \$3,586 for a family of three and \$4,314 for a family of four.

Starkey Hearing Foundation - Hear Now Program Hear Now

<http://www.starkeyhearingfoundation.org/>
866.354.3254

This is a national non-profit program committed to assisting low income individuals permanently residing in the U.S. who are deaf or hard of hearing and have no other resources to acquire hearing aids. Income guidelines per Number of Persons in the Family are (1 = \$18,952, 2 = \$25,497, 3 = \$32,042, 4 = \$38,587, 5 = \$45,132)

Travelers Protective Association Scholarship Trust for the Hearing Impaired

<http://www.tpahq.org/scholarshiptrust.html>

314-371-0533

The Travelers Protective Association of America established the TPA Scholarship Trust for the Hearing Impaired to provide financial aid to children and adults who suffer deafness or hearing impairment and who need assistance in obtaining mechanical devices, medical or specialized treatment or specialized education as well as speech classes, note takers, interpreters, etc. and in other areas of need that are directly related to hearing impairment.

UnitedHealthcare Children's Foundation, Inc.

www.uhccf.org

952-992-4459

The UnitedHealthcare Children's Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit charity dedicated to facilitating access to medical-related services that have the potential to significantly enhance either the clinical condition or the quality of life of the child and that are not fully covered by the available commercial health benefit plan. This "support" is in the form of a medical grant to be used for medical services not covered or not completely covered by commercial health benefit plans. You do not need to possess United Healthcare insurance to apply for funding.