Thank you for considering the ASU Speech & Hearing Clinic for your hearing healthcare needs. The purchase and fitting of hearing instruments is a very important process and one that involves much more than simply purchasing a quality product. Hearing aids are medical devices and not a retail “one-size fits all” type of product. An essential component to every successful fitting is the skill and expertise of the audiologist in selecting an appropriate hearing instrument for your individual needs and then appropriately fitting the hearing aid using advanced measurement techniques designed to verify that the full spectrum of speech is appropriately amplified. Before deciding where to be fit with a hearing aid, consider the quality of service as well as the quality of the product.

While the majority of hearing aids currently available on the market are high quality instruments and provide significant benefits to those with hearing loss, not all hearing instruments are created equal. Hearing aid technology ranges from very basic analog circuits to very sophisticated digital hearing aid circuits. The appropriateness of circuitry type as well as the selection of hearing aid style and other options depends on a number of audiological and non-audiological factors. In general, hearing aids are capable of amplifying sounds as needed to compensate for a given individual’s hearing loss and can substantially improve an individual’s ability to hear and understand speech in a variety of communication situations. However, it is important to realize that these devices do not restore hearing to normal, do not eliminate all unwanted sounds, and do not enable the user to understand conversational speech in every situation, particularly in those situations made more difficult due to noise, distance and reverberation. The type of hearing aid recommended and the amount of benefit one receives from hearing aids is not the same for all users and is dependent on a number of factors including:

1. the severity and type of hearing loss
2. the ability to utilize residual hearing to understand speech
3. the appropriateness of hearing aid characteristics and how well the hearing aid is programmed for the individual
4. the listening demands in a variety of circumstances
5. the user’s expectations and desires for improvement
6. the user’s ability and determination to adjust to hearing aid use

Remember, no two hearing impaired people are alike. Professional guidance from an audiologist is essential in selecting which hearing aid will best meet your needs.

The ASU Speech & Hearing Clinic provides the full range of comprehensive hearing aid services needed to ensure a successful outcome including an audiological evaluation, hearing aid exam and selection, programming and fitting, hearing aid orientation and follow-up. Proper functioning and fitting of existing hearing aids can be determined through coupler and real-ear electroacoustic measurements. If necessary, repair and/or
reprogramming can be performed to ensure that you are receiving maximum benefit from your existing hearing aids.

At the ASU Speech & Hearing Clinic, we use a wide variety of advanced technology products from many major manufacturers including Widex, Oticon, Phonak, Resound, Sonic Innovations, Siemens, AVR Sonovation, Unitron, and Starkey. The actual cost for the hearing aid is charged separately from the professional service fees of the clinic. Regardless of which hearing aid is chosen, the patient pays the actual invoice cost of the hearing aid in addition to the fees for the Complete Hearing Care Plan (CHCP), which includes the hearing aid exam and selection, dispensing fees and follow-up care for three years. The CHCP fee also covers hearing retesting and reprogramming to adjust the hearing aids as needed over a period of three years. The cost of the CHCP remains the same regardless of the hearing aid make/model dispensed. All hearing aids dispensed through our clinic will have a minimum of a three year repair warranty and a two year loss & damage protection. The CHCP fee to fit two hearing aids is $2500.00 and $1250.00 to fit one hearing aid. If a behind-the-ear style hearing aid is fitted there is an extra fee for the custom earmolds.

Below is a description of the hearing aid services provided at the ASU Speech & Hearing Clinic, outlining the steps involved in obtaining a hearing aid from the initial hearing evaluation to successful hearing aid use.

**Comprehensive Audiological Evaluation:** The first step in obtaining a hearing aid is a comprehensive hearing test. The hearing test at ASU lasts for approximately 1 ½ hours and includes a detailed history including measures of self-reported handicap and disability, immittance testing, air and bone conduction audiometry, and comprehensive speech audiometry including a measure of performance in noise. Other tests, such as otoacoustic emissions, are included as deemed necessary by the test results and/or the patient’s history. The results of this evaluation enable us to determine the type and severity of the hearing loss, the necessity for medical consultation, and whether or not hearing aid use is an appropriate option. Based on these audiological results, the appropriateness of different hearing aid circuitry, hearing aid style and the need for different features in a hearing aid can be determined. During the evaluation, an ASU clinical professor (state licensed and certified by the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association), together with a doctoral student clinician, will complete the testing, explain your test results and discuss your needs and desires for hearing improvement. The fee for the comprehensive audiological evaluation ranges from $115.00 to $140.00.

**Hearing Aid Exam and Selection:** The next step in obtaining a hearing aid is a consultation with the audiologist to select the best hearing aid for your particular hearing loss and communication needs. After a thorough review of all audiological and non-audiological needs, we will discuss with you our professional recommendations regarding your potential for benefit from hearing aid use, your desires and needs for hearing improvement, and the appropriate style, circuitry and characteristics of the hearing aids. We will also recommend any additional assistive technology or services as appropriate to help you with full accommodation of your hearing loss at home, work, or school. It is very helpful to have a family member or friend present with you at this
time, and throughout the process of obtaining hearing aids, so that he/she can provide
support and assistance as you (or your child) learn to use hearing aids. During this
appointment, additional testing including frequency specific loudness discomfort levels
or speech-in-noise testing will be completed. The fee for the hearing aid exam and
selection appointment is $250.00 which is applied to the total cost of the Complete
Hearing Care Plan and will serve as your deposit.

