

Q&A:  
SO Program partnership with Starkey Cares

- 1. Once an SO Program decides on a tier level, does activation start right away?**
  - SILVER - SO Program partners with Starkey Cares to offer hearing aids and cerumen management onsite during Healthy Hearing screenings (notice must be given by Program 8 weeks prior to event).
  - BRONZE - SO Program directly refer athletes from Healthy Hearing screenings to Starkey locations for hearing aid fittings offsite. SOI will provide referral list and instructions 4-6 weeks prior to event.
  
- 2. Do we have to activate Starkey Cares at each HH event and how do we let you know?**
  - Yes, once you have submitted your equipment request, please make sure to also activate Starkey Cares for each event by completing the "SONA Healthy Hearing & Starkey Cares Partnership Activation" smartsheet located on HH Resource Page.
  
- 3. How is communication managed between CDs vs Program Health Contact vs Starkey Cares?**
  - Clinical Directors should engage with their SO Program Health Contact and not directly with Starkey Cares.
  - Programs must opt into Starkey Cares activation (Silver or Bronze Tier) using the Smartsheet.
  - Once opted in, the SOI HH Team will initiate a connection between the Program and a Starkey Cares Point of Contact (POC) in your state. The Program then leads communication with their POC.
  
- 4. How do we go about accessing a list of Starkey Cares local providers?**
  - You will be connected to a Starkey Cares POC in your state, who will be the liaison between your Program and local Starkey Cares providers and locations.
  
- 5. How does the referral process work?**
  - To be determined once we initiate the activation. Once the activation begins, you will know exactly how many locations and where these locations are for referral generation.
  
- 6. What if an athlete reaches out with concerns about their hearing aids?**
  - When athletes need referral to Starkey location (e.g., repair a broken hearing aid, something does not sound right). SO Program staff should contact the 1-800 number provided for Starkey Cares, to identify the local-most provider to serve that athlete.
  
- 7. What type of practitioners are coming from Starkey Cares?**
  - Audiologists and Hearing Aid Specialists are typically what is expected.

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- 8. Will the SO Program receive reports from Starkey Cares on the number of athletes using services (i.e., referral follow-up) and how often?**
  - Program will receive this information on January 15 and July 15 for Single Health Evaluation reporting.
  
- 9. How many Starkey Cares providers come to a HH event to support the screening?**
  - This depends on the number of athletes attending the event and whether hearing aid fittings will occur onsite (Silver Tier). Programs should work with their Starkey Cares POC to determine the most appropriate number of volunteers.
  
- 10. Will Starkey Cares provide volunteers to help with HH stations outside of their own stations?**
  - If your Program needs assistance with volunteers, your Starkey Cares POC can attempt to support your recruitment efforts with audiologists and hearing health professionals who can assist as volunteers at any of the HH stations. This is not a guarantee.
  
- 11. In the joint protocol, where will Starkey Cares be activated as clinical volunteers for Silver Tier?**
  - Cerumen Management Station
  - All of Starkey Cares fitting stations. Starkey Cares will be responsible for staffing their stations with providers/volunteers and providing all necessary equipment for their space.
  
- 12. If we have activation on site, does the SO Program have to order Starkey Cares equipment?**
  - If your program is activating Starkey Cares at a HH event, you do not need to order any extra equipment or supplies, they will provide their own. Program will need to order extra tables and chairs to accommodate SC stations.
  - This also does not change the process for ordering equipment for HH; you will still request equipment and supplies through the PNF and equipment will be loaned to your Program by SOI. Any supplies that your Program orders from Henry Schein, will still need to be ordered through the Henry Schein portal.
  
- 13. Can Starkey Cares assist us with cerumen management?**
  - Cerumen management can be performed by Starkey Cares at Silver Tier.

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- 14. Does Starkey Cares require that only they complete cerumen management if other outside volunteers are present to complete the task? (i.e. physician volunteers)**
  - Starkey Cares does not require anything surrounding that and if present, will lead cerumen management in collaboration with other volunteers who are licensed and able to perform the service in the state.
  
- 15. How much space is needed for Starkey Cares to fit hearing aids at a HH event?**
  - This is flexible, but the ideal scenario would be 25% more space for full a hearing aid fitting area that consists of five extra stations. However, Starkey Cares will work with whatever space is made available to them.
  
- 16. How much more time might hearing aid fittings add to the screening process?**
  - 45 minutes total time (includes real-ear measures, earmold impressions, hearing aid fitting, education and counseling, and Bluetooth pairing).
  
- 17. With the extra time needed, should the HH screenings take place during the day of competition or on another day?**
  - This is up to the SO Program to decide and should be planned based on the competition schedule, meals, and transportation, to maximize athletes' ability to attend screenings.
  
