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Collaborating with Pharmacists on OTC Hearing Aids

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Audiology Clinical Coordinator
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences



Elaine Mormer, PhD

Dr. Mormer is Professor and Director of Audiology Clinical Education in the Department of Communication Science and Disorders at the University of Pittsburgh. She is an audiologist and co-developer of the “Championing Hearing Using Accessible Medication Experts at the Community Pharmacy” (CHAMP) certificate course for pharmacy students and professionals. She has been an interprofessional collaborator across health professions, through grant funded teaching, mentoring and research. Dr. Mormer has co-authored a number of articles addressing OTC hearing aids and the role of pharmacists in promoting hearing care.

Lucas A. Berenbrok, PharmD



Dr. Berenbrok is an Associate Professor of Pharmacy and Therapeutics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy. As an expert in outpatient pharmacy, Dr. Berenbrok has made it his mission to cultivate pharmacist leaders who advance pharmacy practice by bettering patient health and medication-related outcomes with multidisciplinary outpatient healthcare teams. In collaboration with audiology colleagues, Dr. Berenbrok created pharmacist competencies for over-the-counter hearing aids and the nation's first OTC hearing aid training program for community pharmacists.

Disclosures

- **Presenter Disclosure:**

- Financial: Elaine Mormer is an employee of the University of Pittsburgh and a partner in Embarx LLC, consulting firm. Non-financial: Elaine Mormer is the co-developer of the pharmacy continuing education course, owned by the University of Pittsburgh.
- Financial: Lucas Berenbrok is an employee of the University of Pittsburgh and a partner in Embarx LLC, consulting firm. Non-financial: Lucas Berenbrok is the co-developer of the pharmacy continuing education course, owned by the University of Pittsburgh.
- AudiologyOnline is making a donation to the audiology program at the University of Pittsburgh for this presentation.

- **Content Disclosure:** This learning event does not focus exclusively on any specific product or service.

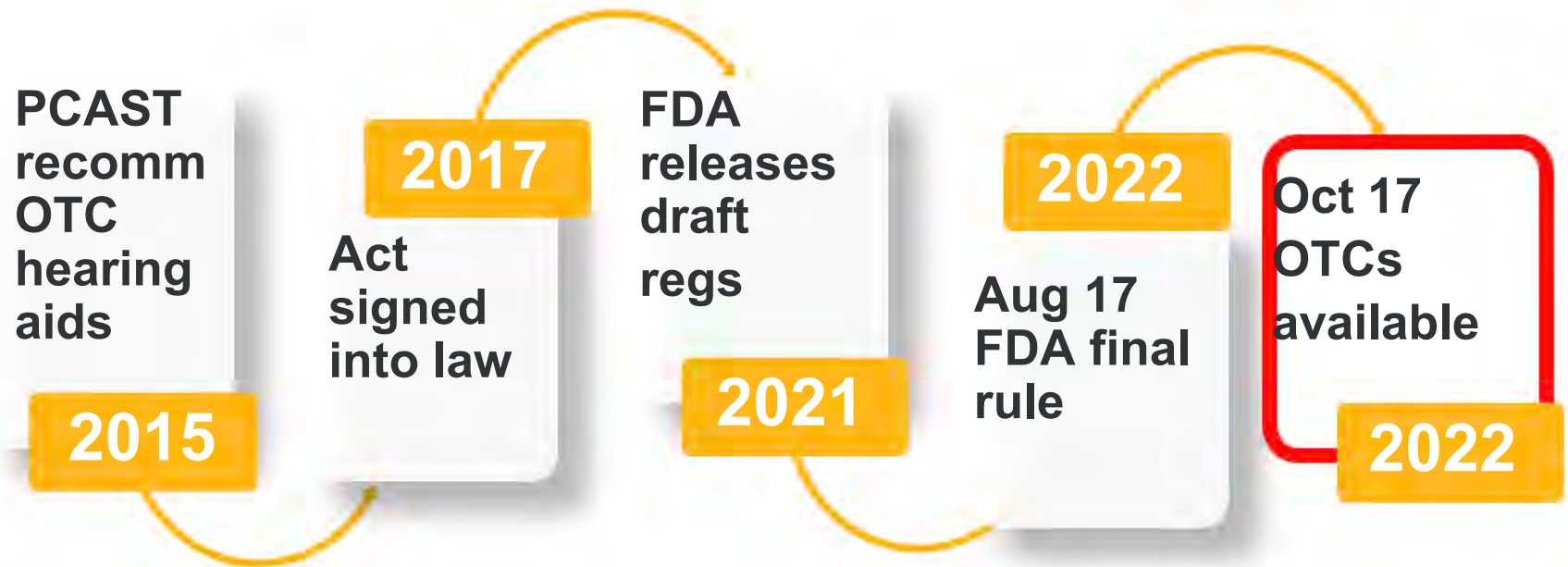
- **Sponsor Disclosure:** This course is presented by the University of Pittsburgh in partnership with AudiologyOnline.

