

This unedited transcript of a Continued webinar is provided in order to facilitate communication accessibility for the viewer and may not be a totally verbatim record of the proceedings. This transcript may contain errors. Copying or distributing this transcript without the express written consent of Continued is strictly prohibited. For any questions, please contact customerservice@continued.com

2024 Industry Roundtable

Presenter: Susan Scollie, PhD; Brian Taylor, AuD; Dana Helmink, AuD;
Dave Fabry, PhD; Jessica Dancis, MA; Jessica Lovell, VP, BA; Steve
DeMari, MS; Natasha McDougald; Laurel Christensen, PhD

Welcome to the 2024 Industry Roundtable. We have a wonderful group of esteemed leaders in our industry here today, as well as our guest moderator, Dr. Susan Scollie. Dr. Scollie is a professor in the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders and the director of the National center for Audiology at Western University and the Faculty of Health Sciences.

We would also like to thank our title sponsor, our credit in all of the companies participating in the 2024 summit. And at this time, it's my pleasure to turn the microphone over to Dr. Scollie. Thanks very much, Carolyn. And welcome to everybody that's on today's panel.

We just have a few quick housekeeping announcements at the beginning of the seminar, and then we'll get right to it. So, first of all, I'd like to just introduce to you all of the people who have graciously shared their time and expertise with us today. So we've got Jessica Lovell with care credit. Hi, Jessica. We've got Brian Taylor from Signia.

Welcome, Brian. We've got Steve DeMari from Caption call. Looking forward to hearing your presentation. Jessica Dancis from Sennheiser, Dave Fabry from Starkey Morning. Laurel Christensen from Resound, and Dana Helmink from Widex.

And last but not least, Natasha McDougald from Cochlear Corporation. So we've got a wide buddy. Hi. We've got a wide range of really different technologies today, and we're going to try to work on bringing the concepts of some of those together in an interesting way and talking about some things that are new and different and maybe a few unsolved problems towards the end. So, getting right to it, we've got a required set of disclosures for presenters, as required by courses such as this.

And you can look at that on the handout as well. And our learning outcomes today, three learning outcomes to describe specific innovations that integrate consumer products with the hearing industries products. That's our overall topic for today. And we're going to talk about ways in which product integration is reshaping hearing healthcare. So there's a lot of changes afoot, and our experts today have an awful lot to share about that.

We're going to also ask them to identify a specific feature of their product lines that is commonly underutilized or misunderstood within the context of hearing healthcare, and make sure we break down some of those myths or misconceptions. So thanks, everyone, for sharing all of that content with us as we go forward for the next 2 hours. Okay, so we've got a number of questions today. We're going to be dealing with four topics within those three learning outcomes that we just went through. And the first one is going to be asking everyone to give us an example of something that their company is doing that's an innovation that is in their product line and that actually integrates consumer products with products in the hearing industry.

So we're going to start up this particular topic with Jessica Lovell from Care credit. So I'll just invite Jessica to take over the slide deck and share with us what she's brought today. Thanks Susan. Very excited to be here today. Thank you for having me.

I want to talk a little bit about Carecredit's custom link and it is really an inclusive all digital solution that allows patients to learn about financing, specifically with care credit. See if they pre qualify for financing and then they are able to qualify or then apply for the care credit card, all from the touch of their phones. And they can also calculate their monthly payments. They can pay their bills online. It really is a great way for your patients to see if they pre qualify and then apply for credit.

And the best part about this technology is it's a unique URL to each of your practices. And you can have a URL that you can text to your patients, you can email this link to your patients as well as you can add to statements. And even more, you can also create a QR code and you can display that in each of your practices so that they can easily see if they pre. There are also website banners and even buttons that you can include on your website or in social media. So it really is just a great way to reach your patients and now talk about some of the benefits.

So as I mentioned, it's really a great way to reach your patients and they have a contactless way to apply as well as to make payments. It's all in one convenience from anywhere, again, from their cell phone and during the COVID environment, it really is a great way for your patients to see if they can qualify and then it also reduces barriers with pre qualification. It's private and it's secure and it really gives your staff more freedom and ability to help patients and to help more patients.

How it works. So it really is very simple. And again, as I mentioned, patients can see if they pre qualify with no impact to their credit score. They then can apply for the care credit card using their own device. They get a decision within seconds and if approved, they can use the account the same day and then they can also calculate monthly payments, which is wonderful because as we all know, hearing care is expensive and costs can sometimes be a barrier.

So having the option for monthly payments is really beneficial to your patients. And as we all know, we all want to help patients get the hearing care that they need and then they can pay for care credit online for services using the location provided within that custom QR code or that custom link. So it really is a great tool for providers.

And closing thoughts at Care credit, we really want to enable our providers to help patients get the hearing care that they need. And using this technology, it really does

bridge that gap for the provider and the patient. So thank you. Thanks very much. Jessica, just one quick question for you.

If somebody preferred to not use it on the mobile app and they'd rather do that on a website, is that also an option for them? It is. Certainly it is. Okay, great. Okay, so we'll pull together a group discussion from this session at the end of everybody's one, but for right now, what we'll do is we'll move on to our next speaker.

I'm just seeking control. There we go. Ok, so we're going to welcome Steve Demari to the screen from caption Call.

Thank you, Susan. Appreciate everyone, appreciate being here. My name is Steve from caption Call and it looks like I didn't pay attention to advancing the slides, but I'm going to start here. I've been with caption Call for a couple of years and I love working with this group of people. The first thing with regard to the question caption Call and Caption Call mobile connects Bluetooth hearing aids and mobile devices so users can get audio directly through their hearing aids while reading captions.

So caption Call meets the TIA 1083 standard for hearing aid compatibility and for reduced interference. So we rely on hearing aids. We rely on hearing aids being the gold standard in the industry. Caption Call is customizable to specific hearing needs. Hearing health providers have the option to send a patient's audiogram to the caption call telephone or mobile device via their OMS system when they refer.

So we can program a patient's caption call phone amplification settings to the provider's specifications. Caption Call mobile runs on award winning artificial intelligence and predictive ASR, and we can talk a little bit more about that with regard to home phone use and mobile use with regard to live captioning agents for the home phone and predictive ASR for the mobile device. This technology is advanced to

generate faster, more accurate phone captions while providing users complete privacy and security, all in a mobile app. To accommodate the growing number of people who use mobile phones and apps in addition to or instead of home phones and landlines, the caption call mobile app can function as a standalone tool or integrate with hearing instruments to optimize communication by improving signal to noise ratios in noisy environments. Essentially, they extend the versatility of hearing aids and with ongoing innovation, it makes it easier to interface with other devices, creating a more robust ecosystem.

While there are several reasons to consider incorporating other forms of hearing assistive technology, the most important thing to know about caption Call is that the referral process is easy. And when we take the ball, we can offer our red carpet service to handle all of the scheduling, installation, training and ongoing support for the eligible user. So while we train our providers on our technology as a need to know basis, it's good information for them to know and be able to understand when counseling patients. But the ability for us to take the ball from them and incorporate this technology for them, they put their trust in us.

And that's my slide for this section. Susan. Okay, great. Thanks. Steve.

What platforms is your mobile app compatible with? So it's available on Android or iOS. So you can go into either the Google Play Store or to the Apple App Store and download the apps accordingly. Okay. And if I understood you correctly, the hearing aids obviously need to be Bluetooth compatible for getting the whole ecosystem to work.

That's correct. But then the advantage to me if I'm the hearing aid user is I can hear the conversation and I can be reading live captioning of that conversation at the same time to help enhance my communication success. Correct. And the nice thing about the

mobile app is it's a two way conversation, so you can kind of create the context and keep context and then review it. So, and this ties into the same technology that we use for the home phone device.

Okay. All right, so we've got a wide range of phone types that we can use for that. That's great. Thanks for sharing. Thank you.

Okay, so next we're going to move over to Jessica Dancis and she's going to talk with us about Sennheiser. Yes, thank you for having me. So my name is Jessica Dancis, and Sennheiser, our whole goal is to integrate the consumer products with the hearing care industry to partner with. You mean in this day and age where people are searching for brands they know and trust? Sennheiser is recognized by consumers as a premium brand with a long standing history in audio experiences.

And I was actually at a convention recently presenting to providers, but I was know I was out with my booth and I can't tell you how many people came up to me who were not part of the convention and kept saying, oh my gosh, Sennheiser. I love Sennheiser. I use you guys all the so. But we're lucky because Sonova is the world leader, a world leader in portfolio covering cochlear implants to hearing aids. And now with our new consumer hearing division, we're offering OTC and situational hearing solutions under the Sennheiser brand and our vision.

We view early entry solutions as the path to improving consumer access to hearing care. Excuse me. And with our new portfolio, we provide products and services for you to participate in opportunities and to deliver your services to as many consumers as possible. Again, our goal is to partner with you. And we have chosen our portfolio of products and designed our technology and offerings to integrate early entry hearing solutions with hearing care.

And we have a portfolio that covers situational products and OTC hearing aids. And we're solving the most common needs and complaints. We have our tvs 200 for tv hearing, which is effortless hearing when watching tv or listening to content on a mobile media device. We have our conce 400, which improves the hearing in noisy environments where ability to distinguish speech is a challenge. And I have to say, I love using these in the airplane because when someone is talking, I can hear clearly.

Like, let's say they're on the speaker, and then if I just want to wipe out the world, you can do that with they have 30 db of active noise canceling. So these are great for people who need help in noisy situations, don't want to wear a hearing aid or don't need a hearing aid at all, but really need help for background noise. And then, of course, we have our OTC hearing aids, our all day clear. These are ricks. They're medical devices, and they're designed to be worn all day.

And of course, these are for people who have a perceived mild to moderate hearing loss.

So you can learn more about the concept 400 and the TDS 200 on our audiology online webinars. And we have our Sennheiser reps who can help you. We're going to focus today on all day clear and all day clear are they're designed to be worn all day, right? I mean, I love my earbuds, but we don't tend to want to wear them all day long. So we have focused on our Rick styles, the all day clear, which is a standard Rick style, and the all day clear slim, which is a unique style for Sennheiser.

