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Beyond Hearing Aids, Connections to a Larger World with Unitron's Accessory Portfolio

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Thank you so much to audiology online for having me present today. I really appreciate it. Thank you to everyone who's taken the time to join us today. From whatever you're doing, whatever you're doing, I know your time is valuable. So thank you so much.

I'm Courtney Smith. I am the regional trainer for the west region at Unitron. I've been with Unitron a couple of years and it's a lot of fun. It's a great company to work for. And I'm really excited to present to all of you today about our accessory portfolio and what we have available for your patients right now.

So a few learning objectives that I have for all of us today, and we will work through these throughout our 30 minutes together today. After today's course, we will want, I will want for you to be able to list what portfolio of accessory solutions we have here at Unitron. Also would like for you to feel comfortable describing the differences between each accessory solution for your patients. And last, I want for all of you to be able to identify a situation of a patient situation that you could address using one of our accessory solutions.

A little bit of trivia here for all of you. Unitron is in our 60th year, this year, so it is our 60th birthday. And these are the three gentlemen that you see in front of you, Fred, Rolfe, and Rolf. And they actually started Unitron. And so they had a television repair shop in Canada, and someone came in with a hearing aid and asked for them to repair their hearing aid.

And upon looking at it, they found that they were able to repair this person's hearing aid, and as such, they decided to expand into hearing instruments. And so here we are 60 years later. Clearly, a lot has happened since then, but it is really interesting to know where we come from and where we've been and that we've been around for 60 years. We've been doing this a long time. Pretty cool little piece of trivia for all of you.

And just as a reminder, you'll see the word experience throughout our presentation today and also on our hearing aid bags and in our marketing material. At Unitron, as a company, we are really focused on the patient's experience and the provider's experience in fitting hearing aids on their patients. So we have a lot of ways that we work to make this journey exciting and personal for your patient. And as a company, we are highly focused on that end user experience. So when you see this, love the experience.

Just know it really is what we are about at Unitron. We are a small company inside of a huge company, Sonova. And we really are kind of a family. So thank you for being part of the family and being here. We really appreciate it, and we hope that all of your patients are doing amazing with their products, and you love our software.

I do want to start, before we go into accessories today, I do want to go over the Vivante portfolio with all of you, just for a few moments. The Vivante portfolio started in May of 2023, and we've been adding form factors in bit by bit. And this, what you see in front of you, is what I like to call our family picture. So if Vivante had a Christmas card or a holiday card, I think that this is what it would look like. And we now have six form factors in the portfolio.

So, once again, I know this is about accessories today, but I do want you all to leave with a good understanding of what Vivante has to offer and what Vivante is about. Before we do that, using the q and a, does anybody have a guess as to what the word Vivante means? So, type into the chat if you'd like to guess. What does the word Vivante mean?

Lively. I don't know. That's very good guess. Anybody else have a guess?

So, Vivante actually is a latin based word, and it does mean lively. It means alive or living. So Vivante is really kind of a spirit that we're capturing. It's someone who lives every moment of their life without any

limitations, someone who's really in it to win it. So when you see the word Vivante, it really is about our patients getting into the moment and getting involved and living life without limits in spite of hearing loss.

And so that's what it is about. We have some unique parts of Vivante as far as sound performance, as far as sound performance is concerned. We've introduced some new features, particularly conversation and loud noise. With hyperfocus. It is our most intense directional beam that we've ever had here at Unitron.

So also features that like 360 car and pin effect two. So all these features helping patients hear better in noise and allowing the incoming sound to sound as natural as possible and supporting them in whatever type of listening environment they're in, whether it's highly complex or low complexity. As far as design, we have now six form factors in the Vivante portfolio, as I mentioned, and in front of you, you can see which ones we have. Now, if you're speaking Unitron, I'm going to throw this out in the q and a. Do you know what the word Moxiee means if you're speaking unitron.

If you're looking at an order form and you see the word Moxiee.

If there are no guesses, I will tell all of you that a Moxiee is a Ric. The word Moxie is actually unitron for receiver in the ear. The word stride. And we have two stride power btes in the Vivante portfolio. Now.

