Satisfaction Guarantee

New York State requires that audiologists and hearing aid dispensers grant a 45-day satisfaction guarantee. If you purchased a hearing aid in New York, you have the right to cancel the transaction for any reason prior to midnight of the 45th calendar day from the date of purchase and return the hearing aid in the same condition (ordinary wear and tear excluded by law). The seller is allowed to retain an amount up to ten percent of the total price of the canceled hearing aid, including all fitting fees, batteries and accessories.

State Agencies

New York Department of State (DOS)

• **Division of Licensing Services (DLS)**
The New York State Department of State licenses and regulates the dispensing of hearing aids by audiologists, hearing aid dispensers and other hearing care professionals.

Questions regarding any aspect of hearing aid dispensing may be directed to the number below.

The Department's website contains the current law and regulations pertinent to hearing aid dispensing, as well as frequently asked questions.

Hearing Aid Dispenser Information:
(518) 474-4429

Complaint Hotline (toll-free; voice/TTY):
(877) 545-5864

• **Division of Consumer Protection (DCP)**
Consumers with questions about hearing aid sales, contract negotiations and warranty specifics or any consumer-related issue may contact the Consumer Assistance Hotline.

Consumer Assistance Hotline:
(518) 474-8583 or (800) 697-1220

Website: www.dos.ny.gov

New York State Education Department (NYSED)

• **Office of the Professions (OP)**
The New York State Education Department licenses and regulates audiologists to practice in New York State.

Audiologist Information: (518) 474-3817, ext. 100

Complaints: (800) 442-8106

Website: www.op.nysed.gov

New York State Department of Health (DOH)

• **Office of Professional Medical Conduct (OPMC)**
The New York State Department of Health licenses and regulates physicians.

Complaints/Inquiries: (518) 402-0836 or (800) 663-6114

The New York State Department of Health strives to protect and promote the health of New Yorkers through prevention, science and the assurance of quality health care delivery.

Public Health Duty Officer Helpline (toll-free):
(866) 881-2809

Website: www.health.ny.gov

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Rossana Rosado
Secretary of State

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Consumer Guide for Purchasing Hearing Aids

in New York State

You don't hear well and you've decided to do something about it.

You have many unanswered questions:

- Do you need a hearing aid?
- Where do you go to get your hearing evaluated?
- What kind of hearing aid should you buy?
- Will a hearing aid restore normal hearing?

Where Do You Begin?

You may visit a licensed physician, preferably one specializing in diseases of the ear, for a medical evaluation before purchasing a hearing aid. This will ensure that medically treatable conditions that may affect your hearing are identified and treated before a hearing aid is purchased.

Once you have determined that your hearing difficulties are not medically or surgically correctable, you should have your hearing tested by a registered audiologist or registered hearing aid dispenser. New York State requires that all dispensing audiologists and hearing aid dispensers be registered with the Department of State and that they display their business and individual dispenser registrations prominently at their place of business.

Selecting a Hearing Aid Dispenser

Only audiologists, hearing aid dispensers, otolaryngologists and otologists are permitted to fit and sell hearing aids in New York State. The same level of service should be expected from all.

Selecting a hearing care professional is extremely important because you are choosing a person with whom you will have a long-term relationship. Because of the importance of hearing in one's everyday life, you will want the relationship to be trusting and comfortable.

What You Should Tell the Dispenser

Communication with your audiologist or hearing aid dispenser should be a two-way street. Express your needs and concerns clearly so that he or she can address them to your satisfaction.

The Hearing Test and Evaluation

The audiologist or hearing aid dispenser will conduct a series of tests to determine the type and extent of your hearing loss. These tests are painless and assess your ability to hear tones, as well as to understand speech. The results of your hearing examination are recorded on an "audiogram" and should be explained to you. New York State law requires that you receive a copy of your audiogram, whether or not you purchase a hearing aid.

Binaural Hearing (using both ears)

If you have hearing loss in both ears, you should consider a binaural fitting (two hearing aids). The advantages to wearing two aids may include improved listening in noisy environments, improved speech understanding and the ability to determine both distance and direction of sounds.

Hearing Aid Selection

Your individual hearing loss and needs will be considered in selecting the right aids and options for you. Be willing to consider all styles of hearing aids, as there may be specific reasons why certain types would be best for you. Be aware that there is no "best" hearing aid for everyone.

Telecoils (T-Coils) and Assistive Listening Technology

State law requires hearing care professionals to inform you of the benefits of telecoil technology, looped environments and assistive listening devices. Before making a purchasing decision, you should be given the option of obtaining a hearing aid or aids that contain a telecoil (or T-coil).

Telecoils are tiny circuits imbedded in hearing aids to enable the user to receive an audio signal wirelessly in environments that have installed hearing loops or utilize other assistive listening systems. Your dispensing professional is required to explain how hearing assistive technology can help maximize your ability to understand speech coming from the television, in group settings or at a distance from the source, such as theaters, museums, banks, and other venues where audio signals and speech are present.

Keep Your Expectations Realistic

Hearing aids will not correct hearing in the way that glasses correct vision, nor will hearing aids restore normal hearing. The secret to success is having realistic expectations. You should know that hearing aids won't allow you to hear as you once did, and that it is difficult for hearing aids to provide optimal hearing in background noise.

The Sales Contract

As a New York State consumer, you have legal rights when purchasing a hearing aid. Be sure to get a purchase agreement or sales contract containing all the terms of the transaction in writing. Read it carefully. It should include the following items: the state registration numbers of both the dispensing audiologist or hearing aid dispenser and his or her office; office location, telephone number and hours of operation; date of purchase; manufacturer, model and serial number; total price, payment terms, refund provisions, adjustment services, and warranty information.