

Carr Advises Caution When Choosing Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids

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ATLANTA, GA – Attorney General Chris Carr is warning Georgia consumers that a number of sellers of over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids are making deceptive and misleading claims about the safety and effectiveness of their products.

“When it comes to your health, cheaper is not always better,” cautions Attorney General Chris Carr. “We urge consumers to carefully evaluate the companies they do business with so that they don’t compromise their health or get scammed out of their money.”

Since medically-approved hearing aids are costly and not covered by Medicare, sellers of OTC hearing aids have been able to appeal to consumers—especially seniors—by offering OTC devices at more affordable prices. However, many of these so-called hearing aids are nothing more than inferior sound amplifiers. Too often, this leaves consumers with useless products for which they are unable to get refunds.

While Congress legalized the sale of OTC hearing aids in 2017, *there are currently no OTC hearing aids that have received FDA approval*. Unfortunately, this has not stopped some disreputable sellers of OTC hearing devices from falsely claiming that their products are “FDA-registered” or “FDA-cleared.” Consumers should also be aware that with the current lack of labelling requirements, sellers of OTC hearing devices are not obligated to inform consumers that their products are not intended for adults with severe hearing loss or for children and could potentially lead to serious and unnecessary health risks if used by these consumers.

The Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division offers the following tips to those considering the purchase of a hearing aid:

Have your hearing evaluated by a medical professional, such as an ear, nose and throat specialist (otolaryngologist), ear specialist (otologist) or any licensed physician. These professionals can inform you of proper hearing aid usage and any associated risks, as well as screen you for underlying conditions that may be contributing to hearing loss and which need to be addressed.

Have your hearing aid fitted by a specialist, such as an audiologist, medical doctor or hearing aid dispenser.

Check the Better Business Bureau’s website (bbb.org) to see if the hearing aid seller has a good rating and whether consumers have submitted complaints against the company.

Get all terms in writing, including what is covered in the price, extra charges, warranties and refund policies.

Stay up-to-date on hearing aid regulations by visiting the [FDA’s website](http://www.fda.gov).