

New Homes for Used Hearing Aids

Judie Lee, IPAT Director

Do you or someone you know have hearing aids sitting in a drawer and don't know what to do with them? This is often the fate of hearing aids when the intended user no longer needs them. Are you thinking they are too expensive to throw away but that they are not really re-usable? IPAT has news for you - many hearing aids are re-usable and we are now sponsoring a program in North Dakota to recycle abandoned or discarded hearing aids. We need your help to make it work.

Hearing loss significantly impacts the lives of millions of people. Individuals with hearing loss have difficulties in social situations, which may lead to isolation, depression, and a possible decrease in cognitive functions. In spite of the importance of proper amplification for people experiencing hearing loss, studies show that only 10-21% of people who could benefit from amplification use it. The major barriers are the lack of financial resources and the high cost of amplification devices. In an effort to increase the use of hearing aids in our state through decreased device cost, IPAT and St. Alexius Medical Center have initiated a hearing aid recycling program.

The hearing aid recycling program, administered through the North Dakota Assistive Technology Info-Line, is affiliated with a national program called HEAR NOW. HEAR NOW recycles hearing aids and re-distributes them to eligible individuals at a cost of \$30. This recycling project will provide an alternative way for North Dakotans to obtain hearing aids while providing donors an opportunity to help someone else.

The ND AT Info-Line is now seeking donations of used hearing aids from people within North Dakota. All donations of used hearing aids are tax deductible. If you have hearing aids that you would consider donating, please remove the batteries and send them to: North Dakota AT Info-Line, 900 E Broadway Box 5510, Bismarck, ND 58506-5510. For information on applying for recycled hearing aids or for further information on donating aids, please call or e-mail the AT [Help Line](#) at 1-800-472-2911.

Assigning Mouse Movements to the Keypad

Are you looking for a way to control mouse functions from the computer keyboard? For the user with movement, cognitive or visual limitations, the mouse can be a formidable barrier to effective computer use. One

alternative to the conventional mouse is to use the numeric keypad as a mouse. This "keypad mouse" is particularly useful for an individual who is able to access the conventional keyboard successfully but cannot use conventional or alternative mice.

Today, most computer keyboards include a numeric keypad (Figure A) with the digits from 1 to 9 arranged in a square with other keys around the edges. This same key arrangement can be used to control mouse movements and at no cost to most computer users (e.g., through Easy Access on the Macintosh, Access DOS for MS-DOS users, and Accessibility Options for Windows users).

When using the numeric keypad as a mouse, most keypads designate the key located in the '5' position as the mouse click, and the number keys around the '5' position as the mouse movement keys. Each number pressed causes the mouse pointer on the monitor screen to move in the direction that corresponds to the direction of the depressed key from the '5' position (Figure B). Thus, the key in the '7' position moves the mouse up and to the left on the computer screen. The key in the '6' position moves the mouse directly to the right, and so forth. The remaining perimeter buttons allow for the execution of the other standard mouse functions including; double-click, click and drag, left button, right button, both buttons and drop. The locations of these mouse function keys vary from keypad to keypad, and are frequently printed on each key for easy reference. So remember, when the keyboard is a successful input device for an individual computer user, but the mouse is not - use the numeric keypad as the mouse!

A Resource Worth Recommendation

DIRECTIONS: Technology in Special Education is a monthly newsletter packed with useful and timely information. You'll find interesting columns and articles from educational and technical specialists relating to the field of assistive and instructional computer technologies. Issues are designed for parents and professionals involved in the education of youth with disabilities. To stay current, save time locating technology and spend technology dollars wisely, contact [DREAMMS for Kids](#), Inc., 2763 Tasha Drive - Clearwater, FL 32621 Voice/Fax: 813.781.7711 and order your subscription today.

Consumer Connection **Accessible Van Rentals**

Looking for an equipped, wheelchair accessible van to rent so that you can experience increased independence when traveling? *Wheelchair Getaways, Inc.*, may be able to help you. They have franchise operations

in over 85 locations in 22 states, Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico. They offer full-size, luxury vans with plush interiors, top-of-the-line wheelchair lifts or ramps, 4-point wheelchair tie-down systems with seat belts, raised roofs or lowered floors, and seating for up to four additional passengers. Some locations also rent mini-vans, and some vans are equipped with hand controls, six-way power seats and remote-controlled doors and lifts.

