



Hear! Hear! Vermont is a statewide coalition of organizations and individuals that have come together to advocate for comprehensive health care insurance coverage for hearing loss services and hearing aids. Hearing loss is a pervasive and serious health problem and has been associated with several negative health outcomes.

- **Mental Health:** Underdiagnosed and untreated hearing loss increases the risk for psychiatric disorders, including depression, anxiety, psychosis and cognitive impairment.
- **Dementia and Alzheimer's:** Hearing loss has been linked to an increased risk of developing dementia. The risk of developing dementia doubles for older adults with mild hearing loss, and triples for those with moderate hearing loss. And for those with severe hearing loss, the risk is five times that of someone who does not suffer hearing loss. Research has found that encouraging people to wear an effective hearing aid may help to protect their brains and reduce their risk of dementia.
- **Loneliness and Isolation:** Hearing loss is associated with increased feelings of loneliness and social isolation. Hearing loss affects one of every five people and is strongly linked to loneliness. Every decibel drop in perception in people under 70 increases the odds of becoming severely lonely by 7%.
- **Mobility:** The risk of slipping or falling is higher for people with more severe hearing loss. Research has found that people with a 25-decibel hearing loss, classified as mild, were nearly three times more likely to have a history of falling. Every additional 10-decibels of hearing loss increased the chances of falling by 1.4 fold.
- **Health Outcomes:** Hearing loss impairs access to important health and emergency communications and leads to lower health outcomes. For example, people who report they have trouble communicating have been found to have increased odds that they will be re-hospitalized.
- **Child Development:** It is well recognized that hearing is critical to speech and language development, communication, and learning. Medical research overwhelmingly shows that hearing aids are critically necessary for a child's speech, language, and brain development.

Resources – Health Impacts of Hearing Loss

- **Mental Health:**

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0749069019301041?via%3Dihub>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30457063/>

<https://www.hearwellstayvital.org/>

- **Dementia and Alzheimer's:**

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/the-hidden-risks-of-hearing-loss>

https://journals.lww.com/thehearingjournal/fulltext/2019/09000/hearing_loss_and_dementia_breakthrough_research.1.aspx

https://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/featurednews/title_725112_en.html

- **Loneliness and Isolation:**

https://journals.lww.com/thehearingjournal/fulltext/2020/05000/social_isolation_loneliness_and_hearing_loss.16.aspx

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/the-hidden-risks-of-hearing-loss>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19322094/>

- **Mobility:**

https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing_loss_linked_to_three_fold_risk_of_falling

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28590900/>

- **Health Outcomes:**

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5435475/>

- **Child Development:**

<https://www.asha.org/siteassets/uploadedFiles/AIS-Hearing-Loss-Development-Effects.pdf>

<https://www.audiologyonline.com/releases/untreated-hearing-loss-puts-children-3565>