- 18. Can we require that Real-Ear Measures be completed on all athletes?**
  - At this time, if the equipment is available, either through Starkey Cares or the program, REM can be completed on all athletes fit with hearing aids.
  
- 19. Are sound booths now required for screening?**
  - If your SO Program has access to sound booths that you are interested in using, you are welcome to, but it is not a requirement of the protocol.
  
- 20. Will Starkey Cares cover those who are not SO athletes or Unified Partners?**
  - Referrals or hearing aid fittings are primarily for SO athletes and Unified Partners. If a coach is in need, Starkey Cares is willing to also assist/support them. In a scenario when volume constraints are there, we prioritize SO athletes and Unified Partners in that order.

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#### **21. Do we now have to include Starkey Cares logo on our t-shirts and banners?**

- Yes, all branding has been updated to include the Starkey Cares logo, and this will be available on the [Healthy Hearing Branding Resources Page](#). Programs should transition from using old branding to updated branding within the first year, and all newly printed materials should immediately include updated branding.
- Any funding for rebranding items (including banners, t-shirts, CD polos) can be included in the HA grant applications, which open twice a year.
- SOI has horizontal banners for US Programs (1 per discipline) that can be distributed to your Program at no cost.

#### **22. Do our updated materials only need to be utilized at HH events where Starkey Cares is present onsite or do all HH banners and shirts need to be updated?**

- Because Starkey Cares supports all HH events through subgrant funding, whether they are present or not, all branded materials must include the Starkey Cares logo.

#### **23. Do Starkey Cares cover their own travel costs if attending a HH event?**

- Yes. Your local Starkey Cares POC will manage the Starkey Cares volunteers, including their travel, who will attend a HH event.

#### **24. Can athletes still receive giveaway items donated by other hearing aid and cochlear manufacturers?**

- Given that our partnership is solely with Starkey Cares, athletes cannot receive giveaway items from any other company outside of Starkey Cares.

#### **25. Who is counseling the parent/guardian, the coach, the athlete etc. on the hearing aids?**

- Starkey Cares is prepared to provide follow-up counseling to all athletes and guardians that are fitted or referrals. Athletes (who can consent for themselves) or guardians can refuse fittings if it is not something they are comfortable with.
- This counseling will be provided via handouts and direct follow-up contact (phone (preferred), email, mail, etc.) with every athlete fitted or referred and their caregivers.
- Counseling is also provided during Silver Tier event.

#### **26. How frequently are athletes able to get hearing aids (each year, every other year, etc.)?**

- Currently, this is based on need and there have not been limitations set around the frequency! If an athlete is in need, they are eligible.

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**27. Does Starkey Cares have a plan for ensuring follow up? Will they reach out to the athlete (family/guardian) once? More than once if they don't respond?**

- Starkey Cares will follow up with athlete at 2-4-8 week intervals to follow up on service and ensure satisfaction.
- State local provider, where athlete was referred, will also contact the athlete and have them come in every six months minimum for cleaning and tune up.

**28. Is there a Medical Clearance waiver that can be used for those that need hearing aids?**

- Legal has drafted a Hearing Aid Medical Clearance and Hearing Aid Medical Waiver template for Programs to use.
- Programs and Starkey Cares to follow FDA guidelines when fitting hearing aids.
- It is the responsibility of the Program and Clinical Director to be aware of state regulations regarding waivers and what is required for hearing aid fittings.

**29. Is additional insurance coverage required?**

- No. Special Olympics expects that the [Hold Harmless Agreement](#) be utilized at program level for volunteers, to include Starkey Cares, when they are onsite at a Healthy Hearing event. This is all that is required.

**30. Will Starkey Cares providers be licensed in the state?**

- Yes, all Starkey Cares providers will be licensed in the state where the event is taking place.

**31. Who is responsible for understanding state regulations?**

- It is the responsibility of the Healthy Hearing Clinical Director, Program Health Staff, and Starkey Cares partner to understand their state requirements for hearing aid fittings and cerumen removal.
- If a program is unsure about their state guidance, please send an email to [healthyhearing@specialolympics.org](mailto:healthyhearing@specialolympics.org) or reach out to your state audiology board or national board (e.g. ASHA, AAA, ABA).

**32. If activating Silver Tier, will the Program be able to meet the Starkey Cares team prior to the event?**

- Yes, a meeting will be held at least three weeks prior to the event which will include SO Healthy Hearing Discipline Manager, SO Program, Starkey Cares state team, as well as clinical director from Starkey HQ, to discuss logistics, guidelines, expectations, venue lay-out, event details, etc. Meeting is generally an hour long.