

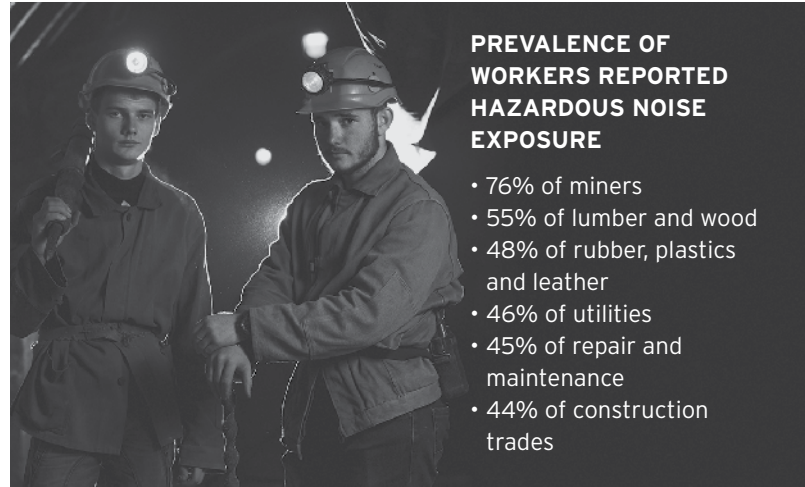
MANAGING COST OVER THE LIFE OF A WORK COMP HEARING LOSS CLAIM

Occupation Hearing Loss is one of the most common U.S. Work-Related Illness, **costing an estimated \$242 Million** in Workers' Compensation annually.

Advancements in hearing aid technology present claims professionals with the challenge of meeting the need of the injured worker, while also controlling costs. For example, advancements in technology have resulted in a wide range of accessories that can radically reduce the effects of a hearing loss disability, but are they medically necessary, and is workers' compensation obligated to provide top-of-the-line equipment? The advancements in technology are astounding. For example, hearing aids now come with rechargeable batteries, Smartphone connectivity, Re-Sound Assist, Own Voice Processing, Health and wellness monitors, fall detectors, language translation, Cochlear implant communication, Bluetooth technology, and wireless earbuds. Of course, all of this comes at a price and determining whether these accessories are medically necessary can be extremely challenging.

Hearing Aids are replaced approximately every 5 to 6 years when maintained and cared for. It is common to pay out on hearing loss claims for over 40 years. Retail quotes for hearing aids average \$6,200. If a hearing loss claim receives 6 new hearing aids over 40 years, that's \$37,200, an amount of spend worth controlling. Under a good management strategy that number can be reduced to \$25,000. A savings of over \$12,200 on just the hearing aids, further savings can be obtained on supplies and services as part of a total management strategy.

As with most medical services without a fee schedule, abuse and physician manipulation are common, especially in areas near an employer with known claims. Carlisle Medical has a solution to save money, not just on the individual purchase, but a total solution for the life of the claim.



PREVALENCE OF WORKERS REPORTED HAZARDOUS NOISE EXPOSURE

- 76% of miners
- 55% of lumber and wood
- 48% of rubber, plastics and leather
- 46% of utilities
- 45% of repair and maintenance
- 44% of construction trades

More than 20,000 workplace hearing loss cases occur annually, many resulting in permanent hearing loss. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

An estimated 24% of hearing loss in the United States has been attributed to workplace exposure, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The main component of cost containment is purchasing the hearing aids through a DME Network Provider like Carlisle Medical. Not only are we able to obtain savings on the purchase of new devices, utilizing Carlisle Medical for all hearing aids and accessories provides us full access to the hearing aids history. We can report on their performance, how many repairs they have had, and what was done during those repairs. If that audiologist says the patient needs new hearing aids at year 3 or 4, we will pull our manufacturer reports and help the adjuster not just justify their decision, but also to make the right decision so money is being spent only when necessary.

The second component is our supplies management program. Hearing aid supplies, like domes and wax guards, are commonly used items and easily resold or shared with friends or family. As part of Carlisle Medical's Hearing's supply and service program we monitor consumption for abuse. Our program provides a reduced cost to the payor, ship to door convenience for patients, consumption monitoring, and abuse prevention.

Carlisle Medical is prepared to assist with **Hearing Aid & Supplies**. Please call today at **1-800-553-1783** or visit our website to learn more about our service offering.

SOURCES:

Work Related Hearing Loss Statistics: <https://www.cdc.gov/features/worker-hearing-loss/index.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/noise/default.html>