Learning Outcomes

After this course, participants will be able to:

1. Explain the required education, training, and scope of practice of pharmacists.
2. Discuss how audiologists and pharmacists can work collaboratively to expand hearing healthcare access in their community.
3. Discuss ways that OTC hearing aids can increase referrals for audiology services.

A Brief History of OTC Hearing Aids



Differentiating products

	Hearing loss	Adult	Child	Purpose	Degree of Hearing Loss
Rx Hearing Aids	Yes	Yes	Yes	Professional Treatment	Mild-to-profound
OTC Hearing Aids	Yes	Yes	No	Self-care Treatment	Mild-to-moderate
PSAPs	No	Yes	Yes	Situational listening	N/A
Hearables/Wearables	No	Yes	Yes	Entertainment Amplification	?

Pharmacists are very interested in learning about OTC hearing aids

Publication	Headline
Pharmacy Today (APhA)	OTC Hearing Aids May Soon be Available at Pharmacies
Elements	OTC Hearing Aids: Everything Pharmacies Need to Know
Drug Topics	Preparing to Counsel Patients on OTC Hearing Aids
Journal of the American Pharmacists Association	1. Pharmacist Competencies for Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids: A Delphi study 2. Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids
AdvanceCE	OTC Hearing Aids: Opportunities for Community Pharmacists
America's Pharmacist	OTC Hearing Aids Could Bring Hassle-Free Relief to Patients with Hearing Loss

Assessment of Consumer Attitudes Following Recent Changes in the US Hearing Health Care Market

by Jasleen Singh, PhD; Sumitrajit Dhar, PhD

JAMA Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg. Published online January 19, 2023.

doi:10.1001/jamaoto.2022.4344

Question

What are the consumer attitudes and opinions about direct-to-consumer (DTC) models of hearing health care (HHC)?

Findings

In this survey study of 1037 HHC consumers, most (84%) would choose to pursue HHC in person. Individuals with specific circumstances, such as lower income, nonavailability of insurance coverage, and previous experience with DTC models of health care, would consider DTC-HHC pathways.

Meaning

Results of this study suggest that **focused consumer education** is needed to increase confidence in and consideration of DTC-HHC models.