Again, these are all powered by Sonova technology. They have two automatic environments. They're made for all compatibility. They're sold as a pair. They have a sleek and contemporary design.

They're rechargeable and one size fits most. You can add the Sonova Easy line tv connector. You probably already have these in your clinic. They are not included in the package. And so this is another way that you can add extra revenue and enjoyment.

They can easily be set up by the consumer via the all day clear app. And frankly, my father in law has them and he's 80 and he was able to set it up quickly and easily and he loves them. We offer comprehensive online support systems so that you know that we're there to support your patients, so that they can get the support they need without necessarily having to come to you. These come with a one year manufacturer service warranty. If you buy them from us, you get a 90 day return.

So you get your normal Sonova return policy. The consumer gets the one year manufacturer's warranty and there is the option for them to add the in clinic care package, which we'll talk about in a second. And both styles contain the same features and self setup. We know how important you and your services are. So Allday Clear has the special ability to add the in clinic care package, and that takes the all day clear experience to the next level by adding professional expertise.

It's only available in clinic. They have to come to you to buy it. And it consists of just one appointment with a consultation, programming with the unit on true fit software, and it adds, as long as it's purchased within the first year, it adds an additional year of manufacturer's warranty. The reason that it's using the true fit software is because that is the software that has the billing feature. So the minimum advertised price for the in clinic care package, and we are promoting that your services have value and cost, so you can sell it for whatever you want in the clinic.

But we do ask that the minimum advertised price is 250, the unlocking fee. So to be able to unlock and program the hearing aids is only \$50. So that means for one appointment, just one appointment, you're making \$200. And because we've kept that

list limited of just the consultation and programming, any additional services like real ear measure or speech testing, or any future appointments, those are all chargeable by you and entirely up to you. So we really make sure that you not only can add value when you do the programming, you can set it to Nal NL two, you can run the feedback manager and you can change the gain in ten channels so you can program it, help them and create a relationship that can build towards say even prescription hearing aids in the future.

You can sell them your services now and then know you're going to be driving those future sales and care in addition. So we know that most practices aren't doing anything online. And in fact in that convention that I was at where I was presenting to and talking to a whole room of providers and I asked does anybody have ecommerce? And not one person raised their hand, but we know that you guys are, that the consumers, they're shopping online, people are looking, they're doing their research, they want to know and find their information and then go to someone online. So we have designed a way to help you take advantage of that.

We're helping it make it easy with our all day clear website. So the all day clear website, we've built it. It's gorgeous. We take care of everything, so we promote it. So we're spending all the money, you don't have to spend any money to drive people to it.

We do all the order fulfillment, we do all the transactions there between Sennheiser hearing and the consumer. We manage the repairs and the returns. So again, we're taking care of everything. But we have a find a provider locator and your name, your logo can be on that locator. And if a consumer goes online and they say, hey, I'm in this local area, your name will pop up.

If the consumer chooses your clinic, you will get \$100 commission and you'll get the lead. So just for doing nothing, for being on that site, it takes 5 minutes once to go

ahead and set up the site. Anytime that a consumer is on our website and looking in your area, they will see your name and they can potentially choose your clinic. You get that \$100 and you get the lead. And since most clinics don't have their own ecommerce, but you do want to have something on your website to attract these people are going to buy it somewhere.

We can give you a link that then you can put that on your site. It goes to a dedicated web store where they only see you, they don't see any other providers. And again, you get that \$100 and you get the lead. If you do have your own ecommerce or when you're selling it in clinic, then of course you're doing all the work, you're taking care of everything and you can take advantage of that as well. And in that case then you get a margin of around \$600.

So we're making sure advantage of all of the ways to reach people and to bring them into your clinic and to connect with them, create a relationship for all those future sales and care.

And by, with all dayclear, you can maximize, you can capture these people earlier in their journey. We are seeing that people who get these OTC hearing aids tend to be a little bit younger than the traditional prescription people. You can again leverage new sales channels. So online and you become that source of education as well as a way to take advantage of everything that's going on online, you can maximize those opportunities, minimize your tested, not sold. There are people who walked out of your clinic and didn't buy anything.

This is a great way to bring them back in. And the Sennheiser brand will help you attract them. And again, you're building that gateway to future sales and care.

Our phone number is there as well as our email. So again, our whole goal is to help you with these early entry devices and integrate the needs of the modern consumer who's looking for something new. There's modern patients who want and need something different and help you reach out and grow your practice and grow your care. So you can always email us or give us a call.

Okay? Thanks very much. Jessica. Just one quick question for you, since we've got lots of time today. So if I'm the hearing health care provider in a clinic and I choose to go with the in clinic care package that you just described, are there additional features over and above the OTC product that, that the.

And we'll talk a little bit more about the self fitting process later on in a future question. But the self fitting is not a pure tone test we didn't try. We're not trying to replace what an audiologist or dispenser does. Our goal is that they get something that is quick and easy to fit and sounds great, gives them that first time experience. But when they come into the clinic now, you can do a fuel test, you can fit it to nal NL two, you can change the gain.

You can run the feedback manager. There's no feedback manager in there. Self fitting. And of course, there's all sorts of other services that you're providing that people come in for. How do I put in my ear?

All sorts of different, really, or anything like that? Obviously those are additional options and opportunities to help them. Okay, thanks. Yeah, you're welcome. All right, so we'll move along to Natasha McDougald from Cochlear, coming up next.

Hi. Thanks for welcoming me here, Susan, and thanks for letting me be a part of the seminar today. It's really exciting for us to be here and talk today about some of the innovations that have really worked into hearing implantables and cochlear implants

product line to be able to show how that's changed and benefit our patients. If you'd be so kind to advance to the next slide.

Thank you very much. So, I've been involved with cochlear implants for over 20 years, and it's just been gratifying to see how that evolution in consumer electronics has driven changes in size, connectivity, and lifestyle across our entire portfolio of cochlear and bone conduction implant systems. And mainly for the benefit of our patients and better outcomes for both the patients and professionals. We've come a long way from when my child was implanted over 20 years ago, when you wore a large, bulky, worn body worn sound processor in a harness around your chest and used a hardline mains cable in order to be able to connect to television. Most recently, in our cochlear implant portfolio, we launched the Nucleus eight sound processor.

It's a behind the ear cochlear implant sound processor that integrates stateoftheart connectivity with the miniaturization we've come to expect in those consumer devices. From a size perspective, even with the fact of having rechargeable batteries, the modern innovation in lithiumion battery technology has allowed the nucleus eight to be the first cochlear implant sound processor on the market today, with a similar size to a high power BTE hearing aid, while benefiting from all day hearing, as well as that wearing comfort for your ears all day, whether it's for a nine month old or an 85 year old. The other innovation in consumer electronics that's really driven technology changes is that of connectivity. Nucleus eight is the first cochlear implant sound processor in the world that is engineered ready for Bluetooth SIG's newest Bluetooth standard, Bluetooth Le, and ready to take advantage of their broadcasting protocol, Auracast. As Bluetooth Le continues to roll out in compatible smartphones televisions.

More, the nucleus eight is ready to take advantage of the connectivity of tomorrow with a simple firmware update supported by our hearing alliance partners. Our smart hearing alliance partners at GN Resound. Patients can even benefit from this direct

streaming support in a bimodal condition, and we all know how much better patients perform when they can hear in both ears. Today's patient can take advantage of crystal clear connectivity today from smartphones with both compatible Apple and Android devices, leveraging Apple's made for iPhone technology as well as Android's audio streaming for hearing aid protocols. In this last year, this key integration with manufacturers early in the line really led to an exciting announcement with Amazon regarding compatible fire tv devices.

It really is the first time that a smart tv could stream sound directly to a cochlear implant sound processor, as well as our Baja six Max sound processor. It was exciting, in fact, that Peter Corn, who is our director for accessibility at Amazon, put it best when he said entertainment should be accessible to everyone, and this is one more way to help make that goal a reality. With Asha, sound processors can connect directly to these fire tv devices at the system level, so patients can enjoy audio from their favorite streaming apps, use Alexa, listen to music, navigational sounds, and more. This connected technology for the very first time has allowed our patients to leapfrog their hearing peers and take advantage of built in connectivity to take phone calls, FaceTime and stream movies and build connections not only in their everyday hearing world, but also that digital world without having to purchase their own set of Airpod pros or a headset like I'm wearing today. One of my absolute favorite stories from this innovation is when I was in clinics supporting the fitting of a twelve year old, their sibling asked when they would get their own cochlear implant sound processor so mom couldn't hear them playing sounds and games on their iPad.

With other consumer integrations, such as water resistance with a waterproof processor, allowing them to wear it in and out of water and in all parts of their lifestyle, our patients, and the patients you help take care of us for, are really equipped to experience all that they can in their life every single day. We're delighted to be a part of this and delighted that the connectivity and access keeps growing.

So, to come back on a closing thought, it really has been those innovations of miniaturization, connectivity, form factor and water resistance that are really allowed cochlear implant recipients who back in the day could only be connected by hardlined unto a mains television cable to be able to go throughout their day and actually lead the pack in their own connectivity and their AirPods, or send Häuser use with their built in connectivity in their devices. It's through our partnerships too, with companies like Amazon that we hope as time goes on, more and more devices will be brought up to the newest Crispus listening standards with the Bluetooth SIG group, and we're delighted to see where that road takes us next.

Okay, thanks Natasha. Thanks Susan. Ok, so I think we're going to come up, we'll go through today and we've got lots of time. So we'll do maybe a roundup of all the different terminologies and jargons for some of these really important technologies. Oh, my gosh.

Because there's a lot. And that's actually part of the point of today.

How surprising has it been that there's more than just one Bluetooth? Right. So just speaking for, I think, on the consumer's awareness level of that technology and that Bluetooth is not Bluetooth. Is not Bluetooth. There's these multiple subflavors of it that do different things.

