

Open Letter to Manufacturers and Providers “ADA-Access-Ready” Hearing Instruments

To: Hearing Instrument Manufacturers and Providers

Request: “ADA-Access-Ready” hearing instruments be manufactured and fit

We consistently find that users/patients are frustrated when they learn their hearing aids do not have telecoils, and, therefore, they are unable to access hearing loops, FM, and infrared assistive listening systems to which they are entitled under the ADA. Once they learn about the options available to them by having telecoils, they do not understand why they cannot “have it all” in their hearing aids or cochlear implants. They want and need Bluetooth, telecoils, the potential for Auracast™ (for when it is available in the future) – and – many would also like rechargeable batteries and other features. We wonder why decisions are made that preclude having **ALL** these options for patients who want them.



In the United States, Assistive Listening Systems are mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to give people with hearing loss the clarity that is impossible to receive with hearing instruments alone. However, there are multiple challenges for users to access them.

When Auracast was first announced we were promised direct-to-hearing instrument connectivity without an intermediary device. We were thrilled because this is the capability that a telecoil provides. But recently, we are seeing more and more mention of an intermediary device. Intermediary devices add complexity and barriers for individuals with limited dexterity, limited cognitive abilities, or limited tech familiarity. Intermediary devices are one more thing to remember, charge, and troubleshoot. The need to borrow equipment adds to the stigma of hearing loss.

Therefore, we are unequivocally advocating for manufacturers to produce and providers to fit “ADA-Access-Ready” hearing instruments that connect to ADA assistive listening systems via telecoil (hearing loops, FM, and infrared), and in the future, potentially Auracast technologies. These fully “ADA-Access-Ready” hearing instruments will require:

1. Both telecoil and Auracast connectivity embedded in the hearing instruments, and not merely offered in an accessory device.
2. Direct-to-hearing instrument connections for both telecoils and Auracast. No intermediary device shall be required, at least for connection to the dedicated assistive listening stream.

Essential reading. Also available on the webpage, [Unequivocally Advocating for Changes to Access ADA Assistive Listening Systems](#)

- New feature article: [Helping People Hear Anywhere with Telecoils and Auracast](#) *Canadian Audiologist*, by Sterkens and Whyman. January 2025.

The Center for Hearing Access produced:

- [Overview of Declaration](#) (1 page). Changes Needed to Access ADA Assistive Listening Systems
- [Declaration for the United States](#) (5 pages). Specific actions in five areas: Hearing instrument manufacturers; audiologists and hearing instrument providers; professional organizations for audiologists and other hearing instrument providers; assistive listening system manufacturers; and assistive listening system installers.
- [What is needed for Auracast streamed ALS to be available and usable](#) (2 pages). Bullet points describing what is needed, some expectations and considerations.
- 15 years of international declarations produced by several organizations are available on the Center for Hearing Access [Declaration webpage](#), including the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH) Position Statement on Auracast and Telecoils (October 2024).
- [List of “ADA-Access-Ready” hearing instruments](#) (2 pages).

How will your business or organization respond?

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