



Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

News *Release*
www.dshs.wa.gov

DECEMBER. 6, 2012

NO. 012-055

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[Kathy Spears](#), Public Affairs, 360-902-7893

[Eric Raff](#), ODHHS Director, 360-915-5835

Technology available to assist DSHS clients with hearing loss

OLYMPIA – Deaf and hard of hearing clients seeking services at the Department of Social and Health Services' Community Services Offices in Tumwater and Tacoma can now use assistive technologies that send auditory signals directly to hearing aids or Cochlear Implants and that better amplify sound while diminishing background noise.

The Department began pilot projects at the Tumwater CSO, 6868 Capital Blvd., and at the South Pierce CSO, 1301 E. 72st St., Tacoma.

“Hard-of-hearing constituents face communication barriers in their daily interactions. The technology will pave the way to heighten awareness that the communication needs of hard-of-hearing clients are vastly different from deaf clients using American Sign Language interpreters,” said Eric Raff, director of the DSHS Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

“Providing assistive listening systems in our offices is one strategy in closing the gap and ensuring effective communication is happening with our hard-of-hearing customers.”

The Loop System consists of a magnetic induction loop that sends an auditory signal to clients' hearing aids or implants that have telecoil. The Counter Loop works with a desktop microphone. It greatly enhances a hearing aid or Cochlear Implant user's ability to hear in an environment with background noise.

Additionally, there is a receiver with headphones that can be used with or without the hearing aids or implants for any clients who can benefit from amplified sound.

Under the ADA Title II, state and local government must ensure effective communication with people with disabilities. Where necessary to ensure that communications with individuals with hearing, vision or speech impairments are as effective as communications with others, the public entity must provide appropriate auxiliary aids.

###

DSHS does not discriminate and provides equal access to its programs and services for all persons without regard to race, color, gender, religion, creed, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, age, veteran's status or the presence of any physical, sensory or mental disability.