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- [Obituaries](#)
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- [Today's Ads](#)
- [Submit Ad](#)
- [Legal Notices2](#)

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- [Gardening](#)
- [Helen Hollyer](#)
- [It Happened in Oregon](#)
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- [Real Estate](#)
- [The Great Outdoors](#)

## Implantable Device: Beyond Hearing Aids

**Published: April 9, 2007**

(NAPSI)-There's encouraging news for the estimated 31.5 million Americans who suffer from hearing loss. A new kind of hearing device has shown significant improvement over hearing aids in listening situations such as enjoyment of music, movies, television and background noise.



### About Hearing Loss

The most common form of hearing loss is sensorineural, which affects an estimated 60 percent of those with hearing loss. This involves damage to the inner ear caused by aging, prenatal and birth-related problems, viral and bacterial infections, heredity, trauma, and exposure to loud noise, as well as a significant number of unknown reasons.

Research has shown that only one out of five people who could benefit from a hearing aid actually wears one. Yet for those with hearing loss who do use hearing aids, more than nine out of 10 (93 percent) indicate that their quality of life has been positively impacted by their hearing instrument usage at least "some of the time."

The Vibrant Soundbridge® is the first FDA-approved, implantable, middle-ear hearing device to treat sensorineural hearing loss. A proven, safe and effective treatment that leaves

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- [Engagements,](#)
- [Anniv.](#)

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- [Crescendo Sports](#)
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- [School Calendar](#)
- [Schools](#)
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- [Sports Results](#)
- [Submit a Sports Score](#)

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- [Announcements](#)

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the ear canal completely open, it is indicated for use in adults who have moderate-to-severe sensorineural hearing loss and who have been unsuccessful with or are medically unable to wear hearing aids.

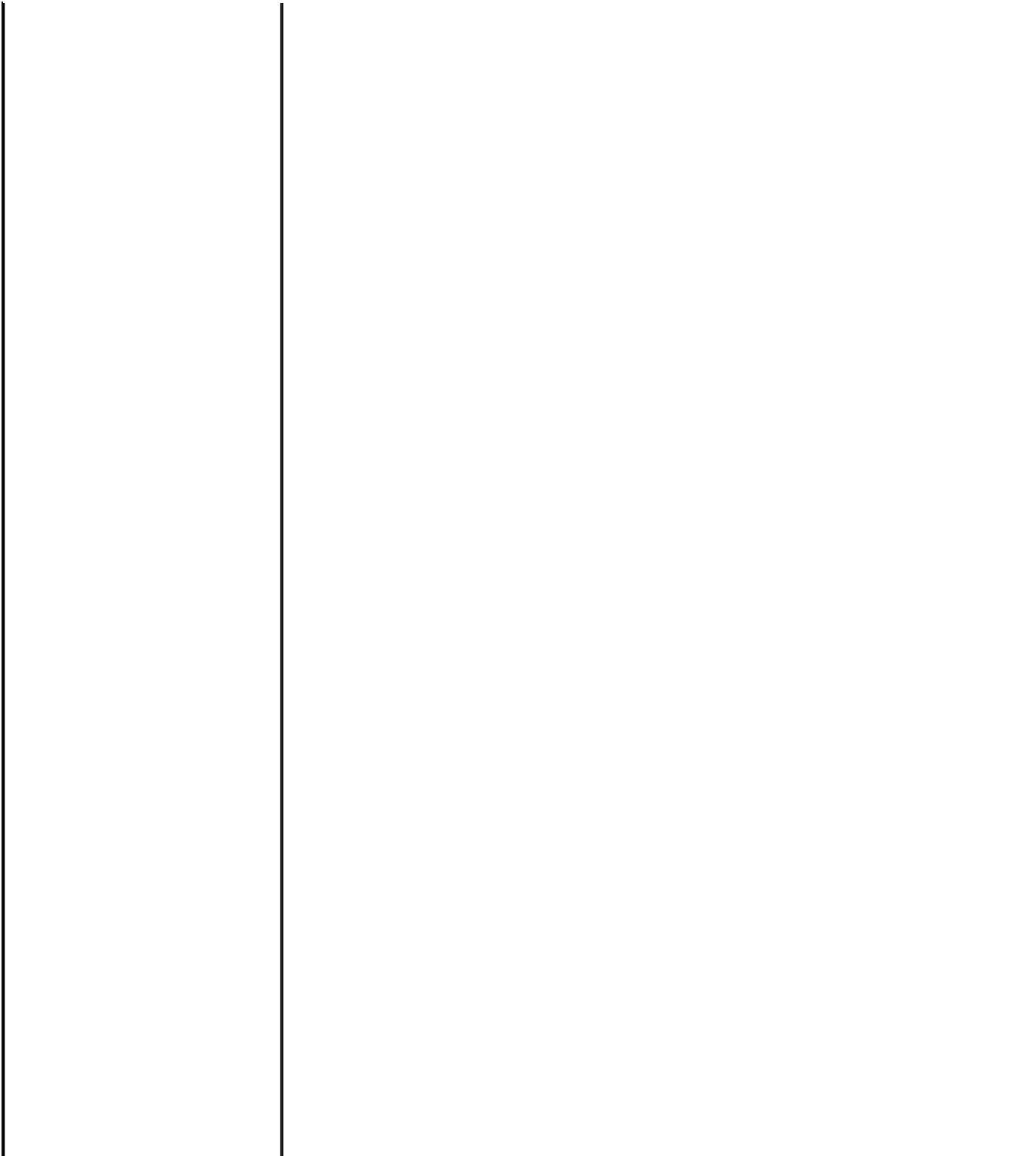
Users of the Soundbridge reported improved sound clarity, better fit and comfort, increased gain (loudness of sound) and fewer maintenance issues than they experienced with hearing aids.

"The Soundbridge overcomes inconveniences of traditional in-the-ear hearing aids, such as distortion and ear canal irritation," said Fredrick Lassen, M.D., of the Lakeview Medical Center in Suffolk, Va. "A lot of people with hearing loss, particularly gradual-onset hearing loss, don't understand all of the options available to them. It's exciting to be able to discuss this option with patients who are dissatisfied with their conventional hearing aid."

The product utilizes hearing technology that directly drives the ossicular chain (middle ear bones), bypassing the ear canal and tympanic membrane (eardrum). Unlike a hearing aid, which simply amplifies sound, the Soundbridge is a direct-drive prosthetic, which mechanically vibrates the bones in the middle ear without surgically altering the structures of the middle ear or blocking the ear canal.

For more information, visit [www.medel.com](http://www.medel.com).

For people with hearing loss, there are now alternatives to traditional hearing aids.



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