



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jeffrey Szmanda, President
Peter Acly, Director of Communications
414-807-0404 jeff@eachear.com

DEPT. OF VETERAN AFFAIRS (VA) CHALLENGED BY CAMPAIGN TO FIX LONG-STANDING PROBLEM FOR HEARING AID USERS Industry-Award-Winning Hearing Aid Retrofit Could Help Millions, If VA Acts

(Milwaukee 01/19/26): Hearing aid users face a common problem every day: Difficulty inserting their hearing aids. Typically, their finger slips off the smooth end-surface of the hearing aid during attempted insertion.

Frustration from insertion difficulty causes many users to abandon their hearing care entirely. This can lead to social isolation, cognitive decline, and other health, safety, and lifestyle related consequences.

An amazing 40 percent of new hearing aid users reported experiencing difficulty inserting their hearing aids, according to a 2022 survey by the Hearing Industries Association in Washington, D.C. (But the industry's top trade association has chosen not to publicize these findings.)

As a result, this industry-documented problem represents a true crisis – a “Hearing Aid Insertion Crisis” -- for millions of Veterans and other hearing aid users. Though this is one of the hearing industry’s most widespread user-experience problems, it still remains unresolved.

Solving this universal problem presents an opportunity for the Department of Veteran Affairs: Being the nation’s largest purchaser of hearing aids, VA could easily specify that new hearing aids include a simple add-on that would make insertion difficulty a thing of the past.

Solution Available – But Not Yet Adopted

Fortunately, a simple and innovative solution is available – a hearing aid add-on named Gruv Button™ Retrofit -- a small plastic sleeve that slides easily over the existing hearing aid speaker (which is the part that is inserted into the ear canal); the sleeve provides a “groove” in the speaker’s end-surface so the fingertip doesn’t slip off, which permits easy insertion and the many health and safety benefits that brings.

Comments from users have been uniformly positive. As the developer describes this innovation, “It Fits the Fingertip!”

Hearing Aid Manufacturers have known about this award-winning assistive device since 2017, but have failed to adopt it so it could accommodate their end-users. Their inaction inevitably calls into question their connection with, and empathy for, the actual users of their products. Key user groups include older adults, people with physical limitations like tremor and arthritis, and the many people who have ear canals that angle or bend, making insertion especially difficult.

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The reason for the industry's inaction is unclear and has not been explained. This suggests that the issue has not been a priority to the Hearing Aid Manufacturers. The result: Our Veterans and tens of millions of others continue to suffer.

Inaction by the Hearing Aid Manufacturers is especially serious because the developer of Gruv Button™ Retrofit – Each Ear LLC of Milwaukee – lacks the manufacturing capability to cost-effectively produce the wide variety of models that would be needed to physically fit all of the industry's hearing aid speakers, which are manufactured in various contours, shapes and sizes. (Each Ear is primarily focused on product research and development, as opposed to manufacturing.) This makes action by VA critical to resolving this crisis.

VA Has Opportunity to Solve Global Insertion Crisis

Given the inaction by the Hearing Aid Manufacturers, the Department of Veteran Affairs has the capability to break this unnecessary logjam and solve the "Hearing Aid Insertion Crisis." Being the nation's largest purchaser of hearing aids, VA could publicly call for manufacturers to include Gruv Button™ Retrofit in their product offerings. That would permit VA Audiologists to further demonstrate the benefits and effectiveness of this assistive device.

Prompt action by VA would also burnish the Department's reputation for excellence and creativity, and would publicly reaffirm VA's efficacy as a positive and reliable force in society. To paraphrase comments by VA Secretary Doug Collins, "When we see a problem, let's fix it!"

Testing of Retrofit prototypes by the developer confirms that this simple, plastic sleeve design is now ready for production and distribution by the hearing care industry. The industry's massive production capacity and extensive networks of retail clinics would maximize efficiency and help to keep the retail price low for consumers.

If VA does capitalize on this opportunity to ask the Hearing Aid Manufacturers to produce Gruv Button™ Retrofit, other Large Hearing Aid Purchasing Organizations will likely insist on the product being made available for their own members and insureds, as well. The benefits would improve the lives of tens of millions worldwide.

Widespread Recognition

The promise of this innovative product has been recognized by professionals representing all aspects of the hearing care industry (except, of course, the Hearing Aid Manufacturers themselves). It won top honors in its category of the 5th Annual Hearing Technology Innovator Award, presented in September 2024 by the Hearing Health & Technology Matters professional organization.

"The Innovator Awards are designed to shine a spotlight on the visionaries and companies turning groundbreaking hearing technology into tangible solutions," said Dr. Robert Traynor, a member of the Awards judging panel. "Companies like Each Ear LLC are driving the industry forward with their commitment to advancing technology and improving lives."

Dr. Amyn Amlani, president of the Academy of Doctors of Audiology, said the winning entries offered "improved user experiences, and more patient-centered solutions. These advancements are shaping the future of hearing healthcare and enhancing patient care."

And Caregivers – who help people daily with the insertion of their hearing aids – are equally appreciative: The Retrofit was honored by receipt of the Today's Caregiver Friendly Award for 2022 from Caregiver Media Group.

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Gruv Button™ Retrofit has garnered numerous positive comments and testimonials from a wide variety of clinicians and consumers. “We need this thing!” said one Wisconsin hearing care clinician. “Great idea,” said another. “Patients struggle with insertion on a daily basis.” Such comments attest to the breadth of support the product has received. (Note: A compendium of comments and testimonials is attached to this release.)

Questions Remain

Each Ear, the developer, is publicizing a four-minute animation, titled “The Hearing Aid Insertion Crisis,” to urge VA to ask the Hearing Aid Manufacturers to produce the product, so its accommodation and benefits can be further demonstrated by VA Audiologists and then made generally available.

But key questions remain: “For the benefit of our Veterans and the public, will VA end the ‘Hearing Aid Insertion Crisis’ by requesting Gruv Button™ Retrofit from the Hearing Aid Manufacturers? And, now that VA sees the problem, will they fix it?”

The response by the Department of Veteran Affairs will provide the answer. Now VA has an opportunity to help millions of Veterans, to whom the nation owes so much. It also has a responsibility to act.

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The Hearing Aid Insertion Crisis

www.HearingAidInsertionCrisis.com

Documents

[Definition of Key Terms](#)

[What Is Gruv Button™ Retrofit? Why It's Important?](#)

[Testimonials and Comments](#)

[About the Awards](#)

Graphics

[Fits the Fingertip](#)

[Gruv Button™ Retrofit](#)

[Gruv Button™ Ergonomic Design](#)

[Animation: Problem and Solution](#)

[Logos: Awards and Each Ear LLC](#)

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