

**Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center
Program Evaluation Summary
2020 Audiology Services**

Summary of Services

Audiology

- 3,907 visits were performed at all 4 clinic locations
- 2130 unique clients seen in-house
 - 45.5 % male
 - 54% female
 - .5% no gender detail

 - 59% white
 - 19% black
 - 8% Asian
 - 14% unknown
- 584 children served through contracts with 3 school districts
- 141 adults served through 5 in -person community based educational outreach events
- 64 adults served through 7 virtual community based educational outreach events.
- **2,919 Total Served through Audiology**

Analysis:

Numbers of clients seen were significantly reduced from prior years due to the COVID pandemic.

- In house clinic was closed for approximately 2 months (March 14, 2020 -May 11, 2020). Contact with clients was established via phone/ video during that time. We also mailed 138 packs of hearing aid batteries and small supplies to clients during that time.
- School districts had much of their year virtual or hybrid. School hearing screenings were greatly reduced as requirements were waived.

Outcomes

In spite of COVID, we continued to focus on Outcomes and providing services using Best Practice protocols. The audiology team gathered both subjective and objective outcomes using the following measures:

Subjective: International Outcome Inventory for Hearing Aids.

- 96% (319/333) of clients report hearing better in situations important to them

Objective: Real ear verification and Speech Intelligibility Index

- On average, our clients receive an 84% increase in ability to understand speech (as measured by the pre and post Speech Intelligibility Index scores. Average increase of 29.25 to 54.59)

Actions: In February 2021, we will participate as a part of Beta testing for a National Outcome Management System (NOMS) that the American Speech and Hearing Association is trialing and we hope to participate in this endeavor long-term once it is available. We will also continue to gather outcomes internally and report to our stakeholders.

Client Satisfaction

With the disruptions COVID brought, inadvertently, formal satisfaction surveys were not distributed in 2020 to audiology clients as they had been in years past. Instead, we gathered information in less formal manners. We worked diligently to stay in touch with clients and meet their needs. During our shutdown we spent our days calling clients to touch base and offer support. In order to meet client needs, while still remaining safe, we began offering curbside and telehealth options for service delivery that continued after we were re-opened.

Paper satisfaction surveys were mailed to those who received hearing aids through the Audiology Patient Assistance Program. Response's revealed:

- 89.5% of respondents indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed to the following statement: "I can better participate in conversations with my family/friends with my new hearing aids"
- 89%% of respondents indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed to the following statement: "This hearing aid(s) has had a positive impact on my life."
- 91.5% of respondents indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed to the following statement: "I can participate more fully in my daily activities with my new hearing aid(s)."

Action:

For 2021, we want to return to formally gathering input from clients and we plan to use Survey Monkey or other online formats as we began those efforts in 2019 and found them to be successful. We have also been able to better gather emails with Counsel Ear, our new Office Management system.

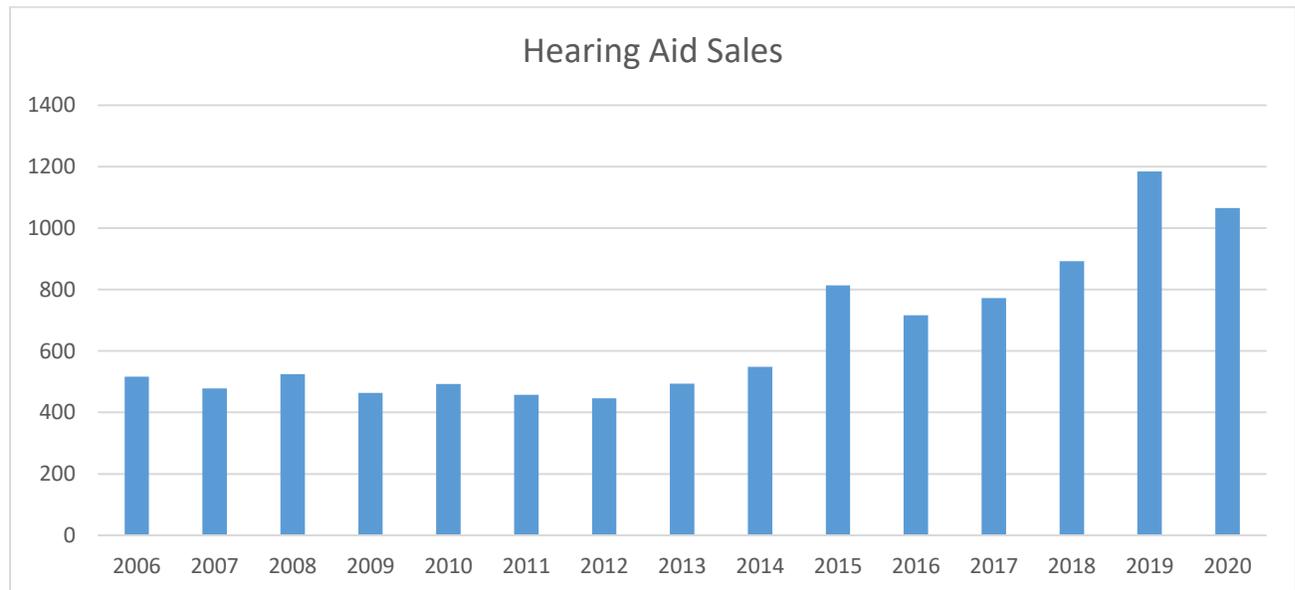
Efficiency

Our main indicator of productivity continues to be hearing aid sales. Even with the disruption COVID created we dispensed a large number of hearing aids. In fact, social isolation and mask wearing drew attention to the importance of communication and highlighted troubles someone with hearing loss may have.