We have a rechargeable and a ultra power, and we have this nice newly designed magnetic charger that's really easy for patients to work with, even if they have some dexterity issues.

We also have these experience tech tools embedded into our software, and I won't go into these a whole lot because this is kind of a separate training in and of itself. But we do have these personalized tools built in for you and the patient to kind of curate a special hearing care experience for them.

Because as we all know, patients aren't coming in to buy just a device that hangs on their ear. They're coming to you for your expertise and your experience and all the many ways that you can help them. Aside from just fitting a hearing aid, we all know it's much more than just that.

So these experience tech tools built in are really designed to set you apart as a provider and make you a partner with your patient. Particularly, upgradeability. If you didn't know this, all of Unitron hearing aids are upgradable and it's a wonderful feature utilized by a lot of our providers throughout the country.

Also, regarding connectivity, once again, I'm just going to touch on this briefly, but all of our hearing aids use made for all connectivity and Bluetooth. Classic. All of our patients have access to two active connections at the same time. So remember that if you're fitting Unitron, you can let your patients know that they have two parking spots to work with, and they can park two active Bluetooth connections in those parking spots and go back and forth between them however they want to. We're all about ease of use at Unitron.

We want our devices to be easy for patients to use, and we want our software to be easy and user friendly for you on your end. Any questions about any of that? I know that that was a lot of information.

Please feel free to type in the chat. Any questions?

And once again, on the left side of your screen, that's our Vivante family picture for our custom devices. We do still have our blue platform devices available, and so we have Inera. Again, in Sara is unitron for in the ear or custom. So remember that if you have a patient and you want to order Unitron, you still can order custom on our blue platform, which is an incredible platform, very well received by patients all over the globe. So remember that I do want to give a quick close up to our experienced tech tools.

As I just touched on briefly, patients want to be invested in their hearing care journey and we want to partner with our patients. So these tools such as first fit, our first fit flow is very easy to follow. Flex upgrade, our industry unique tool that allows you to upgrade a patient's technology at any time during their hearing care journey. Just a wonderful way to personalize and allow their hearing aids to be future ready if their hearing needs change at any time. Our newest experience tech tool is called Success Check.

And if you look out on audiology online, I know you'll see some upcoming trainings on these group of tools and I would love for all of you to attend because there is some really great information to get to know each of these tools as individuals. Success check is our newest and it allows you to see your patients log it all data before they come into the office. So it's kind of a way for you to prepare for appointments and be ready for those conversations and the counseling that you'll want to do with a patient, especially when they're getting started with hearing aids. Seeing that log it all data and how much time they're spending in different listening environments before they walk in the door allows you time to prepare for conversations that will help both of you as you partner through the hearing care journey. So look out for those trainings that are coming up.

So one thing that we really pride ourselves up upon is that we have compelling technology at all technology levels. And this is a slide that shows you what we have to offer at every single technology level. We are really feature rich. There's a lot on here. This is a really busy slide.

We are feature rich at every single technology level. Three, five, seven and nine. So no matter what your patient's price point is, or what their goals are, or what their listening needs are, we have all of these supportive features built in just for them.

If you didn't already know, I do want to touch on the fact that our remote plus app did just get a refresh or a makeover back in January. So you can see kind of a side by side comparison between what our

app used to look like and what it looks like now. And patients have been responding really, really well to these changes. We now have a program carousel that patients can walk through just by swiping with their finger. They are it really, it's easier for them to see where their volume control is.

They can also now see their own log at all data in the app so you can show patients, wow, look how many listening environments you're spending time in. This is awesome. Gives them some encouragement to where their hearing aids. There's a step counter now, and my favorite part is that if we have patients that want more simplicity when it comes to the app, you can go back to the form that the app used to be in, which is called our classic mode, and you can do that by hitting the more the settings button at the bottom right of the initial app screen. Some patients do want that classic mode still.

So if you have somebody like that, you can either use classic mode or advanced mode, depending on your patient's needs and wants. I do love that because we know our patients have varying needs.

