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Custom Fit, Max Impact: Beltone Commence Customs & Solus Max Updates

Presenter: Laura Schachtel, AuD, FAAA

And welcome everyone to today's session. Custom Fit Max Impact, Beltone Commence and Beltone Commence Customs and Solus Max Updates. We are so pleased to welcome one of the best presenters that we know, Dr. Laura Schachtel. And Laura, I'll hand things over to you. Great.

Hi everyone. Thank you, Kimberly. So, as Kimberly said, welcome. This is our course on Custom Fit Max Impact on our new Beltone Commence custom styles and then talking a little bit about the updates to Beltone Solus Max 2.3. Since all of you have had the opportunity for about a week now to explore the new fitting software.

So I think many of you probably already know that we launched our Beltone Commence Custom ITC and CIC about three weeks ago and hopefully many of you were on our kind of launch event. But for those of you that were in or didn't get all of the notes down, hopefully this will kind of fill in some of those points that you were missing. As Kimberly said, there are several handouts, so just go to that resources page and download them. Also, if you are not able to do that, most of the handouts can be found on our training homepage, which is baltoneuniversity.com or if you log into your traincaster account in either the Commence course or the All Fit Domes course, there are handouts in the repository that might be some that aren't available today. So let's talk about our learning outcomes for today's session.

So my hope is that after today you'll be able to explain the hardware changes with the new Beltone Commence custom styles. You'll be able to list three reasons where Beltone Commence or how Beltone Commence is superior to our older essential line which was Beltone Rely. And then lastly, be able to recall some of the enhancements within Beltone Solus Max. And again, that latest version that you've now had the opportunity to download through beltone community is 2.3. Just briefly, these are the risks and limitations, so you can peruse these at your leisure if you'd like to.

But let's just start by kicking off a fun little intro video about Beltone commencement. It's Sam, So hopefully that got you a little bit energized so that you can dive into all that we have for the next like 30 minutes. So again, as most of you have heard and know about, the Beltone Commence family has grown beyond the ries that we launched last year to now include two new custom styles, so a wireless ITC and a non wireless cic. Now with these additions you can now offer patients a truly personalized solution that combines the comforts and discretion of a custom product with the trusted sound quality and performance that you've come to know with our Beltone Commence products. Now these new custom options are ideal for patients who want a hearing aid that feels tailor made to them both in how it fits and how it functions for them.

Now our wireless ITC style is suited for that patient who values seamless connectivity and easy controls through our Beltone Hearmax app. While the non wireless CIC is a great choice for a patient who prefers an ultra discreet solution that's focused on core hearing performance. So let's go ahead and take a look closer at the feature sets of these two new custom styles. And so we'll start with our cic. So when we last launched our cic, this was with our Beltone Serene family.

We talked a lot about how we had upgraded the receiver while starting with this Beltone Commence family. And I think going forward we will be using a Microelectrico Mechanical systems or MEMS microphone. So we've upgraded our receivers, now we're upgrading the microphones in our custom products. And I'll review the benefits of this upgraded MEMS microphone a little bit later in the presentation. But first let's go ahead and review the hardware options of our Beltone Commence cic which as you all know or should it is available in technology level three.

And I want to stress and two, because if you remember our Beltone Rely line in Our Technology Level 2 there was not a CIC option. So, so this could be great as you're seeing patients who do want that quote discreet invisible looking hearing aid, but they just might not have the budget at the moment to go with a

higher technology level. So now you can kind of meet the patient where they are by offering them the size that they're thinking in their head with the technology level that they can afford. So the Beltone Commence CIC can be ordered with a low, medium or high powered receiver and you have the option to add in a push button. But just keep in mind as you talk with your patient that adding a push button or going with a stronger receiver if it's needed probably will make the hearing aid even larger.

So just be upfront with the patient about that. Also as with all of our other CICs, this one will use a 10A zinc air battery and it's also not wireless meaning there's no ear to ear, there's no 2.4 GHz Bluetooth, low energy audio oracast Functionality. This also means to program that you will need to use a cabled connection into Beltone Solus Max, either using a SpeedLink or a Hi Pro 2, those gray programming cables and the CS63 flex strips. And the Beltone Commence CIC is available to order in anthracite, light beige, beige, medium brown, brown, dark brown for both the faceplate and the shell color. And then we have the option to order the shell color in blue, red or clear and then with one of the corresponding colors for the face plate.