So I'll just ask you a quick question about the. We'll get into that more later. But for the Fire TV connection, if that's using Bluetooth le, that would just be the Fire TV connected to one device because we're not yet at orcast, so we can't connect to multiple devices. So is that a single user kind of a solution right now? Well, actually what's really cool about it is today it's using Android streaming for hearing aids.

So it's using a protocol that exists in Android phones and that is built into fire tv devices. What that allows you to do is have a really crisp, clear signal. And you are correct, it is more of a one to one type protocol, but it allows you to be able to hear it crisp and clear in your ears and allows that interaction to be. I like to use this, I come from a systems engineering background, so it allows you to deliver very high quality sound in very small packets, which means you don't use up all your battery life at the same time. So it's a great innovation and it's something really exciting for that two air listening condition.

Yeah, you mentioned batteries and you mentioned what type of Bluetooth are we using. So the LE is low energy obviously, for that type of. So it lets us capitalize on having a rechargeable device that can also do these really connected sort of tasks. Right. Without killing the battery.

I think many of us on this call lived through the early days of that where that was not the case. Oh my God. We so thankful to everyone who's worked so hard to make that be better for everybody. Right. So we'll come back to Bluetooth and our cast, I'm sure, as we go through today.

So we'll maybe take a pause on it, put a pin in it and come back to that and move over to Dave Fabry. That sounds great. Thanks, Dave. Hi.

Hello. All right, so the example, innovation in the product line that integrates consumer products with hearing industry products. I think you've heard today, and a lot of the focus for the last few years has been on over the counter hearing aids self fit, over the counter versus prescriptive fit. And I want to take a little different wrinkle on that. Certainly we're well aware that according to the World Health Organization, nearly a half a billion people worldwide have hearing loss.

Presbycusis is a worldwide issue, as healthcare and longevity improves worldwide. The other area I think that is emerging and aware to many of that are listening today on this webinar is that one in six teens have hearing loss due to high volume sounds. We're all streaming and listening much more than we did pre pandemic. And even during the workday, many of us are streaming throughout the day, at least in combination.

But then, as well, on the right hand side of this, over the next decade, the fastest growing age demographic is 85 and above. Second fastest growing is 100 and above. But now there are more people than ever on the planet that are age 60. And so we know that hearing loss is an important health issue. But one of the issues that I want to focus on today is that adoption of hearing aids, and one of the things that has led to the creation of the new over the counter category in the US, is that relatively low adoption rate, depending upon the country, anywhere between 30% to 41%, depending upon how you slice it, whether they're using cochlear implants, hearing aids over the counter, or PSAP type devices to help them hear better.

The worldwide prevalence of hearing problems is at approximately 15%. But the more hearing loss you have, the more likely you are to use amplification. So with profound loss, either moving into cochlear implant or in hearing aid categories, it's 70%. I want to really focus and stress for this first segment on those with mild loss, where we see adoption rate of really only around 10% and this would fall under the guise of an ounce

of protection, is worth a pound of cure. When we look at the data from the market, if you will, in 2021 hearing protection devices, the market size in the US alone is about 1.7 billion.

And over the next seven years, that market value is projected to increase to approximately 5 billion. We've seen one of the strong benefits of the aging baby boomer and that creation of over the counter categories is raising awareness for the importance of hearing. And rather than focus on an over the counter solution, I want to talk about trying to prevent hearing loss before it occurs, while also providing opportunities for hearing instrument specialists and audiologists to really flex their professional muscles by using solutions that can raise awareness for the important role that they serve in the process of this too, as it's expected, as I said, to see a 10% growth rate over the next seven years or so. So the product that I will discuss first is a component of what I would consider a system. The first is we make available for use on Android and on Apple platforms a free app called Soundcheck Live that uses the phone microphones to give remarkably accurate certainly up to the levels where we start to become concerned with prevention of a sound level in ambient environments where people are out and about and using the social situation of being able to open the app display a real time level display an average level over the duration that they've had the app open.

And also the maximum level is a way to raise awareness and providing, as you see on the left hand side of the three screens, sound level overview for the levels that might be reported at the time and whether there is a risk on the basis of time and intensity and really advising and raising awareness for teens and adults to learn about environmental noise and how it may impact your hearing and discover ways that can protect your hearing. Everything that includes from passive devices that are not custom to include devices like I'm going to talk about next like Soundgear that can include the Soundgear Phantom a custom solution that would engage with the professional, with the

audiologist or dispenser to make impressions and provide a customized rechargeable solution that delivers 23 hours of battery life, including 4 hours of streaming before it needs to be recharged. Dr. Scollie discussed that we've seen remarkable innovations in battery life through the combination of lowered consumption, improved efficiency for processing, and improved battery technology with rechargeables to really deliver something that far exceeds what many of the consumer hearables or earphones that are rechargeable can produce while still providing excellent streaming sound quality. So someone can use these phantom devices.

They are limited to a 30 gain, 90 dB output matrix allow on iOS two way audio. They have wind noise management, which is certainly important for those who would want to use this for outdoor activities like hunting as well as outdoor sporting activities if they go to an outdoor racetrack, indoor concerts as well all of those things provide that protection from hearing loss before it occurs. Because consider that 10% adoption rate in those with mild loss, they may already start to show some signs of high frequency loss. But if using a three frequency pure tone average may not really show up as a hearing loss, but wanting to really show and raise awareness for protecting that noise damage before it occurs. And we do include active feedback cancellation 2.4 db noise reduction rating out of these products, including those, as I said, for transient or steady state type noises.

And the issue we think, and really closing thoughts of this section, is that the MSRP on this product for a pair of these devices is 1599. We have other custom and non custom solutions that go down to much lower than that. But again, I'll restate. I think an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure in raising what is the price of hearing? And although it seems kind of outrageous for a hearing aid company to be focused on trying to prevent hearing loss, there's plenty of work for all of us before we start to get those types of losses that become the requirement for use of hearing aids.

And that's what we think the sound gear solution provides. And I would encourage you to look at the full array. I only talked about Phantom today, but go to look at the [soundgear.com](https://www.soundgear.com) website for a full array of the products and features, and a deeper dive on the technical details and what I discussed here.

All right, thanks very much. Can I just ask you a question about that product, then? You certainly may. Even another one? Even another one.

That was a question. Yeah. So what kind of noises are you targeting to protect people from without everything? Impulse noise. Sustained noise.

Does it have separate processing for each? It does have separate processing for each. So it does work in a sustained environment. We've gone through independent testing to ensure that the attack time for impulse and transients meets the requirements in order to actually provide that protection. And actually for those, the phantom devices are classified FDA as a hearing only.

The phantom custom devices are classified as a hearing instrument, ensuring that they meet that requirement as well for those insurance plans or coverage that provide some reimbursement or coverage for hearing aids. And so it is designed, and we have other products that are specifically designed for someone who's doing, let's say, rapid fire or heavy duty target practice to really ensure that that protection from impulse provides the highest NRR. But the phantom is designed for all around use for both impulse and continuous noise environments. Okay, so maybe some of those other products might also use passive attenuation, like more s tighter seal to the ear canal. This is a custom solution, so it does provide passive attenuation in addition to the other, but it looks like a hard shell.

Maybe going to a soft product might give us a tighter seal. Okay. All right. And one important thing is that I know many people, the new generation is sort of rediscovering the importance of your mold impressions to differentiate themselves. And we recommend right now you can go to the Soundgear website that you use a traditional silicone impression for the very reason that you mentioned, rather than digital scanning.

We typically will not make these with a digital Susan, because as you just have mentioned, the cartilaginous portion of the ear, the shore density, and the way that an impression will ensure that tightness, snugness of fit will get us the highest passive attenuation plus the active attenuation. Right. Same as if you're doing an ear mold for a high power hearing aid fitting. But this is for just a different reason, keeping the sound out rather than letting the sound out. Okay, great.

Thanks for that. And I'm sure we'll hear more about other solutions from you in the upcoming part. So I'll avoid spoilers and we'll move on to. Great. So with that, just checking on our time.

We're doing all right. I do think we will probably move directly on to question two. So thanks for the interactions there. And we will come back together as a panel at the end of today's session. So for those of you joining us, we're talking about product integration between consumer devices and products in the hearing health industry.

And we're going to be moving on to our second question in terms of how do you see that type of product integration as changing the hearing healthcare landscape from the consumer's point of view? Like how would they see it? And first up, we're going to welcome Dr. Brian Taylor to the stage for this. Thank you, Susan.

Great to be with you. I'm going to go ahead and just dive right into my material.

So the question was really around consumer centric innovations. And at Signia, we have a few that we could talk about, and I actually did some crowdsourcing within the company to see which one would be a good choice. So the first one I'm not talking about would be the ix platform. There's webinars on that. You can go and see another one, Signia assistant, which is a way to self adjust your hearing aid.

Not going to talk about that one either, although we have some papers on that at audiology online. The choice amongst my colleagues at Signia, both here in the US and at Global, was to talk about Signia form factors. So that's what I want to spend a little bit of time discussing. I think a good place to start would be to ask the question, why do form factors matter? And maybe even more fundamental than that, where does the term form factor come from?

It's been around now in our profession for a number of years, and it's kind of interesting, and it's, I think, a good example of how consumer electronics has kind of bled into audiology over the years. Form factors is a common term amongst companies that make products like earbuds or personal computers. And it kind of shows you how that terminology has found its way into our profession over time. But why do form factors matter? And I think there's no shortage of data out there from a number of years that talk about the low uptake rates.

Just in the last year or so, Larry Humes published a really, I think, important paper that basically said 85% of adults in the US who self report trouble hearing do not seek treatment. We know that a lot of people out there wait the proverbial seven to ten years to get help from the time they first notice a problem with their hearing until they seek treatment. We know that people that do have hearing aids, many of them only wear them occasionally or a few hours a day, and that could be a bit of a problem. And then in addition, we know that there are a number of people out there that have normal

audiograms and self reported hearing difficulty that may benefit from amplification. Now, of course, having a new or better form factor is not going to solve all of the problems, but I do think that it is one way that you can maybe better address the low uptake rate of hearing aids.

