

Public Oral Statement to the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST)

November 20, 2015

Alicia D.D. Spoor, Au.D., on behalf of the Academy of Doctors of Audiology

"On behalf of the Academy of Doctors of Audiology, thank you for the opportunity to comment.

On November 12, we published a letter to the President providing qualified support of all four of the recommendations contained in the PCAST Report.

We emphasize that the provision of quality audiologic services is critical to achieving successful patient outcomes. We want to ensure that fact is understood by this Council, particularly considering the broader initiatives for improving access to affordable care for older adults.

Professional evaluation and treatment services are vital to remediating a patient's communication difficulties. Better hearing cannot be achieved through a device alone as it is only one component of successful treatment. We recommend that over the counter hearing aids and PSAPs include a **strong** recommendation that a consumer seek a comprehensive audiologic evaluation from an audiologist or physician.

We foresee confusion in the PCAST's use of the terms class and category. Due to the FDA definitions, we request that the report only use the term category.

We also recommend that PSAPs carry labeling that clearly indicates they are not FDA-registered devices. We encourage the development of PSAP standards approved by ANSI.

For the record, we are opposed to online **diagnostic** testing. However, we are very supportive of online hearing **screening** tools. From a clinical standpoint, there is a clear distinction between **testing** and **screening** and those terms are not interchangeable.

The federal government must do more to ensure that older adults have access to audiologic care. We have included several recommendations to bring Medicare in line with today's best practices.

Finally, we believe that awareness is the greatest barrier to diagnosis and treatment for hearing loss. We ask that the CDC be directed to prioritize hearing loss as a significant public health issue and encourage efforts that promote greater attention to this issue by primary care providers.

We are pleased to see governmental recognition of hearing loss and focus on the needs of the hearing impaired, specifically related to hearing technology. It is **critically** important that the same level of attention and emphasis be directed towards ensuring patient access to high quality audiologic care.

We look forward to a continued dialogue on these important issues and would be pleased to assist in efforts to expand consumer access to safe, efficient, and effective hearing healthcare services.

Thank you."