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**Hearing Professionals Focuses on Educating Baby Boomers
About Proper Diagnosis and Treatment of Hearing Loss
During Better Hearing and Speech Month**

Laurel, MD May 1, 2007—May 1 marks the start of Better Hearing and Speech Month, a month dedicated to educating consumers about the need to assure that their hearing is healthy. This year, **Hearing Professionals** is joining with the Better Hearing Institute (BHI) to focus attention on educating baby boomers about hearing loss and what they can do about it.

Baby boomers—those born between 1947 and 1964—may be particularly susceptible to hearing loss because of their lifelong exposure to loud music and other noises, according to **Dr. Lisa Nelson**, an audiologist with 5 offices in central and southern Maryland.

According to Dr. Nelson: “This country and our community must stop treating hearing loss as a minor problem. Research shows that when people cannot hear properly, they make less money and their inability to hear can disrupt family life.

“The good news is that hearing loss can easily be diagnosed and for most people there are solutions in the form of digital and programmable hearing aids, many of which are not visible.”

“Many people associate hearing loss with advancing age,” said **Dr. Nelson**. “In fact, hearing loss is also associated with exposure to loud noises, something that some baby boomers have faced since childhood. According to the Better Hearing Institute two-thirds of people with hearing loss are below retirement age”

Symptoms of hearing loss include not being able to hear well in a crowded room or restaurant, having to ask friends to repeat what they are saying, or not being able to hear sounds that others seem to be able to hear better.

Surveys published by BHI, a not-for-profit organization that educates the public about the neglected problem of hearing loss and what can be done about it, have found that:

- An overwhelming majority (93 percent) of consumers with hearing devices say the devices have improved their quality of life.
- Eighty five percent (85 percent) say they are satisfied with the benefits they get from hearing aids.

- Specific improvements associated with better hearing health include more effective communications (71 percent), better social life (56 percent), better relationships at home (55 percent) and in the work place (48 percent), improved emotional health (40 percent), improved mental/cognitive ability (35 percent), and better physical health (24 percent).
- Ninety percent (90 percent) of the respondents said their hearing aids improved communication in one-on-one situations, while more than eight out of ten were satisfied by the instruments' performance in small groups and while watching television. Three of four respondents were satisfied with their hearing aids when outdoors, while listening to music, while participating in leisure activities, in the car, at a house of worship and in a restaurant.

Founded in 1973 and based in Alexandria, Virginia, BHI is working to:

- Erase the stigma and end the embarrassment that prevents millions of people from seeking help for hearing loss.
- Show the negative consequences of untreated hearing loss for millions of Americans.
- Promote treatment and demonstrate that this is a national problem that can be solved.

“Too many people cling to the old, stubborn belief that wearing a hearing aid won’t help fix their hearing problems,” said Sergei Kochkin, PhD, Executive Director of BHI. “We hope people, especially baby boomers, understand that hearing aids work better than ever, and can dramatically improve the quality of their lives.”

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