So diving into accessories now. Just an interesting statistic for you. In a recent study conducted by MarketTrack in 22, we found that 44% of hearing instrument wearers had an app on their smartphone that supported their hearing instruments. Of this group, the majority are using the app at least every week and there's a pretty high 83% success satisfaction rating with the app. So this is good to know.

I think that app use and Bluetooth will only go up as the years go by. It's interesting to note that we have launched all these features in the last 1015 years and patients are really adopting apps and Bluetooth and accessories, which is great getting into our accessories because I know that's really what we want are all here to talk about today. We have some awesome options at Sonova and Unitron, being part of Sonova has access to all of these amazing accessory solutions for your patients.

Our tv connector can be broadcast to multiple hearing instruments and while streaming patients can adjust that balance between the tv volume and their environmental sounds. If you have ever demonstrated this for a patient, I know that I work with a clinic that has the tv connector set up in their waiting room already. And when they're doing a demo of hearing aids on a patient, they're able to bring them out and demonstrate how much better patients can hear the tv when they're using the tv connector. So I highly recommend if you have not done so in your clinic, to set up a tv connector. If your setup allows tv connector the stream signal, also classified as music or speech, is optimized from the tv connector accordingly.

And also, what I love is that if you have a husband or a wife and they both have hearing aids, they can sync up to the same tv connector. A couple of fun facts about our tv connector. As I mentioned, it is called one to many, meaning one tv connector can stream to multiple hearing devices. Excuse me. The range of our tv connector is 15 meters.

So it's also important to note for your patients that other people in the room that are watching tv while your patient uses the tv connector will maintain the volume and access to the tv signal through the tv. So different than a Bluetooth connection. Right. Because if patients are connecting to their smart tv using Bluetooth, other people in the room will not be able to hear the audio. Only that connected person will.

I love this accessory. It's one of my favorites. I do want to touch on some facts about our partner Mike. Type into the q and a. What kind of environment might a patient experience an improvement while using a partner mic?

So who might benefit the most from a partner mic?

Definitely. Restaurant environment. Absolutely. This is another accessory that I used to demo a lot. When I was practicing in the clinic, I used to have a set of hearing aids that I had a partner mic hooked up to already, so that when I proceeded with the demo, I had it all connected and synced up and ready to go.

Our partner mic can be paired to our hearing aids out of the box, so at all of our accessories, no connection to the software is required to pair. So it's very easy. I would always have one set up and ready to go so that when we did the demo, I was able to give the partner mic to my patient's husband or wife or family member or friend who was there with them that day and give them a chance to experience what that sounded like. I usually would also throw some noise on in the room just to create that effect. The partner mic, it has a simple connection.

It's very easy for patients to use. Again, it has to be proximal to the patient's listening partner, to their voice and their speaking voice. So I always would measure it this way and make sure the placement of the partner mic was proximal to the sound source that the patient was using it for. And it is important to note that unlike the tv connector, it is not one to many, it is one to one. The partner mic has to be connected to one pair of hearing aids, and only that pair of hearing aids will communicate with it.

But some fun facts about partner mic. As you mentioned, it is great for the restaurant environment, those extremely noisy, complex listening environments. It does have a ten meter range, and it has a six hour battery life on a single charge. So it is really an amazing tool. If you have not yet experienced a partner mic, I definitely encourage you to get your Vivante flex trials out and pair one to them.

If you have one in the office or if you don't, ask your unitron regional sales manager to bring one to you so you can listen to it. I also had patients that loved partner Mike when they went on road trips in the summer. I had a couple of big road trip patients, Winnebago patients that would leave all summer and travel with their partner and this made those car rides much more enjoyable. When the partner was

wearing the partner mic and the patient driving was able to carry on a conversation with them with ease. Really, really makes the whole journey much more enjoyable.

We also have a convenient accessory in our remote control. So in the Q and A, go ahead and type in if there's a patient that you feel has you've used the remote control for or has benefited from using a remote control.

If you have fit one recently. It's not our most popular accessory, but I think it really has a niche for it's a great option for specific patients. As someone mentioned, somebody with dexterity issues that cannot manipulate our remote plus app, or someone who has trouble pushing the buttons on their hearing aid because of limitations that they may have. I've also had patients with family members who could then control the hearing aid volume from wherever they were. Great call.

