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Hearing Healthcare News Written for the Most Trusted Physicians in Toronto & Mississauga by Smiles From Ear to Hear.



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## [Continued] Apple's "Hearing Aid Mode" What We Learned from Their World Wide Developers Conference

Written by Demetra Valente



The last time I wrote to you, I shared details of the rumours that were circulating about Apple launching "Hearing Aid Mode" as part of their iOS 18 announcement.

They originated when Mark Gurman (Chief Correspondent of Bloomberg), who has a track record and reputation for sharing Apple insights, predicted that Apple was set to introduce a new feature that would allow their users to use their Apple AirPods (the best-selling earphones on the market) as hearing devices.

Three days prior to the event, he tweeted once again to confirm



what Apple was planning to announce, with "AirPods Hearing Aid Details" being a key thing on his list.

### So, What Happened?

On June 10, Apple held their World Wide Developers Conference to share their plans for the future and make a number of big announcements.

In typical Apple style, they knocked it out of the park and shared a variety of updates, with their biggest being their "Apple Intelligence," which will give iPhone users very powerful AI in their pockets.

However, there was no mention of "Hearing Aid Mode." Instead, they introduced two other features for the hard of hearing:

- The first was a new "Voice Isolation Feature" for minimizing background noise – currently focused on cutting out wind/background noise while on calls using your AirPods and their active noise-cancellation features.
- The second was a feature solely for the hard of hearing called "Music Haptics" that plays taps, textures, and refined vibrations in sync with audio of music to offer a unique way to experience music.

It's left us all wondering what will happen next.

Out of Mark Gurman's predictions, five of six were correct, with "Hearing Aid Mode" the only omission.

With there rarely being smoke without fire, and Mark Gurman not making any "Hearing Aid Mode"-related comments following the conference, this now has us wondering what is going to happen next.

- Did the announcement get delayed?
- Are they planning to instead announce this with their new Apple AirPods 3 (expected in Q1 of 2024)?
- Was the prediction incorrect and not going to happen?

Only time will tell, but our promise is to keep you updated to ensure you're always on hand with the latest information to support your patients.

Please remember that if you have any questions or need any help, then we're here!

# The Future of Hearing Care

## The Big Change Over the Next Several Years

There has been a growing trend in the hearing care industry that we have been closely monitoring.

That is the large amount of consolidation. Essentially, it's small players being acquired and rolled up into larger companies.

We see it many other industries:

- Smaller manufacturing shops are being gobbled up to make big ones.
- Local family-owned banks are being acquired by larger national banks.
- Independent pharmacies are being acquired by larger groups.

And it certainly isn't skipping the hearing care industry.

One of the major players acquiring practices in the US is Amplifon (with their consumer-focused name being MiracleEar).

Amplifon indicated intentions towards making acquisitions to boost its revenue in the North American market in their report from March 1, 2023, raising €300 million in a Post-IPO Debt round on August 18, 2023, to be used to fund acquisitions.

Since then, they have aggressively acquired practices across the US and Canada, with 75 locations acquired in Q1 of 2024 alone, resulting in them having 400 points of sale across the North American market, and growing.

### What Does That Mean for the Industry?

As we see it, the hearing care industry is going through a lot of change.

Traditionally, the options for a patient have been two practices that are somewhat similar, with some slight differences.

Yet with nearly every town in the country likely to have a large chain in their area over the next several years, there is going to be more of a split between working with a national brand and an independent practice.

This will result in the patient having two very different options:

- One will deliver a predictable, process-led experience that is more focused on the hearing aid.
- The other will deliver a high-touch experience focused on hearing healthcare.

Both certainly have a place in the market. However, our experience having helped thousands of people to achieve better hearing teaches us that people need much more than a set of hearing aids to achieve a lifetime of better hearing.

They need a great hearing care provider who understands that the hearing device plays only a small role in the process of achieving better hearing, as well as a meticulous treatment plan that has helped thousands of others to achieve the outcome that the patient is looking for.

As a local trusted physician, it's likely that you'll have patients asking you for the differences between working with an independent practice like us and a large national chain.

As somebody who understands the value of passion-focused care, we hope that you'll continue to advise patients to make the right decisions for their long-term hearing health.

### Who are Smiles From Ear to Hear?

Our reputation is built on a heartfelt, family-focused approach that nurtures your overall health and wellness. Our compassionate team is devoted to helping you achieve optimal wellbeing through personalized solutions crafted just for you. Your journey with us begins with our signature '360 Wellness Examination'—a thorough, multi-point evaluation ensuring a holistic treatment plan tailored to your needs.



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