

# ◀ Hear's the News ▶

The Official Newsletter of the Iowa Hearing Association

Winter 2023



## **IHA Spring Conference**

April 28, 2023  
West Des Moines Marriott  
West Des Moines, IA

## **AAA Conference**

April 19-22, 2023  
Seattle, WA

## **IHS Convention**

September 28 - 30, 2023  
Palm Springs, CA

## **IHA Fall Conference**

Sept. 29, 2023  
Sheraton  
West Des Moines, IA

*Mark your  
calendars now  
and plan to attend*

## **From the President's Pen**

I hope you all had safe and enjoyable holidays with your loved ones, and had a few days to "Reboot" and get your personal and professional plans and goals in place for 2023, if you hadn't already. It's an exciting time to be in this great industry.

I wanted to share with you all some industry information and statistics as well as some personal thoughts on trends we are seeing. OK, first let's talk about last year. For some of you, you're feeling a little blah about your growth in 2022, and understandably so. Q1 of 2022 saw an increase of 7.8% in units, Q2 was down 0.6% and Q3 was down by 0.8%. I don't have data for Q4 yet. So most of us fell into that flat area. If you saw substantial growth, you were an exception of the industry and should be proud of your accomplishment.

But here's what you're competing against. In 2021 we experienced a huge spike in pent up demand post-pandemic. Iowa was one of 15 states that saw greater than 15% unit growth over 2020. Nationwide, unit sales were up 36.6% in 2021 and reached 4.73 million units. The estimation of units for 2022 is a very close 4.71 million units. So yes, it's easy to feel a little down, but look what you were up against.

So let's go back to pre-pandemic 2019. If you compare those numbers, Q1-Q3 of 2022, there is a 15.6% increase in units by comparison in 2022. The industry is continuing to move in the right direction despite a flat past year.

You have to ask then, did OTC impact us? Statistically and personally not at all! My business tends to trend where the industry trends and I have seen no impact what so ever in sales due to impacts of OTC. Prior to penning this, I polled my Team of 37 Hearing Specialists for what they are hearing in the field and their person perceptions of OTC. I had quite a few comments to decipher through. The message was very consistent.

When the rules opened up and it was all over every newspaper and news story, patients came in with questions, and understandably so. But with some brief conversations, they understood the value of us and the services we provide and deemed the OTC model as very skeptical in how it could possibly work. As OTC products have been out for a while, we are seeing sales because of them. People tried them, couldn't program or service them and the sound quality was poor, so they came to us for professional products, prescription fit and received quality aftercare. I can assure you this will continue.

But here's the topic and stats that are awesome to see, Baby Boomers! This group was born in the 1940-1960s. And there are 205 million of them out there. Boom! Secondly in 1946 there were 3.4 million born that year alone, the biggest year ever, and that makes them 77 years old this year, which is smack dab in the middle of our target demographics. Boom! Of that group, only 30% have tried hearing aids which means there's a huge opportunity for everyone in the industry if we approach it the right way. To do so, we must continue to exhibit our high level of professionalism, and most importantly, the human element of what we do to show how much we CARE!

Cory Popelka, BC-HIS  
IHA President



## Silent Auction at Spring Conference

Once again IHA will sponsor a silent auction at our Spring Conference. We ask members, venders, and manufacturers to donate items for the silent auction.

Need ideas? Items donated last year included hearing aids, a hearing aid cleaner, gift baskets, gift cards, a portable hearing loop, one night at a national chain hotel, a national conference package with free registration and much, much more.



Participants enjoyed this event and bids and donations brought our association revenues. The Silent Auction event was a success and will be a part of the 2023 Spring Conference.

Plan ahead! It's not too early to start considering what you may want to submit to the silent auction this year. For more information call the IHA office at 515-440-6057 or email [apmsthomas@aol.com](mailto:apmsthomas@aol.com).

### *Welcome New Members*

**Amanda Bagby**  
Bettendorf, IA

**Noah Garcia**  
Mason City, IA

**Christopher Lorey**  
Clive, IA

**Adam Caviness**  
Sioux Center, IA

**Raquel Green**  
North Liberty, IA

**Sheleigh Metzger**  
Davenport, IA



**Christian Hunt**  
Omaha, NE

**Jorge Suarez**  
North Sioux City, SD

### Receive Benefits of 2023 Dues

Please remember to send in your IHA 2023 dues if you have not done so. The membership directory will be published in May and sent out through email.

IHA members receive discounted registration fees for Spring and Fall conventions.

IHA publishes a biannual newsletter and an annual membership directory. IHA also monitors the Iowa Legislature for legislation of interest to hearing health professionals.