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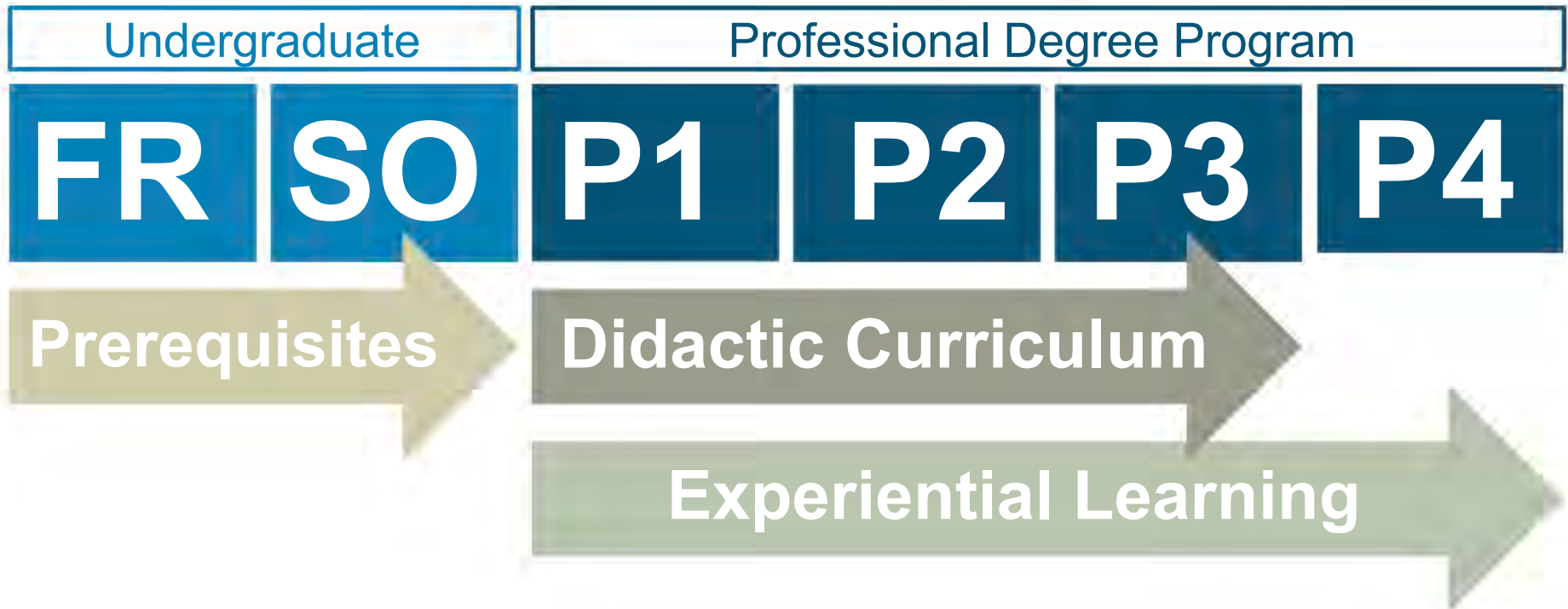
Education

- Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD)
- Sole entry-level degree for the profession of pharmacy
- 141 accredited programs

Training

- 2-4 years of undergraduate
- 3-4 years of professional
- 1-2 years of post-graduate residency training

Curriculum



Courses

P1

Anatomy & Physiology
Biochemistry
Community Health
Dosage Form Design & Delivery
Pharmacist Patient Care
Professional Development
Skills Lab

P2

Cardiology
Community Pharmacy Practice
Drug Discovery & Development
Gastroenterology/Nutrition
Infectious Disease
Nephrology/Pulmonology
Nonprescription Therapies & Self-care
Pharmacokinetics
Skills Lab

Courses

P3

Critical Care
Endocrinology
Health System Pharmacy
Immunology
Neurology/Psychiatry
Oncology/Hematology
Pharmacy Law
Population Health
Safe Medication Use
Skills Lab

P4

Experiential Learning

(36 weeks)

Acute Care
Ambulatory Care
Community Care
Institutional Care
Electives

Scope of Practice



Provide guidance on
appropriate, effective, safe, and
convenient use of medications & OTC
products

