



- ✓ *Scientific dispatch*
- ✓ *Medicare Advantage*
- ✓ *BHC's newest recruit!*



A man wanted to see if his wife could hear him, so he stood 20 feet away and called her name. When she didn't respond, he moved closer and tried again. Finally, when he was right behind her, he said, "Emma!" and she finally replied "For the fourth time, WHAT??"



*scientific dispatch >>>*

***Therapies for hearing loss***

Most hearing loss occurs because of damage to inner-ear hair cells. As mammals, any damage done to a hair cell is permanent. But birds, amphibians and reptiles can regenerate hair cells! Research in this area is moving quickly due to advancing technology.

Researchers at Stanford are analyzing all the genes responsible for cell regeneration in chicken hair cells and are working on isolating the process these cells use to regenerate themselves, with an eye to being able to trigger hair cell regeneration in humans! For more information, see:

<https://stanmed.stanford.edu/listening/scientists-hope-cure-hearing-loss-studying-birds.html>

***Medicare Advantage and Hearing Aids***

You've seen them and we have too – the commercials for Medicare Advantage plans sound too good to be true! "Zero premiums!" "Coverage for hearing aids and dentistry!"

Well, you know that old saying, "you don't get something for nothing?" That's certainly the case for these plans. We appreciate that insurance companies are starting to consider covering hearing aids, but the current system requires partnering with a "middleman" system that limits your choices in providers and in devices.

Most Medicare Advantage plans require a "copay" per hearing aid, which can be several hundred to several thousand dollars, depending on the technology of the aids. While these copays can be costly, they do not cover the actual true cost of the hearing aids being fitted properly by your audiologist.

We have always said that it doesn't matter how great a hearing aid is if it's not fit properly, and we spend a lot of time making sure that the aids that we recommend are properly programmed

and adjusted to provide the absolute best hearing possible for our patients' needs. Doing careful work like that takes time, and the fitting fee that would be paid to us by a Medicare Advantage plan simply isn't enough to cover the time that we need. For these reasons, we will not participate with any plans that require us to use the "middleman" system.

Currently or soon-to-be enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan? Fear not! In many cases, our pricing for new hearing aids is equal to the "copay" that you would pay through a Medicare Advantage Plan. In the event that you have a plan that would allow you to pay less for the same device, we will work with you to match the pricing as closely as we can. We are committed to continuing to provide you with the patient-centered care that we're known for. Please reach out to us with any questions you have!

*We follow the current COVID conditions in our community very closely, and are dedicated to maintaining a safe environment for all of our patients and staff. Here are some of the ways we are keeping each other safe: masks for our staff and all patients, rigorous hand-washing and disinfecting protocols, screening questions before appointments, and temperatures taken upon arrival (for both our staff and our patients!). Please call us from the parking lot, and we'll let you know when it is safe to come in, or we'll come out to meet you at your car! We are invested in keeping our community healthy, and continuing to provide hearing health care during this difficult time. Thank you so much for your patience as we navigate these issues together.*

## ***Welcome Iris!***

Baby Iris Rae Edson arrived on August 13, 2020 – a bright spot in a year with little cheer. While we have yet to snuggle her, we have oohed and ahed over her and enjoy her many adorable pictures.



130 Austine Dr., Ste 210  
Brattleboro, VT 05301

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