### Mark Your Calendars Now

**IHA Spring  
Conference and  
Auction**

**April 28, 2023**

**Marriott Hotel  
West Des Moines**

## Cedar Rapids Miracle-Ear Team Traveling to Puerto Rico to Distribute Hearing Aids to Those in Need

*Cory Popelka and Laura Popelka visited Puerto Rico Nov. 28 – Dec. 3 with other Miracle-Ear leaders from around the country to give the Gift of Sound*

Cedar Rapids Miracle-Ear store owner, Cory Popelka, and hearing care professional, Laura Popelka, participated in the Miracle-Ear Foundation's first international mission trip Nov. 28 – Dec. 3 to donate 200 hearing aids and a lifetime of follow-up care to over 100 Puerto Ricans in need.

Cory Popelka and Laura Popelka will be working directly with patients on the mission to fit them for a life-changing set of hearing aids. Their participation in the trip is both an investment of time and more than a \$10,000 donation to bring the Gift of Sound to those who cannot otherwise afford it.



The Cedar Rapids Miracle-Ear already distributes the Gift of Sound to local, qualified patients through the Miracle-Ear Foundation. However, this first international mission trip will allow Cory Popelka and Laura Popelka to take that mission outside of store walls, and into a country that has been in crisis since Hurricane Maria struck in 2017.

Cory is the franchise owner of 54 Miracle-Ear locations across Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska. He and his team believe that everyone deserves the ability to hear and communicate with their loved ones, regardless of their financial situation. They were proud to represent Miracle-Ear and give the Gift of Sound on the mission trip to Puerto Rico.

According to the most recent data, over 150,000 Puerto Ricans are deaf or struggle with hearing loss. Research and data show that untreated hearing loss is linked to numerous physical and mental conditions, as well as quality-of-life issues. According to Puerto Rico Miracle-Ear franchise owner, Eugene Gomez, many Puerto Ricans cannot afford the hearing help they need. Through his relationships with medical sites and the local community, Gomez and his team have hand-selected patients who need the Gift of Sound most.

To help subsidize the costs of the trip for franchisees, the Miracle-Ear Foundation and Miracle-Ear are investing over \$1 million dollars for hearing aid technology, time and resources.

For more than 30 years, the Miracle-Ear Foundation has been dedicated to helping children and adults with hearing loss. After completing the application process, eligible individuals receive free devices and a lifetime of qualifying services. Since its founding in 1990, Miracle-Ear Foundation has donated more than 34,000 hearing aids to more than 18,000 children and adults nationwide, who could otherwise not afford them.

To help more people identify and prevent hearing loss, Miracle-Ear of Cedar Rapids offers a free hearing check at [Miracle-Ear.com](http://Miracle-Ear.com). The [Miracle-Ear Foundation](http://Miracle-Ear Foundation) also offers qualified individuals free hearing aids and a lifetime of qualifying services.

For more information about the Miracle-Ear Foundation, visit [www.miracle-earfoundation.org](http://www.miracle-earfoundation.org) or visit your local Miracle-Ear store. Community members who would like to support the Miracle-Ear Foundation's ongoing work to bring the Gift of Sound to those in need locally can also make a donation at the Cedar Rapids Miracle-Ear store or [online](#).

## Hearing Aids to Those in Need

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### About the Miracle-Ear Foundation

The Miracle-Ear Foundation has donated more than 34,000 hearing aids to more than 18,000 children and adults nationwide who could otherwise not afford them. Through the generous support of Miracle-Ear franchise owners and donors, the Foundation delivers life-changing services, bringing the gift of sound to an increasing number of people in need each year.

For more information, visit [www.miracle-earfoundation.org](http://www.miracle-earfoundation.org).

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## Here are Trends and Events to Watch for According to the Kiplinger Letter

A recession is now more likely than not. Some parts of the economy, like housing, are already in recession, and other sectors will follow. Manufacturing figures to follow the building industry, and then banking as demand for loans trends down. Services should hold up better for longer. Auto sales figure to do well even amid a general downturn. Demand is still strong, and now supply is improving.

The Federal Reserve won't slay inflation, but it'll make substantial progress, with CPI falling below 4% by the end of the year, from 7.1% in November 2022. Look for the fed funds rate to increase to a bit over 5%, from its current level of 4.25% - 4.5%.

COVID-19 won't disappear in the U.S., but it will keep fading in severity, as new mutations of the virus evade vaccines but also tend to become less virulent. Many will continue to take extra precautions against infection.

The housing market is in for a rough year, due to high mortgage rates and overall economic weakness.