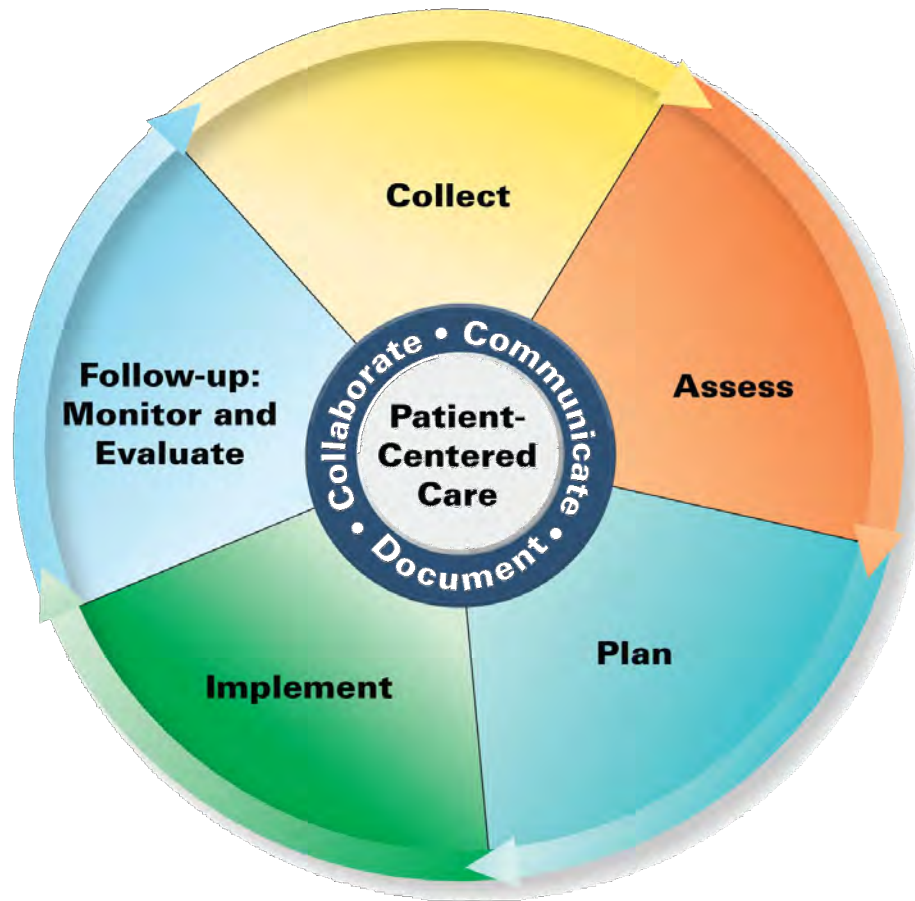
Self-care & Non-prescriptions

- OTC medications
- Dietary & herbal supplements
- CLIA-waived tests for home use
- Durable medical equipment
- Medical devices

Product Placements

LOCATION	EXAMPLES	ID REQUIRED?	ENCOUNTER TYPE
On the shelf, unsecured	OTC medications	NO	Optional conversation with pharmacist
On the shelf, secured	Men's razor blades/electronic toothbrushes	NO	Required request to non-pharmacy employee
Behind the front register	Cigarettes	YES age verification	Required request to non-pharmacy employee
Behind the pharmacy counter	Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed®)	YES quantity limits	Required conversation with pharmacy employee

Pharmacists' Patient Care Process

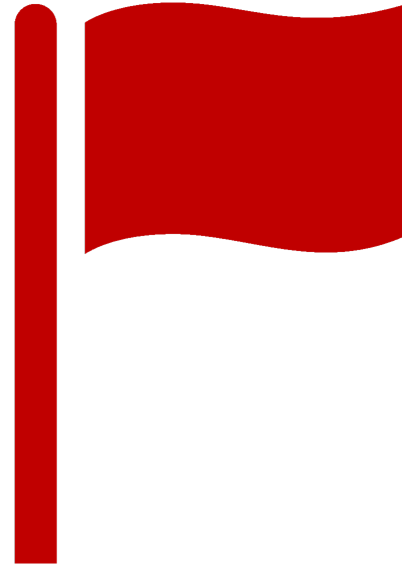
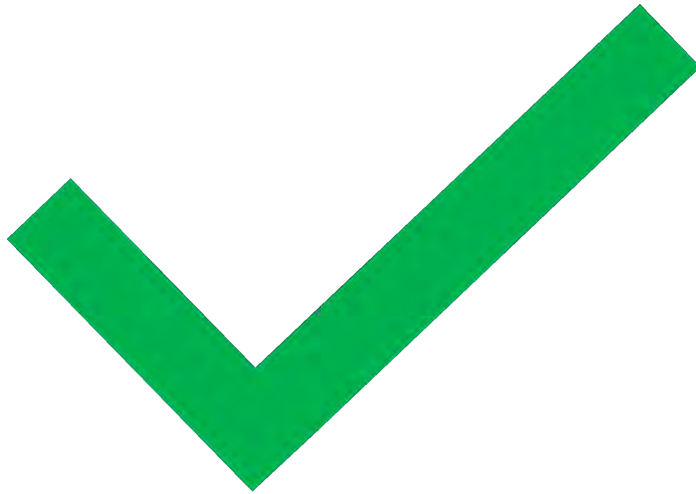


