

## Press Releases



# OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CONNECTICUT

05/10/2021

## Attorney General Tong, DCP Commissioner Seagull Warn Connecticut Consumers to be Wary of Companies Selling Over the Counter Hearing Aids

(Hartford, CT)—Attorney General William Tong is asking Connecticut consumers to be wary of companies selling potentially faulty and unregulated over-counter-hearing aids.

Connecticut law has long required that hearing aids may only be sold by licensed audiologists or hearing instrument specialists. In 2017, the Food and Drug Administration relaxed regulations on the sales of hearing aids and companies began developing hearing aids that could be sold over the counter, without consulting a medical professional. Medically approved hearing aids are expensive, often costing several thousand dollars for a single earpiece.

The FDA has yet to approve any over-the-counter hearing aids for sale to consumers. Yet some hearing devices have been marketed as a FDA “registered” or “cleared” solution for mild to moderate hearing loss at a more affordable price. While some might work as advertised, others may be faulty or completely inadequate for treating hearing loss.

“Although an over-the-counter medical device might be less expensive, it doesn’t mean it will be effective,” **Attorney General Tong said**. “If you are looking into such hearing devices, please do your homework to make sure the device actually works and fits your specific needs before spending money on a product that might be worthless.”

“Just like any purchase, make sure to read the fine print closely,” **said DCP Commissioner Michelle H. Seagull**. “Shop around, do your research, read reviews, consult with a medical professional, and be sure you know the return policy. These are all steps that can help prevent you from wasting money on a device that doesn’t work as advertised.”

Here are some tips to remember if you are shopping for hearing aids:

- The FDA has not approved any over-the-counter hearing devices. Over-the-counter, direct-to-consumer, hearing aids are not regulated and because of this, may work poorly or not at all and could be harmful.

- Research the seller with the Better Business Bureau to see if they have a good rating before you purchase the product.
- Be skeptical of online reviews and endorsements.
- Read the purchase policy carefully. Can you get a refund if they don't work? How long do you have to make a return if necessary?
- If you can, get a health screening and discuss your options with a medical professional. They will be able to tell you exactly what kind of hearing device would work for you and make recommendations.
- Always remember: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

If you believe you have been the victim of a scam or have been contacted by a scammer, contact the Office of the Attorney General at 860-808-5318 or [attorney.general@ct.gov](mailto:attorney.general@ct.gov).