Once the decision is made to obtain hearing aids, an impression of the ear is taken so that
the hearing aid or earmold can be shaped to fit properly in the ear canal. We take great
care in obtaining a good ear impression through the use of an open-jaw technique and the
use of high viscosity impression material. The use of this technique has significantly
reduced the need for remakes due to a poorly fitting shell or earmold.

➤ **Medical Clearance:** Federal law requires that all individuals receive medical
clearance prior to obtaining a hearing aid. This is important to determine whether
medical treatment for the hearing loss is appropriate, and whether there are any medical
reasons why you (or your child) should not wear hearing aids. The medical evaluation
can be provided by a general physician; however, an examination by a doctor that
specializes in diseases of the ear (an ENT, Otologist or Otolaryngologist) is preferred.
You can obtain a referral to an ear doctor from your primary care physician or from the
audiologist. A medical clearance form will be provided to you for the doctor to sign and
return to us. Additionally, the audiologist may advise you to see a doctor to have any
excessive ear wax (cerumen) removed from the ear canals prior to the making of an ear
impression. If you are 18 years of age or older, the law gives you the option of choosing
not to see a doctor before obtaining hearing aids. If you choose this option, the
audiologist will give you a waiver statement to sign indicating this decision. All children,
however, must receive medical clearance for hearing aid use.

➤ **Hearing Aid Fitting and Follow-up:** Our comprehensive fitting protocol is carefully
designed and implemented to ensure a satisfactory hearing aid fitting. Approximately
two weeks after the hearing aids and/or earmolds are ordered, you will return to the ASU
Hearing Clinic for evaluation and fitting of the hearing aids. Prior to your arrival, we will
have performed an electroacoustic analysis on the hearing aids to ensure proper
functioning and adherence to the manufacturer’s specifications. This analysis also
includes a test of processing time delay and phase measurements as well as a verification
directional microphone performance. Additionally, prior to fitting the hearing aids to
you, your hearing aids will have been pre-programmed to an appropriate prescriptive
target using electroacoustic measurements to verify that all hearing aid parameters have
been set properly. During the actual fitting appointment, we will further verify that the
hearing aids have been set properly for your hearing loss by measuring the sound
pressure delivered to your ear canal while the hearing aids are worn (real ear aided
response measures). This test will ensure that soft, average and loud speech inputs are
appropriately amplified within your range of hearing and that very loud environmental
inputs never exceed your maximum discomfort levels. Electroacoustic adjustments are
made, as necessary, based on these results and your listening preferences.
Thorough hearing aid counseling and orientation will be provided to teach you how to use and care for your new hearing aids. During the appointment you will practice operating the aids to assure that you will be able to handle the aids independently at home. We will also practice telephone use and the use of other assistive technology as necessary. Finally, the audiologist will review proper expectations and suggestions to assist you during the adjustment period.

During the **45-day adjustment period**, it is important that you return to the ASU Hearing Clinic for appropriate follow-up appointments to assure that the hearing aids are adjusted properly. We would like to see you for follow-up appointments at least as often as listed below:

- **One to two weeks after the initial hearing aid fitting**
  - During these appointments, aided soundfield testing will be completed to measure maximum aided audibility as well as speech recognition in quiet and in noise; hearing aid reprogramming will be completed as indicated

- **Near the end of the 45-day adjustment period**
  - By the end of the adjustment period, adaptation to the new hearing aids should be nearly complete. At this time outcome measures will be used to further validate the success of the fitting and to determine the degree of hearing aid benefit.

- **Three and six months after the hearing aid fitting**
  - Your hearing aids will be checked for proper functioning and any programming adjustments will be performed as necessary.

- **One year after the initial hearing aid fitting** at which time an updated hearing test will be completed and any hearing aid reprogramming if necessary. It is also recommended that your hearing aids be sent to the manufacturer for an annual cleaning/overhaul

All appointments for assessment and repair of hearing aids obtained from the ASU Hearing Clinic are included under the Complete Hearing Care Plan for a period of three years. At the end of the three year period, enrollment in the PCCP (Patient Comprehensive Care Plan) will offer continued coverage for all appointments, including audiograms, and hearing aid reprogramming as well as discounts on extended manufacturer warranties, repairs, earmolds, etc.

**Living with Hearing Loss Aural Rehabilitation Groups:** Participation in an aural rehabilitation group is encouraged to help you achieve the most benefit from your hearing aids. These 8-week classes meet once a week for two hours. More information regarding the Living with Hearing Loss group and other aural rehab groups is available on our website.