The franchise located closest to North Dakota residents is in Cold Spring, Minnesota, near St. Cloud. If you have the need to rent an accessible van or are interested in learning more about [Wheelchair Getaways](#), contact Jim Trueman at 217 Main Street - Cold Spring, MN 56320 or call toll-free (888) 256-5807.

Funding News

Medicare Coverage for Optical Devices: What You Need to Know

As many of you know, Medicare reimburses a range of assistive devices, referred to as "Durable Medical Equipment." Such devices include prosthetic limbs, walkers, home glucose monitors, and much more. Optical devices and equipment for vision impairment, however, are not reimbursable.

For several years, [Lighthouse International] has been collecting information on limited successes with Medicare. It is a long process, and not one for the faint-hearted. But if you won't take "no" for an answer, here are some tips for pursuing Medicare reimbursement for a closed circuit television set (CCTV) or other electronic magnification system: Obtain and file the Patient Request for Medical Payment, HCFA FORM 1490, available at any Social Security or Medicare office.

Send in the form along with a prescription for the CCTV written before the date of purchase. Be sure that your optometrist or ophthalmologist states that the CCTV serves as a prosthesis for the dysfunctional portion of your eye, and is required to assist you in reading medication information, prescriptions, and other tasks related to managing your medical needs. Include a copy of both the bill and your check or other form of payment. Send it certified mail, return receipt requested.

Be prepared for an initial rejection. You'll have to make many inquiries about the status of your claim, but it will most certainly be denied. Insist on a written denial, which is your right. You won't be able to continue the appeal process without it.

Once you've received the written denial, request reconsideration and send along the same materials. You can add new information about your eye

condition, and include a strong letter from your eye care professional. When your reconsideration request is denied, ask for a hearing. It will be granted. Do not hesitate to bring a family member, or your doctor, to help you advocate effectively. In almost all cases, you will be denied once again. But hope is in sight! Now, request a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge. This is where we've seen some success. When you are ready to take this step, call Lighthouse International at (212) 821-9567. They will share information about successful cases throughout the country.

As more Americans pursue Medicare coverage under Durable Medical Equipment regulations, the current rules will certainly be affected. Let's work together, sharing advice and information, to help change the system!

(Reprinted with permission from [Lighthouse International's](#) "SharingSolutions", Spring 99 issue)

Mark Your Calendar!

Hear What Your Missing . . .

A series of **free** workshops on hearing aids - what to expect, troubleshoot, fund and recycle. To find out more call or e-mail the AT [Info-Line](#) 888.214.2780

All workshops run from 1PM - 4:30PM

Aug. 25 James River Senior Center
Jamestown, ND

Aug. 27 Southeast Human Service Center
Fargo, ND

Aug. 30 Williston Senior Center
Williston, ND

Sept. 7 North Central Human Service Center
Minot, ND

Sept. 14 Greater Grand Forks Senior Center
Grand Forks, ND

Sept. 20 Devils Lake Senior Center
Devils Lake, ND

Sept. 27 Community Center - Enterprise Ave.
Dickinson, ND

Aug. 15 3:30PM - 5:30PM
Chautauqua Disability Festival
Oak Park - Minot, ND

Equipment Spotlight

Are you forgetting to take your meds? [Compu-Med](#) may be your answer. Comp-Med is an automated medication dispenser that enables an individual to take the right meds at the right time. An alarm sounds continuously until the pills are removed from the drawer and the drawer has been replaced. A strobe light may be used as an alarm for individuals with hearing difficulties. Compu-Med is easily programmed to dispense meds up to 4 times a day, 7 days a week. Pills are placed in a refillable tray, which is inserted into the dispenser and locked in place preventing over medication. Battery backup provides portability and auxiliary power in event of power surges and/or failure. It is available for loan through the IPAT Equipment Loan Library at 800-421-1181 and/or can be purchased form PILL ALERT (Darlene Lysne) at 701-642-9529.

Swap Shop Specials

The AT [Info-Line](#) is pleased to announce the recent donations of an electric hospital bed and a Bruno curbside lift. These items, as well as others, are for use, sale or swap. Call us at 888.214.2780 to borrow items, discover what is for sale or to donate used items in good condition.