

# HEARING EVALUATION SERVICES OF BUFFALO, INC.



## Sound Sense<sup>©</sup>

### HES Professional Staff

Anne Orsene, AuD- Director

Donna Lavalley, AuD

Kristina Jackson, AuD

Jennifer Long, AuD

Edward Lobarinas, PhD

Carrie Secor, AuD

Jill Bernstein, AuD

Jennifer Sutton, AuD

### HES Support Staff

Joyce Kessler- Office Manager

Madeline Muscarella

Melanie Gawlik

Cindy Wasinger

### In This Edition...

- More affordable Bluetooth compatible hearing aids are now available
- What is Bluetooth and how can I use it?
- The BAHA—Bone Anchored Hearing Aid. A new alternative for some specific types of hearing loss
- 2008 Open House Recap

## Technology Update

Until recently the only way hearing aid users could access Bluetooth technology was with premium level hearing aids called "Epoq". Bluetooth technology allows you to listen wirelessly and hands-free to cell and home phones, iPods, and even the TV through your hearing aids!

We are happy to announce that another company we work closely with has now developed their own Bluetooth hearing aids and have made this technology available in their basic automatic, mid-level, and advanced hearing aids. This means that more hearing aid users can affordably access this convenient technology.

These products by Phonak offer great sound quality and excellent hearing-in-noise along with many other new and improved features and work great with or without the Bluetooth option.

### What is Bluetooth?

The most common use of Bluetooth application is hands-free wireless headsets linked with cellular phones. If you have seen someone walking down the street with a blue flashing gadget in their ear- that's Bluetooth. Bluetooth is a wireless technology that replaces the cables that were previously needed to connect electronic devices together.

These new hearing aids are Bluetooth compatible with use of a

streaming device (streamer). Using a streamer, the hearing aids can be connected through Bluetooth to a cell phone, home phone, iPod, or even your television. Now hearing aid users can also have cell phone conversations hands-free and with privacy! Additionally, the conversation is heard in both hearing aids giving you the clearest sound quality possible. Many of our patients are already benefiting from this incredible technology. Here are some testimonies from some users.

*"I have had great difficulty using my cellular phone and my house phone because of my hearing loss. I hoped that using Bluetooth devices will help me. It does."*

*"For the first time in many years I can have a telephone conversation with somebody and not have to ask them to speak more clearly and slowly. In my case this technology is a marvelous thing."*

*"They are simply amazing. The hearing aids themselves are crystal clear and don't distort sounds. And I HEAR my phone through them. Listening to my iPod is sweet too."*

**Please call our office at  
833-4488 to schedule an  
appointment and learn if  
these hearing aids  
are right for you.**

# The BAHA: A New Type of Hearing Aid for Certain Hearing Losses

There is an alternative hearing aid solution that is available for certain patients who do not benefit from conventional hearing aids. The solution is a device called the BAHA or bone anchored hearing aid. The BAHA is a relatively new and unique treatment for very specific, less common, types of hearing impairment such as:

- Conductive hearing loss
- Mixed hearing loss
- Single sided deafness

A *conductive hearing loss* occurs when there is a problem with the middle ear. This might include chronic fluid, a perforated eardrum, or a problem with the tiny bones found in the middle ear. A *mixed hearing loss* occurs when there is problem with both the middle ear (see above) and the inner ear.

*Single sided deafness* is a disorder where one ear has normal or near normal hearing while the other ear has no useable hearing left at all.

## What is the BAHA?

The BAHA is a bone conduction device which sends sound vibrations directly to the inner ear through the bone. There is no physical sense of the vibrations. Traditional hearing aids send sound through the outer and middle ear and then to the inner ear. In cases where the middle ear is blocked or damaged, a bone conduction device, like the BAHA may be more effective. Instead of trying to send sound through the damaged area, the



BAHA sends it directly through the bone, naturally stimulating the inner ear. In the case of single sided deafness, the vibration created by the BAHA will actually stimulate both inner ears. Therefore, it will pick up sound from the side of the deaf ear and the sound will be heard by the normal ear.

If you experience any of these types of hearing problems, you may be a candidate for a BAHA implant. The BAHA is for patients who cannot otherwise wear or benefit from more conventional 'in-the-ear' or 'behind-the-ear' hearing aids.

## How does a BAHA work?

The BAHA consists of three parts:

- 1) a sound processor;
- 2) an external abutment; and
- 3) a small titanium implant. The titanium implant is



placed during a short outpatient surgical procedure and over time naturally integrates with the skull bone. It typically takes 6 to 8 weeks for the implant to be secure and ready for use. The abutment then joins the sound processor to the titanium implant. When the microphone on the processor picks up sound, it transmits the sound vibrations through the external abutment to the titanium implant. The vibrating implant sets up vibrations within the skull and inner ear that finally stimulate the nerve fibers of the inner ear, allowing hearing.

