



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hearing Impaired Now “In the Loop” At Virginia Mason *Looping technology installed at Volney Richmond Auditorium*

SEATTLE (Feb. 14, 2012) – Take a look around the next time you go to a movie, attend a concert, or go to the mall. Chances are 1 in every 10 people you see is hearing impaired – with diminished hearing so severe that it affects their daily life. Among people over age 60, the number is a staggering 30 percent. When everyone else is tuned in, they are tuned out of what is being said.

Now thanks to a technology installed at Virginia Mason’s Volney Richmond Auditorium, almost anyone that uses a hearing aid will be back in the loop. It is called an audio-frequency induction loop system (AFILs), or hearing “loop” for short. A loop of cable is installed in the walls of a room or building. It transmits audio signals using a magnetic field. The signal is picked up by special “telecoils” that are standard in about 70 percent of the hearing aids in use today. The loop broadcasts sound through these coils directly to the listener’s ear.

“As a health care organization, we need to be diligent in removing barriers for our patients and our community,” said Sarah Patterson, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Virginia Mason Medical Center. “Our audiology staff made us aware of the benefit of adding a hearing loop as we were making other improvements to the auditorium. If the response among those who use hearing aids is positive, we will consider how we can expand its use in our facilities.”

“We were thrilled to learn that Virginia Mason was installing looping technology,” said Cheri Perazzoli, director of advocacy for the Hearing Loss Association of Washington. “Hearing loss is the most prevalent medical condition in our society and it affects people of every age. This is a tremendous gift to our community and those who struggle to hear.”

Volney Richmond Auditorium is located on Level 1 of the Lindeman Pavilion at Virginia Mason’s downtown campus and is now one of fewer than 25 facilities in the Puget Sound area equipped with hearing loop technology, including more than a dozen churches, Central Theater and The Hearthstone. Additional information about hearing loops and a list of equipped facilities can be found at www.loopseattle.org.

When not in use for Virginia Mason events, Volney Richmond Auditorium is available for community use at no charge, based on availability. Interested groups may contact Virginia Mason room scheduling at (206) 583-6053 for additional information.

About Virginia Mason Medical Center

Virginia Mason Medical Center, founded in 1920, is a nonprofit comprehensive regional health care system in Seattle that combines a primary and specialty care group practice of more than 440 physicians with a 336-bed acute-care hospital. Virginia Mason operates a network of clinics throughout the Puget Sound area, and Bailey-Boushay House, a skilled-nursing facility and chronic care management program for people with HIV/AIDS. The medical center is affiliated with Benaroya Research Institute at Virginia Mason, internationally recognized in autoimmune disease research. Virginia Mason is known for applying manufacturing principles to health care to improve quality and patient safety. Awards and distinctions include Top Hospital of the Decade by The Leapfrog Group; 2012 Top Hospital (for the sixth consecutive year) by The Leapfrog Group; 2012 Distinguished Hospital for Clinical Excellence from HealthGrades®; 2012 America's 100 Best Specialty Excellence Award for Overall Cardiac and Gastrointestinal Care from HealthGrades.

To learn more about Virginia Mason Medical Center, please visit VirginiaMason.org or [Facebook.com/VMcares](https://www.facebook.com/VMcares) or follow @VirginiaMason on Twitter.

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