Screening for Self-Care

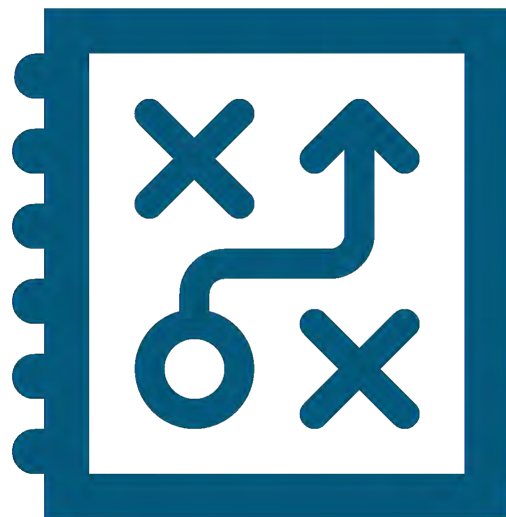
[COLLECT]

- Symptoms
- Characteristics
- History
- Onset of symptoms
- Location
- Aggravating factors
- Remitting factors
- Medications
- Allergies
- Conditions
- Social History

Eligibility for Safe & Effective Use [ASSESS]



Recommendation or Referral [PLAN]



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The Opportunity

- 13,700 audiologists
- 61,500 community pharmacies
- 37.5 million persons with hearing loss



OTC Hearing Aids will increase access to hearing care AND collaboration opportunities

- 90% of Americans live within 5 miles of a pharmacy

(Berenbrok et al, 2022)



A Framework for Collaboration



Commitment to Collaborative Working Relationship

4

Professional Relationship Expansion

3

Exploration & Trial

2

Professional Recognition

1

Professional Awareness

0

Embracing OTC Hearing Aids

Discoverable

Available

Informative

Collaborative

Be Discoverable

**American
Academy of
Audiology**



**American
Speech-Language-
Hearing
Association**



Make Resources Available

**ASHA OTC HA
Tools**



**AAA OTC HA
Resources**



General OTC HA



**Reaching
Pharmacists**

**University of
Pittsburgh
Pharmacy CE**



Be Informative

Elaine Morner
emormer@pitt.edu

OTC Hearing Aid Criteria:

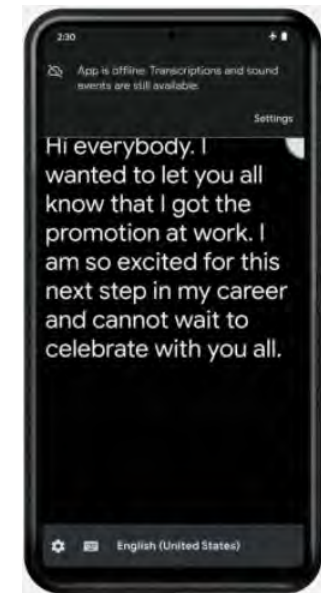
1. Age 18 and older
2. Perceived mild to moderate hearing loss



