

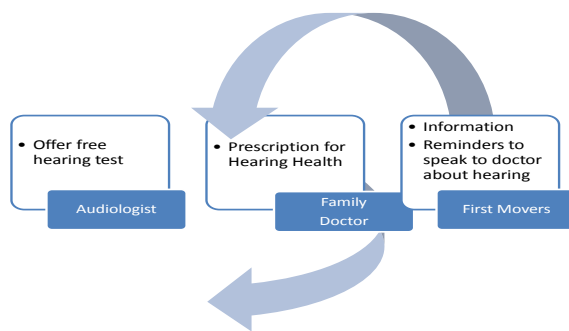
COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND FAMILY DOCTORS



ABSTRACT

To promote hearing health and early hearing loss intervention, this program would enlist the support of health care providers with the broadest reach into the general population: the family doctor. Working through medical societies and national and international health care organizations, family doctors will be encouraged to routinely suggest a baseline hearing test for anyone aged 55 years or older.

To motivate patients to follow through, family doctors would write “prescriptions for hearing health” – directing patients to make annual hearing checks as part of their health care routines. With the endorsement of professional audiology associations and audiologists, the initiative would offer free-of-charge hearing checks to people over 55 years of age when presenting the family physicians’ ‘prescription’.



With the physician/audiologist foundation in place, a wide-range of ‘ first movers’ such as healthcare and community groups would be mobilized to actively support the hearing check as part of routine health care initiatives. A comprehensive toolbox of user-friendly tools would enable targeted “first mover” groups including allied health professionals, nursing home staff, educators and workplace wellness directors to easily implement awareness-building activities customized to their patients/clients.

“Prescription for Hearing Health” materials will be distributed through participating family doctors, audiologists and hearing care professionals.

RATIONALE

Primary care physicians, often called family doctors, are the most important source of health care information and treatment for the vast majority of people.

Family doctors treat patients of all ages – from birth through old age – reaching all patient populations. Most, however, are under severe time pressure and therefore lack the time and resources to delve into potentially complicated medical conditions.

According to a recent study from the Archives of Internal Medicine, primary care physicians are referring more patients to specialists than ever before. In fact, the rate almost doubled in the 10-year period between 1999 and 2009.

By providing family doctors with simple messages and a pre-printed prescription pad, patients can be easily primed to think about their hearing health. The Prescriptions for Hearing Health program increases compliance by offering free health opportunities (such as a free hearing check) and has the potential to increase patient follow-through by prompting via the first movers group.

Free and easy-to-use educational tools/materials for the first movers will help them start important conversations about the importance of hearing care and drive patients to their family doctors.

GOAL(S)

- Make hearing health checks part of ongoing healthcare
- Motivate family doctors to “prescribe” hearing health checks to motivate compliance
- Arrange for hearing care professionals to offer free hearing check-ups to increase compliance
- Support the initiative via dissemination of customized tools and materials to healthcare and corporate influential that can reinforce hearing checks with additional populations

AUDIENCES

Primary care physicians/family doctors

Audiologist and other hearing healthcare professionals

Allied Healthcare Professionals & Corporate/Institution Influentials

Educators

And via these audiences: Adults aged 55 and older

EXECUTION

Phase 1 – Preparation (1-1.5 years)

Develop campaign “Prescription for Hearing Health Awareness” materials working with a group of leading hearing care professionals; to include prescription pads, brochures, and fact sheets

Create instructional videos and eLearning modules and re-producible print materials tailored to first line influential (physicians & audiologists) and second line support (allied health care, educators, workplace wellness directors, nursing home staff, etc.)

Build a dedicated website to disseminate tools/materials

Secure cooperation and endorsement of international (WHO) and national hearing health professional groups

Secure cooperation and endorsement of medical associations (international and national)

Sell-in campaign to physicians, audiologists, and second tier supporter (allied health professionals, nursing home staff, etc.) at major national and international conferences and professional meetings

Phase 2 - Implementation (1 year, first-year initiative)

Launch initiative with a worldwide media blitz that includes editorial and paid advertising; media interviews with heads of medical organizations and groups

Identify participating physicians and audiologists

Create a locator map for easy access by the general public

Working with professional groups, conduct key market training sessions for each of the target support groups; use the training session to jump start support activities

Maintain ongoing contact with professional organizations and institutions to optimize participation among members

Consider “Hearing Health Check Weeks” in communities/countries with the strongest participation and promote the event via media and advertising, posters and billboards

Work with professional groups to set goals for their members and work with them to monitor participation and support/showcase outstanding participants

DELIVERABLES

Gain endorsements from 6 national/international healthcare organization representing US, Europe and Asia/Australia, e.g., WHO, American Medical Association, National Health Service, etc.

Secure participation of 6 leading national hearing health organizations representing US, Europe and Asia/Australia, e.g., American Academy of Audiology, Australian College of Audiology, and British Academy of Audiology



Enlist participation of physicians and audiologists in 10 markets nationwide for a total participation (free hearing screenings) of 1,000 physicians and 1,000 hearing care professionals

200,000 prescriptions written in first year

50,000 free hearing screenings in first year