Now our Beltone Commence ITC also uses MEMS microphones, has an all new field replaceable microphone filter and provides connectivity for all. Specifically for our ITC, your patients will have ear to ear communication for manual control changes. So you know, push the button on the right hearing aid into program two, the left will follow through with that change as well. Also the patient's hearing aids can be connected to Beltone Solus Max and still be Bluetooth connected to their smartphone. So that kind of dual functionality that we had in our RIEs will continue in with the ITC.

And again, the ITC is available in technology levels 3 and 2. I just want to point a note out because you'll see this on another slide later on. Hands Free Calls is not going to be available with the Commence ITC because the microphones are seated so much deeper down in the ear canal that that voice pickup is not going to work well. So Hands Free Calls is just kind of remaining on those

Commence RIE styles. So the Beltone Commence ITC can be ordered with a low, medium, high or ultra power receiver.

A push button comes standard, but you have the option on the order form to add in a volume control wheel. Our ITC uses a 312 Zinc air battery, but you can select on the order form for that shell style to be the ITC size, a half shell or a full shell. But just remember that regardless of shell size, the battery will be that 312. And again the beltone Commence ITC comes in the same colors as the cic. So again that's anthracite, light beige, beige, medium brown, brown and dark brown.

That is for the shell and faceplate coloring. And then again you also have the option for shell colors to be blue, red and clear. And then one of those colors for the face plate. So now let me explain the benefits of using MEMS microphone. So again it's an acronym which stands for Micro Electromechanical Systems.

So MEMS microphones and they're built using semiconductor fabricated techniques similar to how integrated Circuits are made. So think of, like, computer chips. This process allows for extremely tight control over the microphone size, shape, and the placements of the parts. Now, because of that, one MEMS microphone is almost identical to the next one. So their sensitivity and frequency response are very consistent unit to unit.

So you might be wondering, why does using this type of microphone matter to me? So, kind of three reasons here. So, inside any microphone, there are small components, but the most important component of a microphone is the diaphragm. So within hearing aids, that diaphragm is really small, and that diaphragm of the microphone moves in response to sound waves. Now, the tiny size and carefully chosen materials make it less affected by temperature changes, just aging with time, mechanical stress.

So the fact that the diaphragm is moving so many times per second, and physical shock, like the hearing aid being dropped, or vibrations for, like, tapping or rolling around in, like, a pocket, all of this can affect the diaphragm of the microphone. But because of how well made these are, the frequency response of these MEMS microphones doesn't change as much over time. So, basically, I remember in graduate school talking about microphones and how the longer the microphone is in a hearing aid, that frequency response can greatly shift to where the sound quality is no longer the same. And then you're sending out the hearing aid for a repair because the microphone doesn't have the right frequency response, the patient's not getting the gain in the frequency range that they originally had. So, again, less frequency response shift and a better overall performance over the lifetime of the hearing aid.

So this provides your patients with a more reliable and more consistent sound quality over the lifetime that they own their hearing aid. And because of how these microphones are constructed, those sensitive components, so the diaphragm and kind of those supporting structures are all enclosed in a small, little protective housing. And this helps keep out dust, moisture, and other contaminants that could hurt or alter a traditional microphone performance. So on top of our IP68 rating, where we help with all of this, the microphone itself has kind of this extra layer of protection against dust and moisture. So this means that your patient should experience less issues with moisture and humidity that hopefully leads to less repairs, right?

So now, hopefully, your patients not without their hearing aid for too long, so that your patients just can wear their hearing aids or without having to kind of frequently send them out because of a mechanical issue. And again, because each MEMS microphone is so small and they're built so similarly, we, as a manufacturer can predict how it will behave in our hearing aids going forward. So this makes it much easier for us to tune those microphones, build our hearing aids, so that each hearing aid microphone sounds very similar to the next one. Instead of maybe your patient getting a hearing aid microphone back from repair and telling you that that repaired hearing aid does not sound like it did before it went in

when it was working, or that hearing aid doesn't sound the same as its matching hearing aid, because, again, these microphones are tuned so that they're almost identical. So when we put all of this together, why do MEMS microphones really matter?