It gives patients the ability to easily and discreetly make simple adjustments to volume and programs. This remote control does use Bluetooth low energy. It also uses a non rechargeable replaceable like a wafer style battery. So it's very similar to a watch battery and it's replaceable with batteries from the drugstore and they can be found anywhere. It's easy to pair.

So when you hold that plus button down and switch on the remote control, the light blinks blue. The remote control is in pairing mode and you have a three minute pairing window at that point. So once again, no connection to the software is required to pair the remote control with your patient's hearing aids. Once you see a solid green light for 5 seconds, that indicates that the pairing was successful. Super easy to pair, super easy for patients to use, and a couple of just fun facts about our remote control.

It does have a 1 meter operating range, so you do have to be somewhat close to the remote control for the patient to be able to use it. It does have about a year long battery life. With that wafer style watch

type battery, it is very simple for patients to use the buttons are nice and big. They can use the plus and the minus buttons to control volume. And then the button below will control programs if they have any manual programs added.

It's just really nice because we know there are some people that do not want to use the app or they're not comfortable with app use, and that's completely fine. This will still allow them the flexibility that they need and great choice for those patients with, as someone mentioned, dexterity or issues or maybe dementia or caregivers are involved. Just something to remember that we have.

And I can't go without saying that, you know, unitron being part of Sonova that we are, it is important to let your patients know that all of our devices are Roger ready. Vivante has Roger direct. They are directly compatible with Roger transmitters. So while many of our competitors products can access Roger microphones via additional receivers attached via audio shoes or something like that, only Sonova products offer that Roger direct compatibility. Roger really can elevate your patients experience in so many ways, really bridging the gap in noise and across distance.

So distance is a big deal for patients with hearing loss, as we all know. So patients that can access this Roger signal can really bring speech a lot closer to them, even if it is physically far away from them. And these items like Roger Table mic two, Roger select and Roger on are all wonderful devices to be used in kind of different settings. A couple of facts for you to know about Roger on, which is seen in front of you here. It is really great for enhancing speech in noise.

It has a 25 meters range, so that is quite a long distance that patients can really grab that signal easily and access that Roger transmitted signal. It does have an eight hour battery life on a single charge. There are three microphone modes that patients can use while using Roger, and patients can easily access a tv connector functionality on Roger on. So if you didn't know this, now you know that this device can also be used as kind of a tv connector as well. So that's cool because instead of maybe

your patient going in and investing in a partner mic and a tv connector, they might be wise to invest in something like Roger on, which does both of those things that they may need.

So remember that. Does anyone have any patients that are using Roger right now or have used it in the past? Type into the q and A if you've ever fit Roger on.

We do also have like, we have a guide on how to install and activate Roger receivers in our instruments. So if you ever are in need of something like that, feel free to call our tech support team or myself, we're happy to shoot that over to you if you're ever in a situation with a patient, wherever they would like to use. Roger.

So we're almost coming up to the end of our time together, so I do want to summarize some of the information that we just went over today. We have a nice, robust portfolio of accessory solutions for patients, and I think that our clinical interviewing skills come in handy when we're talking to our patients about their needs and wants. As far as hearing goes, it's a great way to tie in those needs and wants with solutions that we have here at Unitron. We have something for everybody, and we're really proud of that. Our accessories are really designed to provide support to every kind of patient that's in every kind of situation.

So we're here to support you with our technology, with our design, with our experience, tech tools, as well as with our accessory offerings.

And remember that as we all know, the questions that we ask our patients are really important. And the fact that we keep asking questions throughout their hearing care journey is extremely important in making sure you select the right accessory for that person. We all know people change and needs change. People go back to work, people watch grandkids. Different accessories might come in at different times in your patient's hearing journey.

So, as I mentioned, we're always here to support you at Unitron in picking out what's right for that person. And thank you all so much for joining us today. I really appreciate each and every one of you taking the time to listen to me and interact with me. Working at Unitron is just an absolute joy. So I am really happy to share that with all of you today, and I hope you all have a wonderful day.