

Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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Accessibility, Billings, and Hearing Aid Manufacturers

The Apple AirPods Pro II has recently received a Class II Medical License in Canada and personally, I welcome this as long as the consumer uptake is appropriate- adults with a mild to (at most) moderate level of sensori-neural hearing loss. The audiology community has always welcomed increased accessibility to services and products in Canada and we recognize that accessibility can vary widely from region to region. Ontario has the Assistive Devices Program (ADP) that contributes up to \$500 for each hearing aid every five years and many other provinces have similar programs in place,... but not all. Even with the government assistance, the cost of hearing aids may still be problematic for some. And of course, the provision and fitting of hearing aids is only one element in the (re)habilitation of a hard of hearing client- counselling, aural rehabilitation, use and provision of accessories and Smartphone apps, and advocacy for more accessible theatres and other centres in Canada, all fall into the scope of our professional life.

Dr. Salima Jiwani has written a thought-provoking piece in her column called “Pricing Dilemma in Audiology”. I am not sure that it’s a “dilemma” because our members appear to be rising to the occasion and are offering value-added services that only an audiologist can provide. In my own practice with musicians (www.MusiciansClinics.com), I see many musicians and other performing artists who require hearing protection that has been optimized for their listening needs. I do charge extra (bundled into the cost of the hearing protection) and this covers the counselling, provision of strategies, information, verification, and follow-up.

In this issue of CanadianAudiologist.ca we have a very thorough cover feature on “Connecting Those with Hearing Loss to Surgical Centres When Hearing Aids Aren’t Enough”. In addition to the availability of cochlear implants, we now have bone anchored solutions such as the BAHA or Bone Anchored Hearing Aids (... and I don’t know if you knew this but a bilateral fitting of a BAHA is a BAHABA!). Cochlear implants have come a long way since the early single channel devices from the early 1980s as have bone anchored hearing solutions. Middle ear implants have also come a long way and I recall being involved with them in the early 1990s. One manufacturer has just received FDA approval in the US for a totally implantable middle ear device.

Whether its hearing aids, cochlear implants, bone anchored hearing devices, or over-the-counter hearing aids, I would like to thank all of the manufacturers and distributors that we, as the audiology community, interact with.

We tend to take a lot for granted, but the field of audiology is blessed to be able to work with so many thoughtful partners. This is a thank you note to the manufacturers that we work with. This is

true of manufacturers and distributors and also equipment, test materials, and software suppliers.

We are grateful to our manufacturers for supplying cutting edge hearing aids, accessories, support services, educational activities, student education, advocacy work, and charitable services for those who are in need.

Manufacturers are much more than just “suppliers” of products and this is becoming exceedingly clear over the past few months with the tragedy in and around Los Angeles with the devastation caused by the fires. In many cases those who were displaced lost everything, including their toothbrushes and cherished pictures. Firefighters and equipment arrived from other parts of the country as well as from Mexico and Canada, and although those people and stories grabbed the headlines, there were many other heroes.

Hearing aid manufacturers were quick to supply hearing aid users with free replacement chargers and other accessories lost in the chaos of the displacement. Billings are being delayed in the affected area until the clinics are able to get their doors reopened.

And during non-emergency times when their presence is perhaps less noticeable, manufacturers are always there in the background to provide support and ongoing care. And as a rule of thumb, tend to be quite flexible even if a hearing aid repair is “just outside” of the warranty period.

So, a big thank you to all of those who bend over backwards to make our practices, and our clients' lives that much better.