## Some benefits of the BAHA system:

- The BAHA does not contain any in-ear components, which allows the recipient to

(Continued on page 3)

## The BAHA (continued)

*(Continued from page 2)*

benefit from a free ear canal. This may help reduce the likelihood of ear infections or irritations and allow the wearer to continue to use their BAHA even with active drainage.

- The BAHA is much less bulky than a CROS hearing aid which is the traditional amplification option for individuals with single sided deafness. A CROS system requires the user to also wear a hearing aid on their normal hearing ear.
- Direct bone conduction allows the recipient to hear clear and natural sound.
- Potential recipients can easily test the BAHA so that they can experience the benefits before they decide to have the surgery.
- The BAHA is comfortable to wear; recipients say that they “forget that it is on.”
- The BAHA is in use by 30,000 individuals around the world. The outcomes are predictable and well documented.
- The BAHA procedure is reversible and does not damage or in any way harm the wearer’s residual hearing.



the implanted version) and evaluate how well it may treat your specific hearing loss.

### **How is the BAHA system different from a hearing aid?**

The BAHA system is distinctly different from a hearing aid. While there is some overlap between the types of hearing loss that hearing aids and the BAHA system can both treat, there are several key differences between these treatment options.

Hearing aids rely solely on amplification through air conduction to treat hearing loss. The BAHA is very different in this respect: instead of amplifying sound, the BAHA system bypasses the damaged areas of the ear to send sound naturally to the cochlea through direct bone conduction.

### **How long does the sound processor last?**

The life of the sound processor is typically five years or more. The titanium implant and abutment to which the sound processor is attached is designed to last a lifetime.

### **What’s the first step to getting a BAHA?**

If the BAHA system sounds like the right solution for you or someone you know, we recommend that you call our office to discuss the possibility of scheduling a personal consultation to determine your candidacy. A recent hearing evaluation will be required and we may refer you directly to a local Ear, Nose and Throat physician for a BAHA evaluation.

**If you would like to make an appointment or talk to an Audiologist, please call our office at 716-833-4488.**

### **BAHA Question and Answer**

#### **Is the BAHA system covered by insurance?**

Yes, in many cases the BAHA system is covered by insurance. Both Medicare and Medicaid offer coverage for the BAHA system.

#### **How can I tell if I’m a candidate for the BAHA system?**

Your audiologist can look at your recent hearing test to help determine if the BAHA system is appropriate for your hearing loss. If so, you can try the BAHA system sound processor on a test rod or test headband. This demo system allows you to experience the BAHA system (with lowered sound volume and quality compared to

**“HEAR THE DIFFERENCE”  
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4949 Harlem Road  
Amherst, New York 14226  
716-833-4488

4063 North Buffalo Road  
Orchard Park, New York 14127  
716-662-0707

**Winter Edition**



## **2008 Open House: Another Great Success!**

This year's annual open house was held off-site for the first time ever at the Marriott in Amherst. The new venue offered plenty of needed space for our staff and all of our 74 guests. Everyone was able to mingle and enjoy the delicious refreshments in a comfortable atmosphere.

The large open space with enough room for everyone to sit comfortably made it easy for everyone to enjoy this year's presentations. Dr. Anne Orsene began by introducing all eight of our Doctors of Audiology. She also demonstrated our website ([www.hearingevaluationservices.com](http://www.hearingevaluationservices.com)) and talked about the various services that HES provides in addition to hearing testing and hearing aids.

Dr. Jill Bernstein then presented information about how the ear relates to your balance and discussed some of the common causes and tests of ear-related dizziness. Dr. Jennifer Sutton and Dr. Bernstein also provided balance screenings to almost 50 guests.

Our final featured presenter was Dr. Edward Lobarinas. Dr. Lobarinas gave an informative talk on the current state of research related to tinnitus and hearing loss.

We were very pleased with the turnout for the open house and would like to thank all who attended for making the day so special and such a great success. As a thank you gift for joining us this year, guests received their choice of wine. A very special thanks to Dwight Krieger, owner of Aurora Liquor, where the excellent bottles of wine were purchased. This year, three lucky people won great door prizes. Congratulations to our winners!

- John B.— Sennheiser T.V. listening set
- Beatrice M.— \$100 Gift Certificate
- Jean M. — \$50 Gift Certificate

**We hope to see you all again  
at the 2009 open house.**

**We will let you know when to save the date!**