

CHILDREN'S HEARING AID PROGRAM SUNSET REVIEW- ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, updated 8/28/19

HEARING AID COSTS

- Retail cost of hearing aids is about \$4,000 to \$5,000 a pair for traditional hearing aids (\$2500 for a single hearing aid).
- Retail cost of bone-conduction hearing aids for a child with atresia or single-sided deafness is about \$10,000 for a pair (\$5,000 for a single unit).

HEARING AID MAINTENANCE COSTS

- Batteries cost about \$1 per battery and last for about 5-10 days depending on the size.
- Earmolds are about \$250 for a pair (\$150 for a single); Earmolds may need to be made:
 - every 2-3 months for an infant,
 - every 6-9 mos for a toddler, and
 - every 9-12 mos for a child.
- Hearing aids may need to be replaced every 3-5 years; CHAP is committed to helping parents with the first set to help allow parents to start saving for their next set.
- Hearing aid follow-up visits may also incur a cost; part of the CHAP contract is that audiologists will see the child at no cost to the family for up to 3 years; once that 3 years is up, some companies may charge an additional annual fee to cover provider visits which can range from \$350 up to \$700.

FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES

- Federal poverty guidelines go by the gross income so a family of 4 can be covered for a hearing aid by CHAP if the family's *gross* income is \$73,800 or less (about \$55,000 for *net* income).
- The families that fall within these guidelines make too much to be eligible for Medicaid; however, they are still low- to middle- income families who are trying to make ends meet with house payments, basic car payments, and typical family financial needs. Many of these families may also have large medical bills they are paying off as well. Having to come up with \$5,000 immediately for an unplanned event can be very difficult.
- There are studies that show that only about 40% of Americans are able to cover an unexpected \$1,000 expense, such as an emergency room visit or car repairs (A \$1,000 emergency would push many Americans into debt. PUBLISHED WED, JAN 23 2019 Annie.Nova@ANNIEREPORTER).
- Many families may also have other concerns that further impact the cost factor such as, multiple children with hearing loss and/or comorbidity of hearing loss with other medical concerns. In addition, they may find themselves trying to pay off a hearing aid while trying to save for a future hearing aid. Children who receive hearing aids later in life or don't receive hearing aids frequently have developmental delays including speech/language, cognition, and behaviors. These delays entail a special education path starting in preschool and typically lasting throughout their education. This may also impact life as an adult with unemployment and disability determination. This can be very costly compared to the reimbursement of one pair of hearing aids for an infant.