What I want to talk about, one of the factors I think that we've known about, but maybe haven't really studied a lot, or we maybe don't understand as well as we should, is the role that stigma plays in that low uptake rate. Stigma, we know, is the process by which people experience a lowering of their social status as a result of a condition. And I think what's really interesting in our field is you sort of have not only the stigma of hearing loss, but mixed in with that, you have the stigma related to concerns and fears about cognitive decline and dementia, and just the aging process per se. I think all of those factors, aging, cognitive decline, and hearing loss, which are all stigmatizing conditions, are sort of interconnected in some way that maybe we don't completely understand stigma. I think it's important to remember, if you look at sort of the big picture, there's really two components to it.

There's the fear of diagnosis. You don't want to be told bad news, and that can keep you out of the clinic for a long time because you're afraid of what might be something of terrible consequences. And then the other component of stigma is the visibility of treatment. And I think we have to keep in mind both of those factors when we talk about stigma and how to better address it in our clinics. I just want to note one survey that was done a couple of years ago.

She's a person who does a lot of consulting within our industry. She found that 21% of hearing aid non owners cited stigma as a barrier to using hearing aids. And they said that in the face of lower cost options, like over the counter, direct to consumer hearing aids that are out, they knew that even if they could spend less money, that stigma was still a condition that prevented them from getting the help that they may need. So I

think we all know stigma may be understudied, underappreciated at signia. Over the last decade or so, we have spent some resources trying to better understand stigma.

And we have over that period of time, launched three different form factors to better address some of the issues related to stigma. Now, what I want to just focus in, I think many of you have seen these styles. They're not really new. But what I wanted to cue you into is that each of them has a stigma reducing trait. So, for example, stiletto, you see the letter a there that's trying to address the trait of what's called deidentification, which is the intentional idea here is to remove the most identifiable feature, namely the push button or the switch on the hearing aid, to remove those features to make it look less like a hearing aid.

The silk. I think the main idea there may be obvious, but it's still worth pointing out. It's the stigma reducing trait of concealment, to make the device as invisible as possible. And then finally the active there on the right, it is trying to address the stigma reducing trait, which we call normalization, to make the device look like some other common non stigmatizing device, like a consumer earbud. And as we all know, more and more people are walking around the neighborhoods, airports, the streets around the country with earbuds in their ears.

So it makes these devices that look like hearing aids, that are actually hearing aids, more palatable for some. I also wanted to mention this is mentioned a survey that was conducted by my colleagues in Canada, Signia, Canada, a year or so ago that looked at if a couple of these different form factors were made available, would that move the needle with respect to the non buyer rate? So they showed photos. You see the photo on the left with three form factors and the photo on the right with five form factors, including the ones that I just shared with you. And they asked the question to the 384 respondents, would you try and purchase any of these devices?

Would you try or trial and then purchase any one of these devices? And the bottom line from this survey is they found that the non buyer rate increased 21% when the stiletto and the active and the silk form factors were made available as a choice to try. Now, 21% may sound kind of small. That's one in five. And when you consider how many people out there are not getting the help they need, in my clinic, I would take one in five anytime when it comes to improving the non buyer rate.

So some of the implications for changing the hearing aid landscape, I think the message here is when you make available some of these newer form factors that don't look like traditional hearing aids, it's a great way to increase the adoption rate and to perhaps attract some non buyers into your clinic. Those that might be concerned about stigma. I think all of us are invested in trying to improve and attract new buyers, younger individuals that might be able to get started earlier when their loss is more mild in nature, and maybe even those that desire to wear their hearing aids situationally and have a device that maybe is a multitasker in the sense that it is a hearing aid one moment, and then the next moment they use it for streaming music or talking on the telephone.

So some final closing thoughts. I think over the last decade or so, we've seen the morphing of prescription hearing aids with consumer electronic devices. I think traits that traditionally have been found in both of those categories have melded together over time. And it's an exciting opportunity for audiologists out there, I think, to try to address the needs of some of these more nontraditional hearing aid wearers by thinking of the hearing aid as more of a consumer electronic device.

Okay, great, Brian, thanks for zooming in on the issue of form factor and how it relates to cosmetics and stigma. Sounds like you've been able to balance that off with connectivity and rechargeability and those other sorts of factors. So in the interest of time, because we do have three other folks in this session, and we want to have this

one through by 110. I think we'll save big group questions to the end for this topic for now, and we'll welcome Dave Fabry back to the screen for the same question. Consumers.

Okie Dok, thanks. So from the consumer's point of view, the hearing healthcare landscape I think is what I honed in on for this section. And really, as opposed to the last segment where I was talking about protecting from noise damage, I want to talk a little bit about the fact that hearing loss is seen as a top concern among baby boomers. It really dovetails with what Brian was just talking about. We know stigma has been a big issue, but like many other boomers, I am less stigmatized by hearing loss and the use of hearing aids.

But I have higher expectations for preserving my health, ensuring the ease of use, and some of the other things that I'll briefly touch on in a moment. But hearing loss is a top concern among boomers. Over half rate hearing loss as a top health concern. We say hearing care is health care. And along the left hand side of the screen, you see a number of different health conditions that have been shown to be comorbid with hearing loss.

And in many case, that concern about hearing and the link to overall health and wellness has been something in the mindset for really, I want to say, since the previous millennium. I remember some of the first studies that came out linking hearing loss and cardiovascular issues came out of the enhance database and people with heart disease have 54% increased risk of hearing loss, elevated in the risk of falls, even with a mild loss, three times more likely to fall. Diabetes is another associated heart condition, heart failure, but then more recently, the cognitive impairment. And boomers. We've been maligned for many years as wanting to think we're ten to 15 years younger than we really are.

Now that we're reaching senior citizen status, we're really starting to focus on what it is that preserves our coconuts as well as our overall health and wellness with that aging process. And the achieve study was that three year global study that was taking place, a randomized control study. I just came back from auditory society where they highlighted some of the follow on studies that are being conducted. I think many of us listening to this webinar were disappointed by the overall finding that showed no link between the use of hearing aids in the overall population and preservation of cognitive function versus a control group. I want to hone in on that Eric cohort, the one that had atherosclerosis, easy for me to say, cardiovascular risk factors.

And in that population, over the three year time period. It reduced cognitive decline on the ten measures that they used by 48% versus the control group who was followed over that time but not using hearing aids. And we were really the first in our space in 2018 to introduce devices that when worn would obviously first and foremost, you have to provide outstanding sound quality, speech intelligibility, but then in addition would track and encourage more physical activity similar to the growth we've seen in wrist worn devices, but also social engagement which are reported in the app, encouraging the patient to continue to be more physically active and socially engaged in our latest product, Genesis. First and foremost, as I said, we include a feature that I'm not going to talk about today, the Edge mode, that looks at situational use of machine learning and artificial intelligence. Now even beginning to use DNN to optimize for a challenging listening environment.

We're delivering beyond IP 68 rating and 51 hours of battery life out of a Ric device on a single charge for those who are interested in rechargeability, but you also see health steps, standing and exercise. What I didn't show here was the social engagement piece, which also looks at the hours that they're spent in conversation throughout the day, the diversity of environments as they go throughout the day, and then also linking on the right hand side to the center panel, a fall detection feature. We've got a number

of presentations coming up looking at our new area of study that we've been going on in a partnership and collaboration with Stanford looking at fall detection features. Great, but we really want to try to encourage people, if they have gait, strength or balance problems, to try to ultimately prevent a fall from occurring before someone breaks a hip. So with that, I will advance to the next slide, which I think is my summary one.

And really the overall closing thought is hearing care is health care. And our motto is hear better, live better. Connecting really to all of those other ways that people connect with their health and other people to hear life's most important moments.

Okay, great. Thanks very much for that, Dave. We're just spot on time, so we're going to turn the mic over next to Laurel Christensen and we'll regroup at the end of the session. Great. I hope you can hear me.

I will take just a little bit of a different turn here on this product integration piece and really talk about Bluetooth low energy audio. So we've already had this mentioned a couple of times, and I think it's something that is really starting to come to the forefront for most audiologists. So I remember about six months ago I gave my first talk where I was mentioning Bluetooth low energy audio, and I asked the audience, and there was probably 250 people or more in that audience. I asked the audience, have you heard of Bluetooth, low energy audio and Auracast? And there was only one hand that went up in that group of hearing healthcare professionals.

But I think if I did that today, things would be quite different because I think we're starting to really see this in the forefront, and it's a great story for our industry. So I'll touch a little bit on where it came from as well. But just to start out with Bluetooth low energy audio is a new Bluetooth standard. And it's a new Bluetooth standard that will

eventually, over time, replace the classic Bluetooth that we all use today. We use it with our headphones and our computers and our phones and our cars.

We're very familiar with the old classic Bluetooth standard. So what will this give us for people with hearing loss? And there's a couple of things, and I think for all audiologists and hcps, these are really going to be welcomed because we have such a plethora of different systems today. But in the basic sense, what you're going to get is calls. Calls that can be streamed from your device.

And with a Bluetooth low energy device, you'll be able to connect to a Bluetooth low energy hearing aid and have hands free telephone calls, streaming, and anything you would want streamed to your hearing aids with that Bluetooth low energy audio. And again, hands free. And we haven't been able to do hands free very well with Android phones unless you were using a classic Bluetooth protocol that ultimately really takes so much battery power. The second thing that Bluetooth low energy audio will give us is this broadcast audio called Auracast. So if you just take a look at really all of the different systems, and we've had wireless for a very long time.

You look at telecoil starting back in 1939 or 31, and then you have FM systems that came on the market in 1968. Classic Bluetooth was 99. And when you start to look at hearing aids and proprietary protocols, they started to come out about 2010, where you had 2.4 ghz, but not running on classic Bluetooth, just running what was each company's proprietary protocol for streaming. So we saw a lot of that in our industry with accessories and things, and then made for iPhone came out in 2013. And then someone, I think Natasha, maybe she talked about the Android streaming for hearing AidS protocol that we all get confused with ASHA and the American Speech Language Hearing association.