Will it matter so that your patients can have smaller, more discreet hearing solution without sacrificing any type of performance? So we all know that over time, microphones can become clogged with wax and debris. And that's why we have filters to easily replace this in the office. Now, we have always had microphone filters for, I'll call it legacy custom products that had two microphones. So any custom product that had directional microphones, we had a filter system.

It looks like what you're seeing on the screen. But I don't know if everyone knew what this was, because you might have inherited an office and just saw that little wheel sitting there and not sure what it was. You might not have had the changing tool, might not have had the directions. You might have had all of it. But when this is too complicated, I'm not changing this.

So to align with our other microphone and receiver filters that are preloaded on a map stick, we now have a new microphone filter specifically for our Beltone Commence ITCs. So besides from being easier to use, this new microphone filter is needed to help calibrate the use of those fancy MEMS microphones. And so because of this, this specific filter is mandatory to use when fitting a beltone Commence itc. It helps with calibrating those microph. And we recommend that you change these filters at least or about every two months.

I know most offices kind of do a quarterly cleaning check, so it will just be up to how plugged up are these filters with the patient that you're seeing. If you do have to have them come in a little bit more recent to change these microphone filters a little bit more often. Now, to help distinguish this specific filter from all of our other filters, the case coloring is what we'll call sand. So like a beigey color. And then that matchstick is brown.

We'll also have the part number printed on it. So it's 234-344-7323. So that it'll help you identify which hearing aid it's for. And also you should get these filters in a pack out when you order one of the products. Now the filter itself has a slight whitish body color to it and so you can see here on the beige colored hearing aid you don't really see the filter at all.

It kind of blends in, but when we look at that anthracite color you see just a little bit of white there. So again, depending on how the hearing aid is positioned in the patient's ear with an anthracite color, you may or may not notice that, but I just want you to know there is a slight white body color there. So I just want to go ahead and play a quick video on how you would change this mandatory filter to change a microphone filter on Beltone's battery operated itc you will need the case of microphone filter tools which is included in your Beltone hearing aid packaging. Locate the two microphones on your hearing aids. Remove a filter replacement tool from the case.

To remove the old filter, insert the removal end at a 90 degree angle into the first used microphone filter. Pull the filter stick straight out. Insert the other end of the filter tool, the end with the new filter into the microphone opening. Gently press the new filter straight into the microphone opening and pull out the filter stick. Discard the filter stick.

Repeat these steps to replace the filter on the second microphone.

So pretty similar to a lot of the other filters. So nothing new there but just wanted to show the video in case anyone is kind of new to Beltone, just to see how you would replace that filter. So just a reminder again that these new custom styles are expanding the Beltone Comet's family, adding to our previously launched RIE options, giving you an even broader fitting portfolio within the same product line. So again last year we launched our rechargeable Mini RIE and technology level 3 and then we also launched our 63 and 64 battery operated styles both in technology level 3 and 2. Our RIEs all utilize automatic

receiver detection, helping you ensure that the software recognizes the correct receiver and it just helps support a smoother, more accurate fitting process for you.

They also have field replaceable microphone filters which make maintenance more convenient and can help extend the life and sound quality of these hearing aids in everyday use. From a connectivity standpoint, all models support Bluetooth Low Energy Audio and Auracast have flexible streaming options for calls, media and shared audio environments. And in addition they are all compatible with our new All Fit Dome portfolio that helps you optimize comfort, retention and acoustic performance across a wide range of ear anatomies and hearing losses. And I'll be going over in more detail about our all fit Dome family in tomorrow's session, including how to choose the right dome style for different patients and fitting goals. So just a reminder that our Bell Tone accessories extend performance beyond just the hearing aid themselves and help patients hear better in real world situations that they care most about.

So with our updated MultiMite plus, patients can bring the speaker's voice directly to their ears in challenging environments such as noisy restaurants, meetings, classrooms and even car rides. Improving that signal to noise ratio helps reduce listening effort and supports better understanding at a distance or in background noise. Our TV Streamer plus delivers clear, high quality sound from the TV again straight into the patient's hearing aids. This allows patients to enjoy the programs at a comfortable personalized volume for them without turning up the TV volume for everyone else in the household. So that just helps support a more relaxed, natural communication style at home.

