

STRATEGIC VISION 2020

1 Our ability to hear and engage with others and the environment around us is foundational to healthy aging.

3 The Cochlear Center focuses on what can be done now across five core areas (population health evidence, public awareness, care models, healthcare policy, hearing technology) to address hearing loss in older adults at scale.

2 The widespread prevalence of hearing loss, which affects two-thirds of all adults 70 and older, is not going away – preventive interventions (e.g., reducing noise exposure) and research into future neurorestorative therapies (e.g., gene therapies) are all needed but are in no way a panacea.

4 The mission of the Cochlear Center is to educate and train a generation of clinicians and researchers around the world to work across these five core areas using public health approaches and methodologies.

POPULATION HEALTH EVIDENCE

PUBLIC AWARENESS

CARE MODELS

HEALTHCARE POLICY

HEARING TECHNOLOGY

AT PRESENT

Hearing is not routinely considered in epidemiological & health economic studies

Population health methods for hearing assessment & analysis are often flawed

Poor awareness of what hearing loss is, what one's own hearing is, how to obtain care, and how to address hearing loss

Clinical model of in-person 1:1 care between patient and clinician is the dominant model

Massive economic and racial disparities in access to and utilization of hearing care

Outdated with respect to current understanding of importance of hearing to health and functioning of older adults, technology advances, role of services vs. devices in hearing care

Highly consolidated hearing aid market focused on high-margin segments.

Hearing aids and hearing technologies are considered a niche product

STRATEGIES & INITIATIVES

Bolster inclusion of hearing and consistent analytic methods in population health studies.

- Ongoing Center faculty/trainee-led research
- Integration of hearing into large population health studies
- Disseminate methods developed by the Center's Audiology & Analytical Cores
- Promote SENSE Network to build an infrastructure that supports international sensory aging research efforts

Establish a common language and metric for understanding and discussing hearing loss.

- "Know your PTA" initiative
- Partner with other groups (public-focused and clinician-focused) to disseminate knowledge

Develop, test, and disseminate other models of care, particularly those focused on task sharing to expand workforce.

- HEARS model
- ENHANCE model

Be a go-to resource for decision makers regarding hearing care and funding policy.

- Disseminate policy briefs to educate policymakers
- Engage influential national and international advisory bodies to address hearing loss

Champion OTC hearing technologies and development.

- Support market-shaping regulations around OTC hearing aids that can ensure safety and efficacy
- Support development and implementation of Bluetooth LE audio standards for broadcast sound transmission

IN THE FUTURE

Hearing is routinely considered in studies of older adults resulting in robust evidence

Established methodology for hearing measurement and analysis routinely used

Everyone knows their PTA

General principles are known around what hearing loss is, how it can influence other issues in aging, and how to address it

Diverse models of care at all levels of accessibility and affordability are available to consumers/patients depending on their preferences and needs

Insurance policies routinely cover hearing care and distinguish between the role of hearing care services versus technology

Healthcare policies and guidelines routinely account for importance of effective hearing to optimize health outcomes and promote patient autonomy

Broad technology choices exist for hearing

Effective hearing is incorporated into all aspects of life through universal design of technologies