In 2020, we dispensed 1065 hearing aids. Although this is a 10% decrease from the record high in 2019 – we saw tremendous growth in the later part of the year once more people became more comfortable leaving their homes.

In December of 2020, we implemented a new office management system (Counsel Ear) to also gain efficiencies in scheduling, hearing aid tracking and data reporting.

In addition, we internally re-organized and provided more support and management to our front desk/ intake staff, allowing for a better customer service experience.



Action:

Continue to explore all features of Counsel Ear in order to maximize efficiencies including online scheduling, paperwork via email, follow up correspondence, patient portals etc. Analyze need for a new phone system.

Continue to move toward the model of having a Hearing Instrument Specialist at each office location will allow more walk in and same day appointments and a more cost-effective treatment option for simpler cases. Audiologists will have time to devote to more challenging cases.

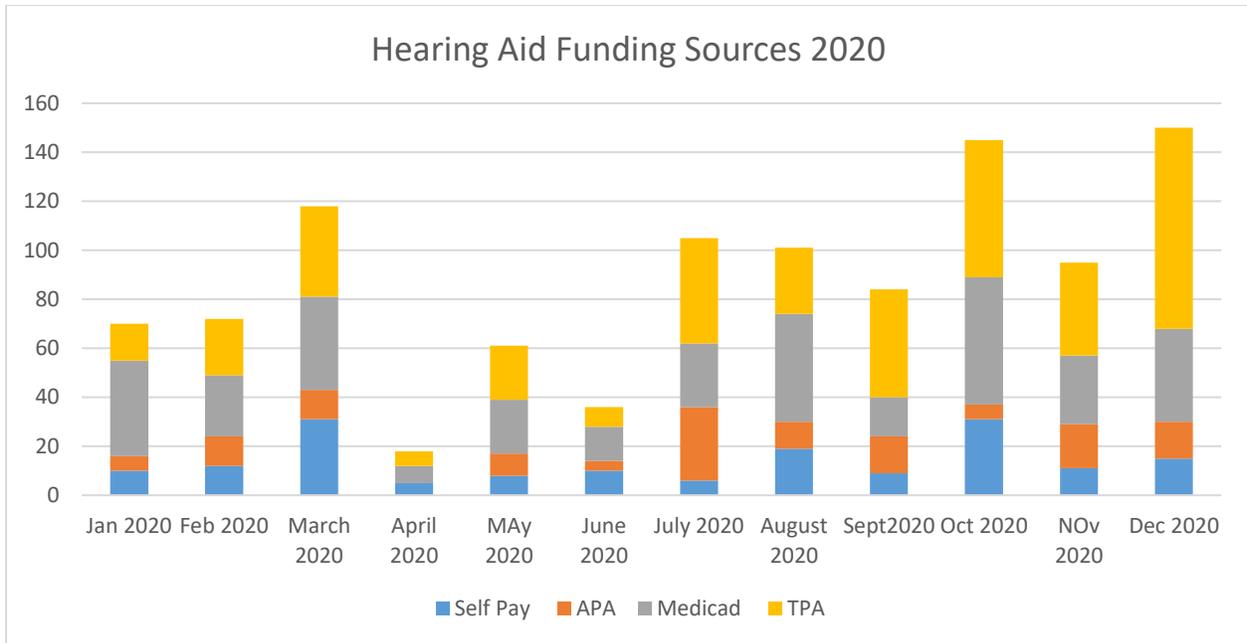
Accessibility of Services

CHSC recognized that our office in South Euclid had serious accessibility issues. Physical accessibility was restricted as there was a small flight of stairs within the building restricting movement for those with physical limitations. In addition, there was only one audiology treatment room and demand was much higher. Wait times increased to over a month for basic appointments. In addition to putting into place a Hearing Instrument Specialist to see same day appointments and simple cases, we moved into a larger, more physically accessible space. The South Euclid office was moved to the new Lyndhurst location in Feb 2020. Additional Accessibility of services in each office location is addressed in the accessibility plan and report and not repeated here

COVID 19 created barriers to accessibility. In responses, we offered phone, video and curbside appointments. We also followed CDC guidelines and require mask wearing for staff and clients. Our offices, waiting rooms and meeting spaces were re-configured to allow for maximum social distancing and plexiglass barriers were installed in office and at front desk. We required staff to quarantine and not physically come to work when exposed to COVID 19. Implementing these safe practices allow for even our most vulnerable clients to feel safe in seeking treatment.

Financial accessibility is also exceptionally important. CHSC offers the Audiology Patient Assistance Program for financial assistance in obtaining audiology services. In 2020, we were able to dispense 76 hearing aids to 138 clients. An additional 53 people were served through APA receiving hearing aid repairs, devices or professional services at a greatly reduced cost.

The payer mix for hearing aids at CHSC shows our commitment to financial accessibility. 87% of hearing aids dispensed at CHSC were funded via Medicaid, APA, TPA or private insurance which have zero to very low out of pocket costs.



Action: CHSC continues to remain focused on accessibility. We have a formal accessibility plan and meet regularly to address any concerns.

Our leadership team works closely with our medical advisory team to ensure our COVID protocols remain up to date and allow for safe accessibility of our service. We will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

In addition, advocacy efforts to maintain funding for APA will continue to ensure access to this program and the positive outcomes it yields.