Since again, there's not this conflict of the TV volume. So everyone can enjoy watching a movie or a show together at their comfort volume. Now together, these wireless accessories give patients more control, more flexibility and more confidence in their hearing, whether they're working, socializing or spending time with family and friends. They're simple to pair with one touch pairing, they're easy to use with their auto streaming settings, and they're designed to integrate smoothly with the Beltone HearMax

app. And don't forget that both accessories support AuraCast.

And speaking of AuraCast, from our own data, we believe that more than 2.8 million ears have been held with Oracast enabled hearing aids since 2023, and that 76% of listeners prefer the sound quality of AuraCast over that of a T coil. And According to Bluetooth SIG, more than five new AuraCast venues become AuraCast enabled globally each day. Now for our patients to easily connect to this new technology, we have our Beltone HearMax app and the world's first Oracast assistant that works with any phone that's compatible to our app. So to connect, just click on the button that says Find a broadcast at the bottom of the screen. Select the AuraCast stream from that list, just like an open WI FI connection.

And that's it. The sound is now streaming directly into the hearing aids. Now here's a quick overview of the connectivity options offered for each of our Beltone comments Dials this is one of the handouts that you can download, so just quickly I want to switch gears and kind of compare what you're now getting with our Beltone Commence products versus what you were able to offer with our older Beltone Rely product line. So since the technology levels of Beltone Commence and Beltone Rely don't necessarily exactly match up one for one, it's kind of hard to compare. But if you remember that feature set of a Beltone Rely, it most closely matches that of a commence 3.

So again, in that Commence product line we've upgraded that feature set. But Even with that commence 3 level, the rely 4 is missing some key flexibility and adjustments here. Just want to remind you that A Commence 3 has 12 processing channels, which is a first in this technology level. Plus the additional features of impulse noise reduction, smart beam steering, the ability to adjust that mixing point frequency streaming Bass boost and Low frequency Boost. Now when we look at the feature set of a Rely three, again, because of how we've upgraded that feature set in our Commence line, it more closely matches what's in a Commence two than a three.

But even when we compare it to a Commence two, you still get less channels and you're still missing some options here. When we compare our two levels to each other, the Rely 2 really offers your patients a whole lot less than our Commence 2, because again, there's no ability to connect to a smartphone with any product at that two level. So again, just reminding you, with the Commence 2, again we have 10 processing channels. Again a more expansive feature set than that of a rely 3 or a rely 2 with the added features of Streaming Bass Boost and Low Frequency Boost, plus the additional features that Beltone Commence has as far as field replaceable microphone filters, Bluetooth, Low Energy audio and Auracast capabilities, hands free calls, the ability to be connected simultaneously to the fitting software and a smartphone, and then just one more reminder that all of our Beltone Commence products will have better battery life than Beltone Rely products, because again, Beltone Commence is built on our 360 chip platform, which uses the battery more efficiently than the Coyote 5 chip that powered our Beltone Rely product. And this is the same connectivity guide, but comparing between Beltone comments and what you would get with our older line of Beltone Rely.

So just kind of to switch things up and to end the session to talk about some of the beltone Solus Max 2.3 updates, and I'll kind of just go through four of what I think are the main points. First is that the hearing aid firmware updates are again part of that connection flow, so it provides you easy access to any type of firmware update while you're connecting into the fitting software. Now, a firmware update must be performed when there is a firmware version mismatch between the hearing aids, as you see here on the screen. This is no different than it has always been. So I look at this with, okay, the right hearing aid went out for repair.

The factory upgraded the firmware. I'm now getting this back to program it for my patient with their left hearing aid that was not sent out for repair. But because the factory upgraded the right one, I now need to upgrade that left hearing aid. Now, if I choose this option to skip the update. So this is new.

That's fine. You can quote skip the update, but you will continue through the connection flow in simulation mode. So you can see the programming, but you can't actually program and save any changes. The only way that you can continue with a live connection is to update the firmware in that left hearing aid in this picture. So we will not let you live program with two mismatched firmware versions.