SCAN ME

For exclusions to self-care and to find local audiologists

Be Collaborative



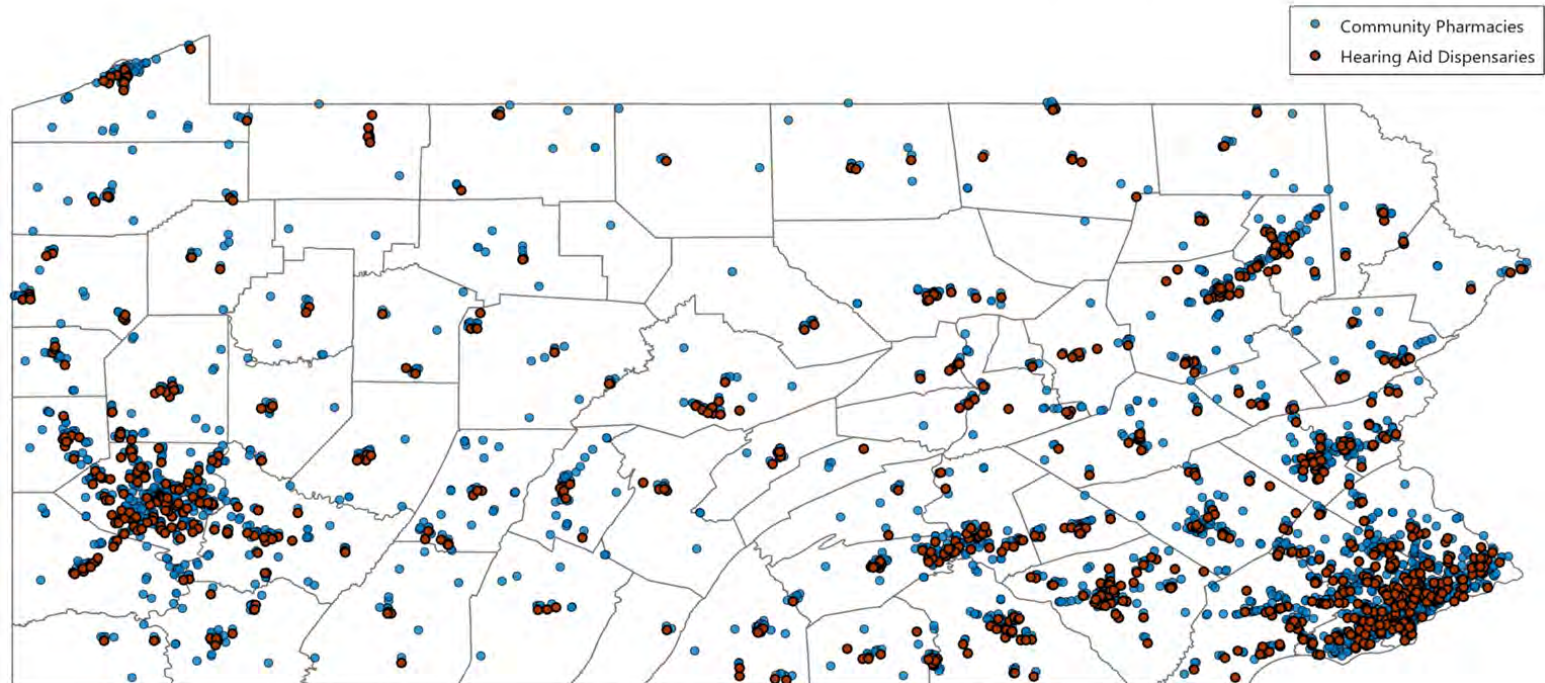
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