But look at all of these different protocols. And I think one thing that anyone who's practicing the clinic will tell you is that they feel like they've become someone who has to know everything about phones and consumer electronics and not just about hearing anymore, because there's so many protocols, there are so many updates to iOS and to Android, and some update might break something with the streaming. So there just is a lot of time spent on this today. So it will be very nice when everybody is on one protocol. And all hearing aid manufacturers have actually said that they will move to this protocol.

And so how did it come about? So this is a great story in our industry. Try to change the slide here. There we go. So it's a great story in our industry because it was the european hearing Instrument Manufacturers association.

So Ahima that went to Bluetooth SIG, which is the Bluetooth Special interest group, which is a global trade association that oversees Bluetooth. And it was those european hearing aid manufacturers. It's basically all the major hearing aid manufacturers went and said, we would really like a new Bluetooth. We need a Bluetooth for hearing aids. We don't have a lot of power that we can consume in our hearing aids.

Bluetooth is classic is incredibly power hungry. It also doesn't have the greatest sound quality, the way we have to implement it with compression in our hearing aids. So we want better sound quality. And then they also asked for the broadcast standard so that it would be very easy to go into any public area and be able to have broadcast. And so Bluetooth special interest group said, okay, we'll do this.

And now, after a number of years, Bluetooth low energy audio is out. And not only has this been built for us, but Bluetooth SIG has decided that this will replace Bluetooth classic. So this has everything that Bluetooth classic has today and more. And I'll show

you a few of those benefits. But just here are just some of the things that are starting to happen on the horizon.

3 billion Bluetooth low energy audio enabled devices are expected to ship by 2027. So that is a very short time away. You start to talk about cochlear implants, hearing aids, earbuds, tvs. You just start to think about all of the things that have Bluetooth today. And the newer devices that will come out will have Bluetooth low energy audio by 2.5 million locations globally will offer auracast.

And that would be the ability to go into a public space, find your auricast signal, and have whatever audio that is streamed direct to your hearing aids. And one thing I think that is important to be aware of is that direct connectivity to smartphones, tablets, and computers is now in the top three satisfaction drivers for hearing aid users. So while connectivity was kind of something special the hearing aid could do once upon a time, that just isn't the case now. People are expecting their hearing aids to have these easy connections, hands free connections. So a little bit more about the benefits of Bluetooth low energy audio.

I already mentioned it will have an improved codec. So codec is really the sound quality of how that audio is streamed. So a richer, much nicer sound quality, lower power consumption. I'll talk a little bit about that in another slide. We'll also be able to stream to multiple devices simultaneously.

And as I mentioned before, you'll have hands free two way communication in Android phones without a Bluetooth classic. And then finally you have Auricast, which is broadcast audio. And I'll talk a little bit about how that will work. But first, let's just talk about the differences between Bluetooth classic and Bluetooth low energy. So this is a study that's actually from the Bluetooth special interest group, and they were

comparing streaming sound with Bluetooth classic versus the new Bluetooth low energy audio protocol.

And what they found was that Bluetooth low energy audio gives the clearest sound quality, much lower battery consumption, which is really important for us in our hearing aids. I mean, we're trying to do a lot of great signal processing for patients, and if we're using our power to just stream, we can't do as complicated as signal processing as we want. So we want that power consumption to be way down. And then finally, the comparison between the two is that there is a lower latency or a lower delay time in streaming Bluetooth low energy audio versus Bluetooth classic. And that's important for getting it to someone's ears and not having any kind of echo or delay.

So just a little bit more about auracast. So Auracast has three parts to it. The first part being share your audio. And sharing your audio might mean you're just listening something and you say, hey, I want you to listen to this song, too. You can think of children on an airplane.

I know my kids used to sit with one iPad, and I had to have a splitter to go to two kids. And now you'll just be able to share your audio with anyone around and then hear your best. And that would be going into a public place, like, let's say an airport, and you could go to a certain gate, and you can look for the stream in that gate so that you can get those gate announcements right into your hearing aid. So this could be any number of different public places. And then lastly, unmute your world.

The best example of that would be you maybe go to a bar to enjoy sporting event. And sometimes you'd actually like to hear that tv. And usually it's just on. It might have some closed captions on it, but you might want to hear it. And you'll be able to find the auracast stream from that tv and have that go into your earbuds, your hearing know, whatever you're using.

It's not just going to be for people who have hearing loss. It will also be for anyone with their consumer electronics.

I might ask you just to wrap it up just for sake of time. So we're going to see the time. Yeah. Sorry. So the last thing that I would mention then is just how are you going to get the auricast?

And the aura cast will be really just like you do on Wi Fi. So when you go into your phone and you search for a Wi Fi network, you'll go in and search for an Auracast network. There's already two Samsung phones on the market with Bluetooth, Leonard Gaudio and an auracast assistant to do this. So these things are happening incredibly quickly and are quite easy to do. And I'll end it right there.

I'm really excited about this technology for what it means for sharing audio with hearing aid users and non hearing aid users. And it was part of the reason for the overall topic that we're talking about today. So I know that that's something that you guys are working on, but it also pertains to the whole industry. So thanks for sharing that, Laurel, very much. We'll pass that over to Steve as the next topic in this particular area.

Thank you. Can you hear me and see? Great. Okay. This has been great.

I'm learning so much. So a little bit more about, I guess, our company, Sorensen. And then caption Call is a part of Sorensen. Sorensen.com is a good spot to go to gain information on all of our services. So essentially, we are a telecommunications provider, services provider for the deaf as well as the hard of hearing, whether they wear hearing aids or not.

So some really great services and products over there that you should take a peek when you get a chance. And I'm trying to advance my slide. Here we go.

Thank you. Sorry. I appreciate it.

So, with regard to these products and services, again, we kind of like to call ourselves a one stop shop when it comes to products and services for the deaf and hard of hearing. As we know, hearing healthcare is no longer an island and thanks largely to technological innovations that offer a customizable suite of solutions for each patient's hearing loss journey. Whereas the last generation of hearing healthcare providers could offer patients hearing aids to improve their quality of life, now hearing aids are one type of wearable technology that may be a part of a comprehensive treatment approach that can also include integrated closed captioning and lifestyle enhancing mobile applications. There's a whole ecosystem that has developed around the growing need for assistive technology to live well with hearing loss. The integration of hearing assistance technologies, including captions, into daily life and practice, is a perfect example for the healthcare professionals supporting hearing assistance technologies for their hearing.

Hard of hearing patients should be considered for use in challenging listening situations. This allows equal access of services and it is a benefit for the patient's overall health and well being. These technologies encompass a broad array of services and devices designed to improve listening in various environments via amplification, captioning, visual display, or a combination of these on the go caption call mobile, which we talked about previously, that technology and the adaptation to modern telephone usage. More people are using a cell phone in addition to having a home phone. Mobile apps can be downloaded at no cost in Google and Apple as well as the Amazon App Store.

For eligible users, these types of technologies are frequently being used whether the users wear hearing aids or not, and for a variety of degrees of hearing loss. Creating these communication advantages creates a better quality of life by granting more independence and less isolation. People with hearing loss can take years to decide on purchasing hearing aids for a variety of reasons, offering a no cost, easy to use phone captioning solution like caption, call services can be an immediate solution to positively impact a hard of hearing person's life, and again, the eligibility for that is hearing loss and the need for captions to understand and communicate over the phone effectively. There's still a need for ancillary technologies even as a gateway to other forms of amplification. As Sergey Kochkin's market track revealed, the second most important listening situation is to one on one listening is communicating over the telephone.

The captioning application is just one more tool in the toolbox of communication technologies. So again, we're a one stop shop. These are just a few of the products and services that we offer that allow people that are hard of hearing as well as those that are deaf, to communicate with each other in a more collaborative approach.

And there's a large amount of faqs for each of these applications on the website. If you need to find out more specific information about each of these apps, they're all very highly involved and user friendly. The sorensen for Zoom is brand new, and I suggest you take a look at that. But Susan, if there's any questions on this, I'll be happy to answer. Okay, thanks very much.

Sure. I think it's probably time to move on to our next question. We've got lots of participants wanting to handle this one, so this is just a fun one. What is a feature of your product that is underutilized or misunderstood? We are just a couple of minutes over, so if you want to be a bit succinct, that would help us out and appreciate your efforts there.

So we'll turn it over first to Dana. Thank you. I'm going to kick us up here. Let's see. I think I need to advance.

Slide. There we go. So, when asked this question in terms of an underutilized or misunderstood feature, my brain went immediately to artificial intelligence. So I think there's been a really large growth of artificial intelligence and app use within the hearing industry, and that's been great. Right.

That kind of thing allows us to identify patterns in data and analyze vast volumes of data and enable users to really have a personalized kind of experience for themselves. And so this is undoubtedly a benefit. And with that in mind, I wanted to talk about the feature that I see as being misunderstood in the Widex portfolio, and that is often our AI solutions. And what I'll dive into here. And so what I think of when I think of AI is the different approaches in how we can use AI within solutions in the hearing care industry.

And there's essentially two ways that I think of this. One is the automatics. This is the type of pre training or deep learning applications that are used to drive automatic signal processing and steering of classification systems. For example, Widex offers a great automatic classification system that we call soundclass technology, and it has been trained by real world sound samples, and it helps wearers achieve that, set it and forget it kind of experience that they're looking for throughout most of the situations in their daily lives. But the challenge with these automatic systems is that they're based on certain assumptions about what the hearing aid wearer wants to focus on in a given situation.

And even the best systems don't always know the intention of a specific wearer in a specific environment at that point in time, regardless of how much we use in terms of acoustics and sensors and various things. Humans are just complex. Really. Quick

example, I travel for work, and I think hotel rooms are depressing. And sitting by myself at a table in a restaurant is sad.

So you'll usually find me at the bar with my laptop, trying to get some work done. And sometimes in that setting, I am extremely focused on what I'm doing. Sometimes in that setting, I'm actually interested in the sports event that might be on the tv if my home team is part of it. And other times I'm super interested in some drama going on with another couple sitting nearby. And it can absolutely change what my goal is in that situation, even though the acoustics of that environment have not changed at all, depending on my intent.