U.S. oil production will return to record levels in 2023, but just barely. Petroleum inventories remain historically low and should offer some support to both prices and

### Support the Iowa Lions Hearing Aid Bank

Used hearing aids may be given  
to your local Lions Club or mailed to:

**Iowa Lions Club**  
c/o Chris Waring  
924 Dohrmann Street, Jessup, IA 50648

**All hearing aids are accepted with sincere appreciation.**  
*(Your donation may be considered a tax deduction.)*

## Licensure Renewal Questions?

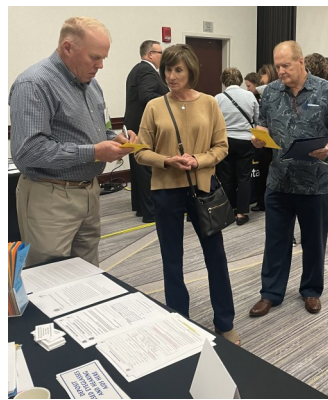
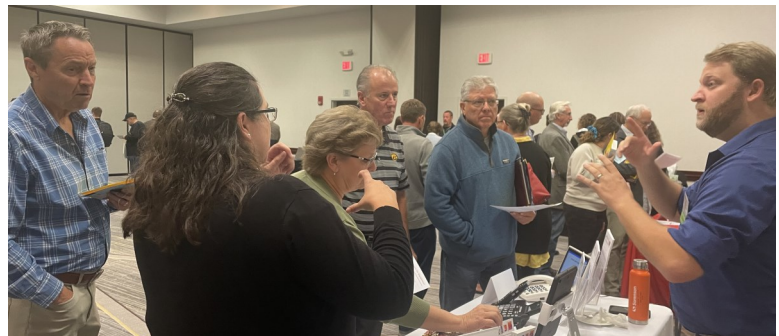
Below is an internet address to a page discussing licensure found on the Iowa Department of Public Health website.

<https://idph.iowa.gov/Licensure/Iowa-Board-of-Hearing-Aid-Specialists/Licensure/Renewal>



# IHA Fall Conference Highlights

September 23, 2022  
Sheraton Hotel, West Des Moines, IA



**IOWA HEARING ASSOCIATION**  
**DISPENSER OF THE YEAR AWARD**  
**- Nomination Form -**

*Please submit this form by April 1, 2023 to IHA Office,  
1001 Office Park Road, Suite 105, West Des Moines, IA 50265*

I wish to nominate the following person for Dispenser of the Year:

Nominee's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Business/Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Background on Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons for Nominating \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Outstanding Characteristics \_\_\_\_\_

Nomination submitted by: (Optional)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Company or Business \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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## Calibration at Spring Conference



What could be more convenient — you're not at work, and your audiometer needs to be calibrated — you attend the seminars and pick up your machine when the conference is over. Remember, you are required by the State Health Department to have your audiometers calibrated once a year. Bring your audiometers to the spring conference.

**Nominating Criteria for  
Iowa Hearing Association  
*Dispenser of the Year Award***

The Dispenser of the Year Award is designed to honor an individual who has demonstrated distinction in the field of Hearing Aid Dispensing Services, regardless of how significant that contribution might be. The following criteria outlines the categories of distinction which should be considered when nominating an individual for this award.

**Years of Service:** Nominees should have at least 5 years of distinguished service to the field of hearing aid dispensing.

**Performance:** Nominees should have distinction in the performance on the job as well as service beyond the standard requirements of the job.

**Leadership:** Nominee's accomplishments should demonstrate how their contribution is notable and deserving of recognition by the Iowa Hearing Association. Nominees should have a record of providing service to the field such as: offices held, committee memberships, teaching roles, research contribution, special projects, community involvement and exposure, ease of access for patient care, or contributions to policy or the dispensing practice. The nominee should demonstrate knowledge, a positive image and offer distinguished representation to the field as a whole.

**Standing:** A nominee must hold an Iowa Hearing Aid License and should be a member in good standing of the Iowa Hearing Association. If applicable, Nominees should encourage their staff to be member of the Iowa Hearing Association. A nominee should never have any formal charges filed against them by the Professional Licensure Board.

No more than one award may be given per year. The Dispenser of the Year Award may be given posthumously.

One Dispenser of the Year Award may be presented during the Spring Iowa Hearing Association Conference. Once an individual is awarded this honor, that individual can still be eligible to receive another Dispenser of the Year Award.

To nominate an individual for this distinguished honor please submit a letter or email summarizing the nominees accomplishments as outlined above, to the Executive Director of the Iowa Hearing Association, 1001 Office Park Rd., Suite 105, West Des Moines, IA 50265, (apmsthomas@aol.com). The Executive Director will submit all nominations to the Iowa Hearing Association Board.



# Plan to Attend The IHA Spring Conference

April 28, 2023



West Des Moines Marriott • West Des Moines, Iowa

❖ Continuing Education

❖ Speakers

❖ Professional Networking

❖ Trade Show

## Purpose of the Iowa Hearing Association

- To promote the welfare insofar as hearing is concerned, of the hearing impaired.
- To coordinate, promote and advance the program of this corporation and others in similar work.
- To provide a unified voice within and for those actively and principally engaged in the practice of selling and fitting hearing aids.
- To provide communications among members of the professions.
- To improve the methods of fitting and using hearing aids.
- To enforce among its members the Code of Ethics of the hearing aid industry and many state or federal laws and regulations that apply to the profession.
- To cooperate with the medical profession and all other ethical professional groups engaged in aural rehabilitation.
- To promote and encourage an effective program of public education as to benefits of the use of hearing aids.