Now, if both hearing aids are on the same firmware and you are connecting in, and you get the message that there is a firmware available for both of the hearing aids, again, you have the option to run that update or to skip it. But because both firmwares are matching, when you skip it, you will be brought into solus max into the fitting page, live connected. You can make your changes and you can save that session. But I've been told there could be a time where GN believes that the firmware update is so important that it needs to be completed on both hearing aids right away. You cannot skip it.

So if this ever does happen, I'm assuming we'd give you warning. But if this does happen, just be aware that if you then skip this kind of must update firmware update, you will be brought into simulation mode. Now, if you do skip that firmware update, you will get notified on that on the menu button and then under the notification header. And I just want to let you know that you will now see the number two, meaning that you have a firmware update pending for both hearing aids. Not that there's two different updates that need to be run.

Now, the second update is that you can now select an alternative saved audiogram in the case of an audiogram mismatch. So again, during the connection flow, on the audiogram mismatch screen, you can select from the last four saved audiograms per ear. So the blue timestamp indicates what's currently selected. And then your optional timestamps will be listed in black. And again, the audiograms are unlinked so that different dates can be selected for each specific ear.

So just thinking of running a crossfitting, you do annual audiograms, but that bad ear, that dead ear, there's no point in testing it every year so you skip it. But you are testing that better ear. So you might

pick the audiogram, the latest audiogram for that better ear, but you might use a year or two old audiogram for that poorer ear because it's not going to change. So that's why you can pick differently for ear sides and that audiogram history will include audiograms from Noah and standalone and this feature is available if you are doing a remote Care live session. You can also change the selected audiogram during the fitting from the Patient profile screen by clicking on the Change audiogram button and then in the window you can then select your desired audiogram date.

So great news, especially when you are fitting our new Beltone Comment cic you no longer need to wait for the Scanning for instruments message to complete. When switching from the Noelink Wireless to a wired programming interface, you can now just press the Stop button right away in the drop down menu, select the interface that you want, connect the cables, connect the hearing aid, and then click on that scan button to immediately scan with, let's say the speed link for rcic. So it just saves you a little bit of time waiting for this message to spin and complete. And then lastly, it's much easier for you to find the Beltone Solus Max version number. It's still located under help.

And then about Solas Max as you see here on the screen, but we've added the version numbers to a few other places. So when you hover over the thumbnail in Noah you can see this. And just note you do not have to be in a patient file in order to hover over and see the firmware update number or sorry, the Solus Max version number. And then we also have the version number here on the Beltone Solus Max version splash. So if you are calling in for audiology support or tech support and they need that full number, these are the three places that you can easily find it for them when you're on the phone.

I just want to point out that the version you're seeing here on my screen is not the version that you can install off of Beltone community. It was a test one. So just to review, we added in our custom ITC and CIC styles to our existing Beltone Cometz family, all providing best in class hearing quality comfort, feedback, management and connectivity and patients can enjoy using our Multimic plus and TV

Streamer plus. And please remember that each accessory can be used as a personal oracast transmitter so your patients can enjoy a shared high quality audio experience and patients can connect to other AuraCast broadcasts using our AuraCast assistant in our Beltone Hearmax app. So again, just to summarize, our Beltone Commence custom styles now use MEMS microphones and our ITC must use our new microphone filter to help calibrate those MEMS microphones.

Our ITC also comes in three styles that ITC style half shell and full shell and has Bluetooth Low energy audio and AuraCast capabilities. Beltone Commence uses our 360 chipset, has more advanced features, Bluetooth LE audio and AuraCast enhanced free calls over our Beltone Rely product family. And then lastly with beltone Solus Max 2.3 you can now select the audiogram you want to use. You can update the hearing aid firmware through that connection flow and easily change the programming interface from the Assign Instrument page. And then again when you're on the phone with one of our tech support you can easily find that software version number.

So I just want to thank all of you for taking 30 minutes out of your afternoon or morning to hear a little bit more about our Beltone Commence custom products. If you do have any questions, please go ahead and start typing them into the QA box. I can tell you no one has asked a question yet, but I hope I see all of you on tomorrow's call as we talk about our All Fit domes. But if you have questions and they're not getting put in through Audiology online, you can always reach out to me and email me any questions that you have. So thank you all for spending the half hour with me.

I hope you enjoy the rest of your day and I hope to see you all tomorrow. Bye everyone. Thank you so much.