And so, with that in mind, we really focus on this idea of real time intent, because sometimes all the automatics aren't enough, and we look at how the patient can be helped by giving them some ability to indicate their actual intent in the environment that they're in. So Widex has been considering this question of intent for generations of products. Actually, as far back as, I think a decade ago, with the introduction of unique, we did something unique, which was to look at having something called a preference control instead of a simple volume control as part of our solutions, where a traditional volume control turns everything up or down. By contrast, a preference control, the widex preference control, adjusts adaptive features and parameters towards either more audibility or more comfort. We go ahead and make an assumption that when people raise their volume, they want more audibility.

That tends to be their behavior, and that when they lower their volume, they want more comfort. That tends to be their behavior. But really, behind the scenes, we were trying to predict their intent in a particular situation. And it was a simple, but really accessible approach that warehouse had in a variety of situations. But then we went forward with our AI solutions, continuing to adapt our automatic solutions, but then looking at how

we could really bridge the gap between an audio scenario that you're in, the intention of the wearer, hearing aid, controls, app use, all of that.

And that led us to the introduction of soundsense learn, which was the first real time artificial intelligence AI solution in a hearing aid. And so what it did is connect that power of machine learning through a smartphone and give the wearer a way to quickly adapt settings in a real time situation, so that it is driven by the context, the circumstances, their attentions, their emotions, all the things that we can't read based on the input to the hearing aid. And so if you're not familiar with sounds and learn the basic concept of it is that the user makes a series of paired comparisons. Think eye exam. Do you like A or B?

Do you like C or D? So they go through some of these comparisons indicating their preference. And an algorithm is able to predict the next set of comparisons based on their previous answer, and ultimately to arrive at a recommendation for settings that will apply in that real time situation and improve their satisfaction. And the results of studies show success with that. Our experience with the improvements that patients have through having that empowerment and control led us to move forward and look at the next level of AI solution for our product portfolio.

And that was the introduction of our third generation AI solution called mysound. And with that, we focused on how we could leverage AI to make the decisions even faster and easier for the wearer, still prioritizing user intent, still gathering that information. We start with asking a couple of simple questions, where the wearer indicates their activity that they're engaged in and what they want to optimize for in the moment. And from there, we're able to leverage cloud data gathered over years of this AI solution to make simple recommendations based on the preferences of others who've been in that activity and had a similar goal for optimization in mind. And so we can deliver on that

promise where our system keeps getting smarter over time using that cloud based data.

So wearers might be able to choose from two recommendations that make it really simple for them to arrive at an instant answer, or they can go on and continue to do those paired comparisons where they really fine tune to their needs and their preference. And then we elevated that system one more time by adding new parameters to what is happening behind the scenes. One of those is compression characteristics, knowing that compression can influence the emphasis in a specific environment, and that there are both individual and situation specific preferences for compression characteristics, like attack times and things of that nature. So with mysound 2.0 and these added parameters, we're still focusing on listening needs, listening intent, in the moment, in the situation, in real time, where we can create maybe more focus on nearer, louder inputs, or more focus, or open it up to softer, farther inputs, same situation, maybe even the same person, but a different intention. And so with that, I think I just want to leave you with the closing thought that I believe that the best path forward with artificial intelligence is that we consider both artificial and human intelligence.

We're smart, humans are intelligent, we're complex, and when we drive the AI solutions, when we interact with them, we can arrive at the best possible place where our intentions have been considered and our needs have been met. Great summary. Nice to see the ecological validity together with the AI that's really interesting. With that, we'll pass things over to Jessica to bounce it back over to care credit. Thanks.

Thanks, Susan.

So a question that I get all the time is what is care credit, what is a library credit and what is the know? Aren't you guys? So, you know, these are questions that we get on

a daily basis and I'm really glad to be here to kind of talk through the differences. And really, it's a toolkit for our providers when it comes to the healthcare credit card. Care credit is the largest provider of healthcare financing in the country.

And when we purchased Allegro credit, it was really designed to give our providers more payment options for even more patients. And so really, at the end of the day, you want to help your patients and we want to help facilitate financing for your patients in order to give you the power. And with that, we're all in this together. And so really we're giving you the power to help your patients. And when we talk about the differences between the two, there's really some key benefits between the two.

And it really comes down to what is best for the patient. And if we could go to the next slide, that'd be great.

Next slide, please.

Thank you. So when it comes to the different patient payment preferences, really you have to look at what is best for your patient. And this hits very close to home because I myself have hearing loss and I was diagnosed at a very young age and I go to an audiologist and I was recently told that I need to get fitted for a hearing device, that my hearing loss has escalated. And so with that, I myself am on this patient journey to find the best technology, to find the best fitting hearing aid. And so with that, I myself am going through some of these similar questions, such as, sometimes it's not about the total cost, it's really about fitting those payments into your monthly budget.

Especially with the current economic environment.

There's things such as going to the grocery store and being able to pay your mortgage, those types of things. You need to be able to fit hearing into those budgeted items, and

it's so important. And with financing, we're able to provide patients with the ability to make those monthly payments and to fit it within their budget so that they can afford and they can live their life that they've been living it. And so with that, people like to have options and that's why we have. And if you want to go to the next slide, I'll go through a little bit closer look to explain the different products and the benefits.

So the care credit card is a revolving credit card, and it can be used at more than over 200,000 enrolled locations. And that includes the dentist, that includes the vet. So it really is a large network and they can use it again and again. And there's several different types of promotional opportunities, but there is a no interest of paid in full within the promotional period. And really that gives patients the ability to fit that larger ticket item into their budget and pay for that over time.

And as I mentioned earlier, talking about pre qualification, that really is a great benefit to the care credit card. And really we want patients to be able to achieve life changing outcomes and we want to give that power to our providers and to our audiologists to be able to help their patients. And then going on to the Allegro installment loan, this is a slide. So the installment loan is a fixed loan in which there are predictable monthly payments, and it also has a fixed interest rate as well as a payoff date. So really sometimes patients just want to know exactly what their monthly payment is going to be as well as the payoff date.

And so for that, the installment loan might be a better option. And there's also the option for the waived interest option if paid in full within that promotional period. So very similar to the deferred interest for the care credit card. This is for the installment loan. And it's a great way for patients to be able to again pay on a monthly basis and fit that into their budget.

And then the great thing about the installment loan is at the end of that loan, they can upgrade to new technology and then they can pay over time again with monthly payments. And so the way that I try to explain the two different products is it is a powerful toolkit that providers have. And if they're revolving credit card, if they already have a card, and maybe they used it at the vet for their dog, they can then use it to get hearing care, or maybe they prefer that installment loan. Whatever it is, it is a very powerful toolkit that can be used in your practice.

And really, at the end of the day, I really want to get across that. The economic environment is very tough. The demographic is changing for preventative hearing, health care, it's getting younger, we're seeing it getting younger. And so care credit, we really want to give you the power to help your patients, given these tough economic conditions and everything going on right now. We want to help you.

We're all in this together. And we, so, you know, with that we want to be able to give you the products to be able to help your patients get the care that they need.

Moving on now to Natasha from cochlear and talking about products that are misunderstood. You bet. Thanks Susan, and thank you so much to all our fellow colleagues, speakers here. Many of us are showing out our consumer trends that are influencing our device, but a lot of us have also addressed one of the key challenges we have as partners in the industry, which is access. And when someone talks to me, if you'd be so kind to advance the slide about how can we assist access.

Our talkers talked about stigma, form factors and situational hearing. But one of the thoughts that we have at cochlear as well is making sure that our patients have access to care where and when they need it. And really that involves kind of four key pillars to help this be successful and to integrate it into practice out in the field. That involves convenience, connection, giving our clinicians insight and ensuring it's a secure

environment so that our patients can feel confident in their data as well as our clinicians and their data. Cochlear's suite of remote care solutions give clinicians a flexibility to really customize patient care.

They offer new care access solutions and they maximize time so you can focus on what matters most, which is improving patient outcomes and delivering an exceptional patient experience for our patients. With compatible nucleus or Baja sound processors, clinicians today can now offer remote hearing assessment through cochlear remote check and even remote video appointments through cochlear remote assist. These innovative and secure platforms further enhance clinical practice as you're able to bring more options for monitoring patient performance, all the while optimizing those hearing outcomes remotely, which enables you to be able to provide ongoing care for each patient as their needs change and their clinician's practice grows. Accessing clinical care today is not easy for a patient. With remote care, clinicians can offer their patients convenient quality hearing care without visiting the clinic, which fits into their patient's life, including those patients who may be limited by location, health, mobility or work commitments.

My 21 year old son, who is deafblind, can't drive a car, so for him to be able to get to appointments for his hearing health, it's a special accommodation from my husband and myself. So these type of tools really allow and empower him to be the captain of his health care. Partnering with these clinical tools, which can really help to see how your patients perform, there are patient self care applications that empower recipients to personalize their hearing experience. One of the things the previous talker spoke about was intention unique to cochlear. We have smart apps that allow a patient to be able to truly tune their cochlear implant map, whether needed to accommodate ongoing, very cochlear conditions like meniere's disease, or even to suit a situational listening situation.

We know that patients are exposed to different hearing every day. And this app has the range of options to support patients proactively managing the device setting to optimize outcomes, but also to have more satisfaction with their daily listening experience. This suite of connected care applications ranges through, from the surgical counter to that first fit all the way through that daily ongoing care and maintenance. And it really gives you the confidence and comfort to be able to offer a new way of care to your cochlear implant and Baja recipients. One of the things that's unique, and I'll just leave you with that because I know I'm getting close to my time.

Susan, is that what's unique about this is even as we come up to those older ages, our patients have reported, and typically our patients are, our most common demographic is the aged adult. They report willingness to use these tools again, and they want to be able to use these on repeated appointments. One of our pediatric audiologists reported that with remote check, she could confirm the function of a cochlear implant, saving her worried parents of this child an emergency trip to an audiology appointment to ensure that the device's cochlear implant was still functioning after a rough and tumble day. Thank you so much for this opportunity, and I'm excited that we hopefully can continue to deliver new care to remove those access barriers. Okay, great.