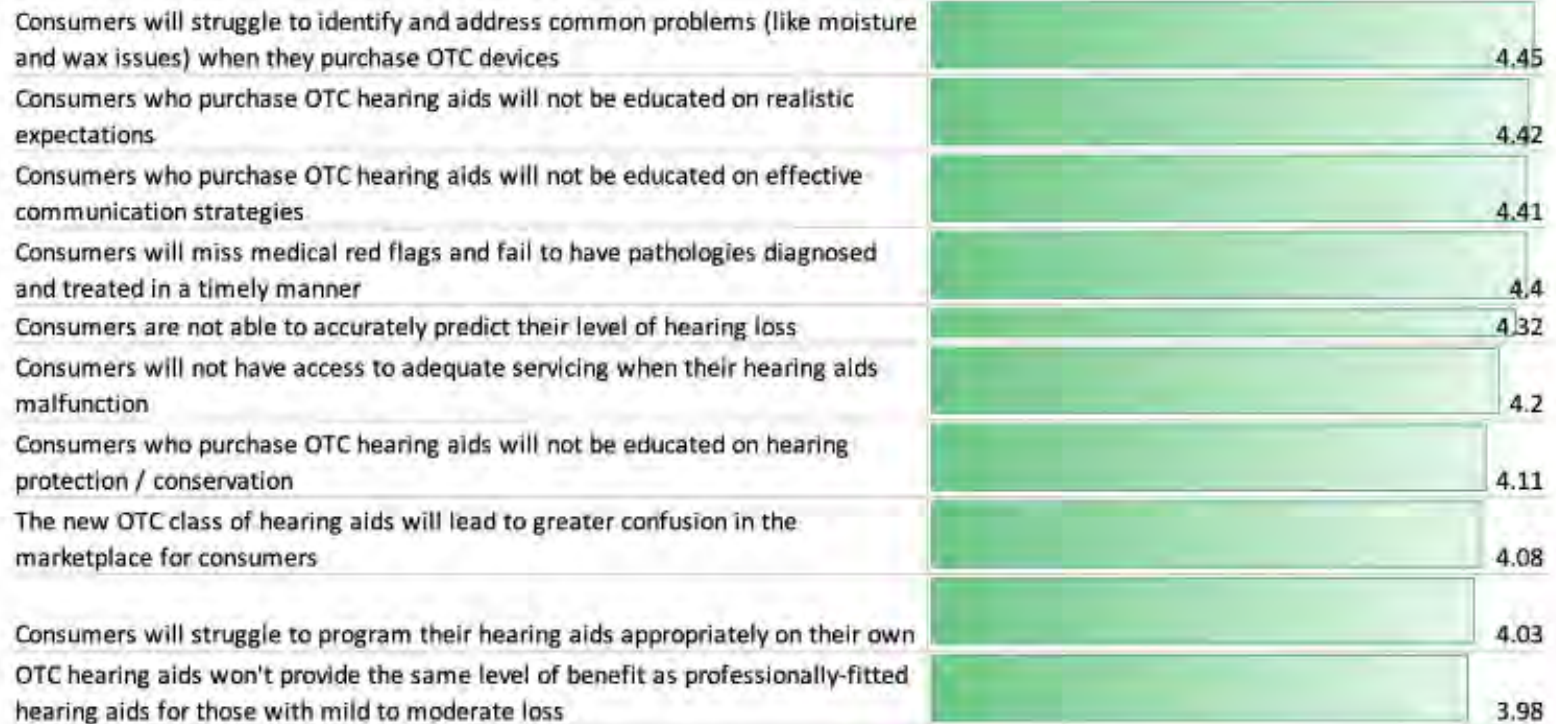
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Community Pharmacies and Hearing Aid Dispensaries in Pennsylvania

