



Limited Access to Audiology Services in Florida Assisted Living Communities

BACKGROUND

Florida has the highest percentage of older adults in the United States, and over 631,000 of these individuals have a hearing-related disability.¹ Hearing loss can be effectively treated with audiology services, but estimates suggest that about 40% of older adults are not utilizing these services.² This presents a serious issue as untreated hearing loss can lead to increased risk of isolation, cognitive decline, and falls.³ It is therefore essential to provide audiology services throughout Florida, particularly in the 3,070 assisted living communities (ALC) that are home to more than 100,000 residents.⁴ Currently, there is no state policy that r

diagnose and supply hearing aids to a greater number of patients over a greater distance. By implementing tele-audiology into their practices, audiologists would be able to expand their services to treat hearing loss in additional counties in Florida. Policy makers should consider promoting the benefits of audiology services and providing incentives for audiology clinics to expand to underserved areas of Florida.

REFERENCES

1. State of Florida Department of Elderly Affairs (2018). *Profile of Older Floridians*. Retrieved from: http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/pubs/stats/County_2018_projections/Counties/Florida.pdf
2. Blazer, D., Domnitz, S., & Liverman C. (2016) Hearing health care services: Improving access and quality. *Hearing health care for adults: Priorities for improving access and affordability*. Washington D.C.: National Academies Press.
3. Arnold, M., Hyer, K., Small, B., Chisolm, T., Saunders, G., McEvoy, C., ... Bainbridge, K. (2019) Hearing ae2.293aTw -14.4 G.Tf09 (. A)0.90

Table 1. The Number of ALCs and Audiology Clinics by County in Florida.

County	Number of ALCs	Number of Audiology Clinics	Number of ALCs w/ Audiology	Population, 2018
Alachua	12	1	1	35,866
Baker	1	0	0	3,807
Bay	12	1	1	30,643
Bradford				

Martin	18	3	
--------	----	---	--