With the geographical barriers to seeking care from implant centers, certainly in my country, it's few and far between. So these are really important technologies. Thanks for sharing that. Thank you. You're welcome.

So moving on then, to Brian Taylor and over to you, Brian. Okay, thanks again, Susan. I'm going to talk very briefly about one feature that is underutilized or misunderstood in the Signia world, and that is the Signia digital assistant, which has been around for a long time. It's an app based tool that allows people to self adjust or self tune their hearing aid using data collected from thousands of other wares who have opted into the system. So it's a great example of a live neural network, and it offers clinician, I

think the real important take home point here is that it's a great tool to augment or supplement the fine tuning aspects, things that you do during the follow up process.

We know that the average number of visits, post fitting appointments is about three. Those appointments take upwards of 30 to 60 minutes sometimes, and about a third to a half of the time is spent in those appointments. Fine tuning. So the idea here is you might be able to offload for the right patient, some of the fine tuning put it in the hands of the digital assistant. We think that that's a great way to empower the patient, the right patient to make decisions in real time on how to adjust their hearing aids.

And we also think that it's a great way to free up time in your own clinic so you can spend it on doing other tasks that might be of more relevance to other patients, like counseling, seeing new patients, things like that. It's a very intuitive system.

It's controlled, so it doesn't give the person too much access. They can only adjust so many things. You see here on the slide how that works. And lastly, I'll just share with you some recent internal data that we collected on people that have our devices. You can see that of those that said that they had used Signia assistant, 89% said it was useful.

And you can see the other bar there on the right did not use Signia assistant. You can see that about three quarters of them said they didn't have a need for it, which is great. But also notice between 25% and about a third said they either didn't have the app or they weren't aware of it. We think that's an opportunity to instruct your patients that they have some of these unique features on their smartphone that they might want to access, to fine tune and adjust their hearing aids on their own without having to come into your clinic. So I think it's a great example of a feature that kind of augments what you do in the clinic.

And for the right patient who's able to use a smartphone, who has good digital literacy, it's a fantastic feature and a great example of machine learning that you find in today's hearing aids.

Okay, so we're hearing lots today about app based personalization, essentially, and there's been so much growth in that and definitely a way forward for the folks that are able to make use of those technologies more and more all the time. So we'll move it on to Jessica Dancis. And again, what do you feel like is a feature that's misunderstood about your products? Yeah. Thank you.

So, know, I want to start off by talking a little bit more about something that some of the other people have touched on as well. Which is the incidence of hearing loss, and about the millions of people who need amplification. I know Dave had mentioned that only 10% of people who have mild hearing loss have amplification. When you think about it, that's 10%. That means 90% of people who have a mild hearing loss, who are struggling hearing, and all of the things we know that are associated with hearing loss, like depression and potential cognitive impact, they're not getting the help that they need.

So that's 90% of people that are out there that we have an opportunity to reach and help. And then there's another 26 million people who have normal thresholds, but they're also struggling. They're going into your clinic and they're saying, hey, I have problems, I need help. But they're not actually getting. Oftentimes, they're just not even being recommended to get anything.

Because I know that a lot of times we look at that audiogram and we say, hey, you have normal hearing. We'll come back in a year. And I'm going to imagine to that person who is struggling, and they're thinking, wow, but I'm in the restaurant and I

can't hear people, or I'm at work, and I can't understand. It then delays them getting help. And oftentimes they don't need something all day.

They're not ready or need a prescription hearing aid, but we can help them. And that's a great opportunity for us, not only to give better patient care, more personalized, more individualized, and more holistic approach, but it also enables us to get them into something, give them that taste of better hearing. And then when their hearing loss progresses, then we can move them into a prescription hearing aid. So we've got this great opportunity. But like Brian had mentioned, stigma is an issue.

They don't want a prescription. These people with a mild hearing loss and their normal thresholds who are struggling, they don't want a prescription hearing aid. They want something else. And this is where that big gap is, and this is where we have an opportunity. And that opportunity is with these early entry devices.

So these are your OTC hearing aids and your situational solutions. These look different, have different names right there. It's a great opportunity to get them into something that they're willing to wear. And it also, obviously then gives you the benefit of extra revenue and attracting people earlier and creating that relationship for a longer period of time with them.

So we at Sennheiser and Sonova, we understand that these people are looking for something different, and that's why we have the entire portfolio of solutions for you. We make it really easy. We're addressing all of the things that they tend to come in and complain most about, or they're searching online for because they need help with. So we've got our tv solution. Sometimes they just come in and say, hey, I just need something for the tv.

My wife is yelling at me all the time. This is a great option for that because they can be watching the tv, control their own volume while the other person is sleeping. And of course, it doesn't look like some big thing. So for your people who have no hearing loss or just a little bit need an extra help, this is a perfect option for them. And then we have our Conc 400, which includes that background noise protection as well as the speech enhancement.

So it's a great combination for people who say, like, work in noisy environments and need that extra help, need the prevention, but they also want to be able to hear and understand. And of course, you just get that extra clarity for when they're in restaurants and noisy places. And of course, your otc's. Some people, they don't mind the idea of wearing something like an OTC. And in fact, Rick is going to be more comfortable for that long day wear.

But they don't necessarily want to go through all of the steps of a prescription hearing aid or even the stigma of the know that's a prescription hearing aid. And all of the things they would want to come to you and say, hey, I need something, but I just want to get it real quick. Or a lot of times we're also seeing people are giving these as gifts for their family members, getting them into something that it doesn't seem as big of an ask. So you've got this portfolio, and you can take advantage of it and help all of those people who have the mild hearing losses and who are struggling, but don't look like they need it when you just look at their audiogram.

And again, this is also about how we have helped what is misunderstood. So not only do we have the misunderstanding of maybe the expansion, maybe is a better term for it, for all the people we can help. But then when we have our all day clear slim and our all day clear, we have opportunities to help people with unique features. So helping people to avoid stigma, a lot of times, hearing aids. And we have a traditional rick, and it is very popular, but we also have the all day slim clear slim form factor.

And this is a unique Sennheiser design. It is exclusive to Sennheiser and it is a one size fits most approach, and you've got that forming wire where they can just warm it up and adjust it to their ear so that it's always a comfortable fit. And you've got the part that goes in the ear. It's an earbud design, so it looks a little more techy, a little bit more modern. And the microphones are on the part that goes in the ear, they're on the earbud.

And what that means is that it's always in correct alignment. And the part that goes behind the ear doesn't really can hang no matter where it needs to. It doesn't matter where it hangs, because that earbud always has the microphone in correct alignment. So if you have someone who wants something a little more modern, techie looking, who wants the one size fits most, but know a traditional rick, they would hang in the wrong place. This is a great solution for them.

You choose the all day clear slim.

And as I mentioned earlier, our fitting process, our self fitting process is not trying to replace you. We understand the value of the testing for you. That's something you can add. But we wanted to make sure that we were helping those first time users because that's what most people are often going to buy. An OTC are first time users.

So our sound profile self fitting process is unique from other Otc's and from prescription hearing aids. Our unique approach focus on the first time users and making them successful with all dayclear by matching their gain and their sound preferences. After treating millions of people, Sonova understands the needs of these mild to moderate hearing losses and the preferences of the first time users. So we created seven processing configurations. Users control the processing.

They pick that processing that sounds clear and comfortable to them. And it's super quick. Just three easy steps and it can usually be done in about 2 minutes. Since these are first time users, I'm just going to pop in and give you about 1 minute to wrap up there. Jessica.

Yes, start so about 80% and then they can acclimatize it to turn it up and make it more comfortable. So we make sure that they're going to have that great first fit experience. And then of course, you have the ability to program and with the in clinic care package, and we make sure that it is easy for you online in clinic to take advantage of and help and reach all of these people and take advantage of all of the different ways we can get people into amplification that they need. Thanks very much. So we're getting down to the end of today's session.

You've guys worked really hard. Thanks for all of that. We're going to do a little bit of future looking right now, and a couple of you were brave enough to take this one on. So what feature or service do hearing healthcare professionals request the most? That is simply not possible to provide at this time.

So our first brave soul today on this one is Laurel Christensen. Over to you, Laurel. Thanks. I will go quickly here. Since we're running out of time.

I think my first thought on this was, well, what they want is an invisible hearing aid that has ear to ear processing beam, for me, is rechargeable, occlusion free, and everything perfect to make transparent hearing. But we're not there yet. So I think what I'll talk about just for a minute here is hearing a noise. It continues to be the number one thing that people come in and the number one problem, and I just want to remind the audiologists and hearing healthcare professionals that we do have tests to test ability to hear a noise. There's actually a new one out.

I was a little stunned when they said it was the very first test for hearing and noise. When there have been a lot of tests around for a long time, I think probably the easiest one to give is the quicksin, but I won't recommend one. What I will just say is that you really can figure out what is the signal to noise ratio loss of a patient, and with that information, you can decide what to do. And in these cases, hearing aids really are created differently. And what I want to show you is just some circular spectrograms that we have run on different hearing aids.

So I'll jump right to those. What you're seeing here is basically the sound that's getting in through the directionality, which would be the red and all of the blue and yellow is what's attenuated around them. So it's a way to look at the directionality 360 degrees around, and the highest frequencies are toward the head, and the lower frequencies are on the outside. And all I want to call your attention to is the difference between hearing aids that use all four microphones to create a very narrow beam, or the traditional two microphone directional systems. And there are a lot of hearing aids still out there that have two microphones.

And these four microphone systems are just far superior for hearing and noise. So if someone has a two or three db signal to noise ratio loss, a two microphone system will be fine for them. But for people with greater signal to noise ratio losses, you really need to reach for hearing aids that are using a four microphone beam former. And I'll just show you a little bit of data on that. This is a study where we actually just put the noise right in the front, and that'll really show you the difference between a wider open beam and a narrower beam from four microphones.