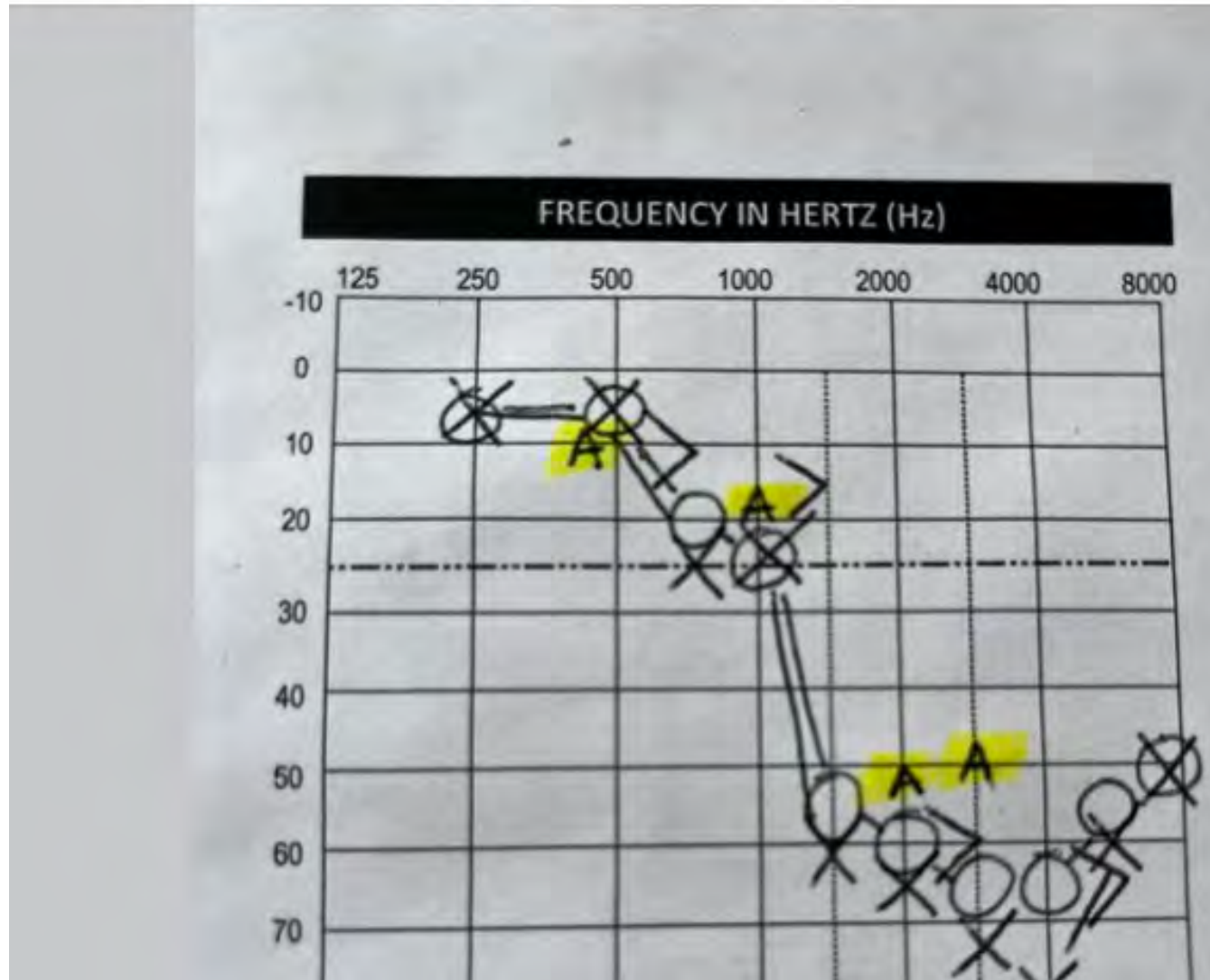
Community Pharmacies and Hearing Aid Dispensaries in Pennsylvania



Audiologists ranked objections to OTC ranked from strongest to weakest



If you're wondering who is buying OTCs and how it's working out...





I had one last week, brought in aids from Best Buy complaining they weren't working. Did audio and REM and showed him why 🙌. Got to charge for that testing and he is getting aids from me!

Like Reply 1d



6



If we do our job well and continue to care about the ears, OTC will have minimal if any impact except to cause patients to wait longer to get proper help through a license/register hearing aid dispenser

Like Reply 1d



5



I had this last week. Same kind of hearing loss he bought OTC from Best Buy. Couldn't understand why it didn't work. I explained to him why it wouldn't work and we put on my hearing aids. Instant results and bought a set of hearing aids

Like Reply 1d



15

Referrals from Pharmacists

- Exclusions for self- care
- Complex listening needs
- Refined customizations
- Dissatisfaction with OTC hearing aids

Conclusions

- OTC hearing aids, like other self-care products, fit within the scope of practice of pharmacists
- Efforts are under way to educate pharmacists on hearing loss and hearing aids
- Pharmacists are learning about audiologists
- OTC hearing aids will not be a satisfying solution for many patients
- Collaboration with pharmacists opens a new opportunity for increasing referrals in your practice

Questions/Discussion

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