And I won't dwell on the results too much here, but I will show you that the tallest bars here are your four microphone beam formers. And today we really just don't have any kind of artificial intelligence that is going to take enough noise out to make a difference. It is all still based on the microphone, and you might be able to get some comfort from

some of the things that AI are doing. And I think in the future, AI will provide a signal to noise ratio benefit and speech intelligibility benefit. But today it's all about the microphones.

Know the difference between two and four, measure the patient's problem, really help them with their solutions, and use accessories when their signal to noise ratio losses are over 8910 db.

Awesome. Those are some of my favorite strategies, too. I've noticed a real increase in interest in the quicksand since it's embedded in so many audiometers these days. It seems to be having a resurgence. So that's a really nice connection with that.

Okay, so we'll move on to Dana. And again, what can't we do right now that we'd like to? So, similar to laurel, I identified the speech and noise problem as one of those challenges that remain present day in and day out. And I think hearing healthcare professionals want solutions that address hearing and noise in all situations, for all wearers at all times. And while that probably isn't possible yet and not realistic, I think there's a good challenge there for us to think differently about the solutions that we have for hearing and noise, and where the challenges are.

With that, I guess I'll take us back just a step to think about the fact that market track data shows that non owners of hearing aids often cite no noticeable improvement in noisy environments as one of the reasons for non acceptance. And so it indicates that there's room for us to improve. And I think we're every day, as clinicians, fighting a tough battle with sometimes a lot of things working against us. We're fighting for every DB, and every DB does matter in achieving the benefit that patients are looking for. And sometimes in the real world, we don't get exactly what we expected.

And in looking at what can be influencing that, Widex has looked at this idea of microphone angle and speech and noise performance. And so we know that a key factor affecting the efficacy of directional microphones is that directivity index, or how much the signal from the front is favored over the signal from other directions. And in those directional systems, the directivity index is dependent on that angle formed between the microphone openings relative to that horizontal plane. And as that angle increases, so as the microphones maybe are directed more upward, the directivity decreases. Right.

So some of that potential benefit is lost. And in looking at the evidence available, keeping that microphone angle under 20 degrees can preserve more of that theoretical benefit in directivity. But unfortunately, a lot of devices today have microphone angles much higher than that, so much more pointing upright or vertically instead of on that horizontal plane. And it was with this challenge in mind that Widex introduced, designed, and now has introduced the new Widex Smartwick. So, this is a new product for Widex, and it offers improved directionality related to its unique design.

If you've seen it on social media, you might have thought, wow, that's a really different design. That doesn't look like what I expected it to look like. And you're right, it is a different design. And the purpose of that design is to place those microphones at that more horizontal angle, actually averaging less than 20 degrees, and therefore improving that signal to noise ratio, which is linked to an improvement in speech intelligibility and understanding.

I'll just preview it here next month. Our wonderful colleagues, Dr. Francis Cook and the team at the research facility have completed a study. It will publish next month. So definitely pick that up and read it.

It's out of scope for the time that we have, especially when you go last, but the preview of it. So the study that was done really looked at comparing microphone angles between a traditional RiC and style and smart Ric, this new innovative design. And then also looked at comparing those SRT 50 scores using the hint. So looking at that speech and noise performance related to the different designs included in the study. So, in this study, we did use a widex product, the widex moment EMRic, compared to the smartric, so that all things remain equal except for microphone angle.

Each device was fit to be optimized for the best angle that could be achieved on that patient with that device. And a few of the findings that are notable is that the average microphone angle reduced to twelve degrees with smartric compared to the 37 degrees on average with the MRIC that was representing the traditional rick. And that aligns with other evidence out there that traditional Rics have an average around 40 degrees. And every single participant in the study had an improvement in microphone angle with smart Ric. So something that couldn't be achieved with that traditional RIC device.

And the impact on speech and noise performance in this study showed that by reducing the microphone angle, you can get an average 1.25 db improvement in signal to noise ratio. That corresponds to about a twelve and a half percent improvement in speech understanding when you assume that performance intensity function for sentence materials having a slope of about 10% per db intelligibility. But the results also showed that some individuals gained up to a five db improvement in SNR. And I will tell you, that's the kind of thing that I think is life changing. To change somebody's experience to that degree is what has them inviting you to your wedding and baking you cakes and saying that you've changed their life.

And so I'll close by saying that I think given that hearing and noise remains a primary goal of patients and a primary challenge that we have, it's incumbent upon us to think

differently about what we can do going forward. Okay, thanks very much, Dana. That reminds me of Todd Ricketts textbook material on fitting the require to the right length that I find easier to teach on a mannequin than in lecture. So that's how I do. It's really hard to achieve in the real.

Yeah, yeah. They are comfier when they're hanging way back there, aren't they? But anyway, so that's great. I'd like to invite all of you to take a minute to think about the following challenge, which is if you were explaining a consumer or consumer integrated technology that something that you talked about Today or someone else talked about today to my mom, how would you dejargon that? So how do we explain this stuff to people is really, I think, an interesting challenge.

If you hate that question and you want to use a different one, go ahead. So maybe I'll invite Laurel to explain auricast to my mom. Because I feel like you can probably do that. Yeah. If I was going to explain Auricast to your mom, I think I would tell her about normal.

I would start with normal bluetooth and say, you know how you connect your phone to your car? Well, there's a new one coming out. And what will it allow you to do is go into your theater or out to the airport or anywhere that you want to be in public and have the sound come straight to your hearing aid with that kind of transmitter. So that's probably how I would explain it. Yeah, I like the car analogy.

That seems to be the first place. People get success with bluetooth usage, at least in my parents' generation. Okay. All right, we get to pick whatever you want to try to explain to my mom. Dave Avery, go ahead.

I would explain that hearing loss doesn't occur in a vacuum and that there are many other important health conditions that are comorbid with that. So if you have hearing

loss, you're more likely to fall and could benefit from features that could enable a fall detection system to alert loved ones and enable your mother to live independently in her home longer without worrying you. Okay. All right, I'll just go around in the order of my screen. So, Steve, next.

Well, I'll keep this pretty simple. My mom's 100 years old. She wears hearing aids. And the simple thing every morning is put your hearing aids on. And as simple as that, because she'll keep them off for as long as she can.

Well, I got a hairdresser's appointment. I can't put them on because I'm going to lose them. So it really comes down to when she wears her hearing aids, she can get on the phone, facetime, my kids, her grandkids, and that just creates a better life for her, just being able to hear us and be with us and communicate with us. And I call her on the caption call phone whenever I can, and it's just that know, just staying connected. And that makes her life much happier to talk about the connection rather than the.

Yeah, yeah. Ok. All right. Natasha would be next on my screen. You know what?

Mine is a really easy one, but it would really be the difference between a cochlear implant and a hearing aid. Although we share a lot of the same things, which perhaps of wearing on the ear profile and this great connectivity and small size. A lot of people I talk to don't understand. It's actually a surgical system. There's a part underneath the skin and it's actually a covered benefit on pretty much everybody's plan.

So I do really like to bring that out. And you don't just have to be deaf to get one or a little baby like you see on the little videos of activations we like to watch. Yeah, lots of misunderstandings around that. Yeah. Okay, Brian, there's already been a lot of good things said.

I would want to emphasize that hearing aids are becoming true. Multitasking devices. They work seamlessly with your phone and they allow you to just squeeze more applications out of them because of it. Okay, follow up question for you from the chat, actually, Brian, is which of the form factors do you think reduces most the stigma through cosmetic manipulation. Yeah, I saw that question.

I really don't know the answer to it. I think it depends on the individual. And I think that's where there's an opportunity for providers to have a conversation, maybe in a little bit more detail about stigma. And if it's a problem or a challenge, there's the power in offering choice as well. Right?

Yeah. Okay. Jessica Lovell. Yes. I would say just, you know, as folks get older, we're seeing that they isolate themselves and they remove themselves from social situations.

And not only is that not a great way to live and to connect, but it also the risk of dementia, early onset dementia, and really it increases. And so getting that hearing care that is really needed, you can prevent that and you can live a connected life and you can decrease depression and all of these different things that we see that starts to happen as we get older. So I'd really just say just connection, connecting with others and getting that hearing care. So sort of call to action then. Okay.

Jessica Dancis? Yeah, I think a little bit of is actually stealing from everybody else, which is this idea that you need amplification when you struggle for connection and to avoid those comorbidities. But it's that it's not just for people who have big hearing losses, it's for people who have very mild hearing losses, or maybe they don't even have a detectable hearing loss, but they are struggling. And there are solutions. You got your true wireless, you've got your situational solutions, and you've got your over the counter hearing aids for people who just aren't ready or need a prescription hearing aid.

Okay. And finally, over to Dana. Sure. Jargon. Jargon.

Jargon, yeah, jargon. Jargon. Jargon. Right. And I think one of the themes here was some of the amazing things available through AI and app usage.

It came out and many people talking. And so I think of how do we just make that something that our patients aren't afraid of? A younger generation of them are not afraid, but there are still many individuals who are tentative and sometimes that comes from us and our fear of introducing it to them. So I think find easy ways to show them how simple it is for them to engage with the smartphone they own and an app that might be available. When I talked about Widex, I gave the example of how we do those comparisons, and it's like an eye test.

So if you have one, you already know how to do this. So whatever the solution, find an easy way to help them relate it to something they know how to do today, and I think we'll see greater adoption across the board. Okay, so that links to. I was interested in hearing about uptake of the more advanced technologies and how that changes with changing demographics. And I was also interested in global access to some of the technologies that we're talking about, which sometimes apps can be really region restricted.

I know, living north of the wall in Canada, there's some stuff we can't get yet that we're looking forward to. And so those are some items maybe we can have as an informal follow up chat. But I think probably our colleagues at audiology online would have us end the formal recording portion of this session. And so I'll just hand it over to them in terms of our next steps for today. Thank you.

I'll just close with a big thank you to Dr. Scollie and to all of the companies and presenters today. There's not a lot of opportunities in our industry to see you all at the same table in the same forum. So we really look forward to this every year, and I just love the questions, and we all learned a lot. So thank you so much for your time and expertise, and we'll wrap today's class.

Bye.