



N.C. Division of Services
for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing

State Services for Veterans--DSDHH

**Jeff Mobley, Accessibility Resources Coordinator
Governor's Working Group for Veterans, Service
Members and their Families**

August 24, 2017





Hearing Loss—

The Invisible Disability:

- Things to know about hearing loss
- Where to find services to help

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- What do you know about people with hearing loss?
- How do any personal perceptions of hearing loss impact service provision for people who have hearing loss?

Common Misperceptions about People with Hearing Loss

- All people with hearing loss can speech read.
- All people with hearing loss use sign language.
- People with hearing loss are stubborn, uncooperative, demanding, negative, or unfriendly.
- Problems related to hearing are limited solely to the physical.
- People with hearing loss cannot use the phone or drive.

Information Service Professionals Need

- An estimated 54 million people in the US have some degree of hearing loss that affects communication.
- As of 2014, over 1.2 million or 16% of the adults in North Carolina had some degree of hearing loss; it is projected rise to 1.65 million by 2030—a 33% increase.
- Over 1/3 of people age 65 and older have hearing loss. The effects of hearing loss often have a greater impact than most believe; many go undetected

Information Service Professionals Need

- Hearing loss is the 3rd most chronic health condition in older adults.
- Hearing loss impacts both the physical and the mental well-being.
- Studies now link hearing loss to:
 - Diabetes
 - Dementia / Alzheimer's Disease
 - Falls
 - Increased Hospitalizations
 - Cognitive Impact

PLEASE REMEMBER!!

Often invisible, denied, and overlooked—untreated hearing loss, for some, can become a matter of LIFE OR DEATH.

Impact on Our Veterans

- U.S. Department of Defense—”Hearing problems—loss and tinnitus, which is a ringing, buzzing or other type of noise that originates in the head, are by far the most prevalent service-connected disability among American Veterans.”
- Governor McCrory’s Executive Order 49 (4/17/14) establishing this working group identified many wellness issues but did not include hearing loss despite the fact it is the most common combat-related disability among returning Veterans.



Impact on Our Veterans

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Research and Development identified 933,000 Veterans receive compensation for hearing loss.
- Additionally, 1.3 million Veterans receive compensation for tinnitus.

Impact on Our Veterans

- Based on 2014 statistics, DSDHH estimates NC has:
 - 736,000 veterans.
 - 121,569 of them have some form of hearing loss—17%.
 - Expected to rise to 161,636 by 2030—33% increase.



Impact on Our Veterans

ECONOMIC IMPACT--

- In 2014, untreated hearing loss in NC resulted in the loss of more than 174,000 jobs, and more than 17,000 of those jobs were among Veterans.
- Unemployment rate among Veterans was 14%, twice that among all persons with untreated hearing loss.
- Total picture: Loss of jobs, sales, and property taxes revenues among Veterans with untreated hearing loss equals **\$1.2 billion.**



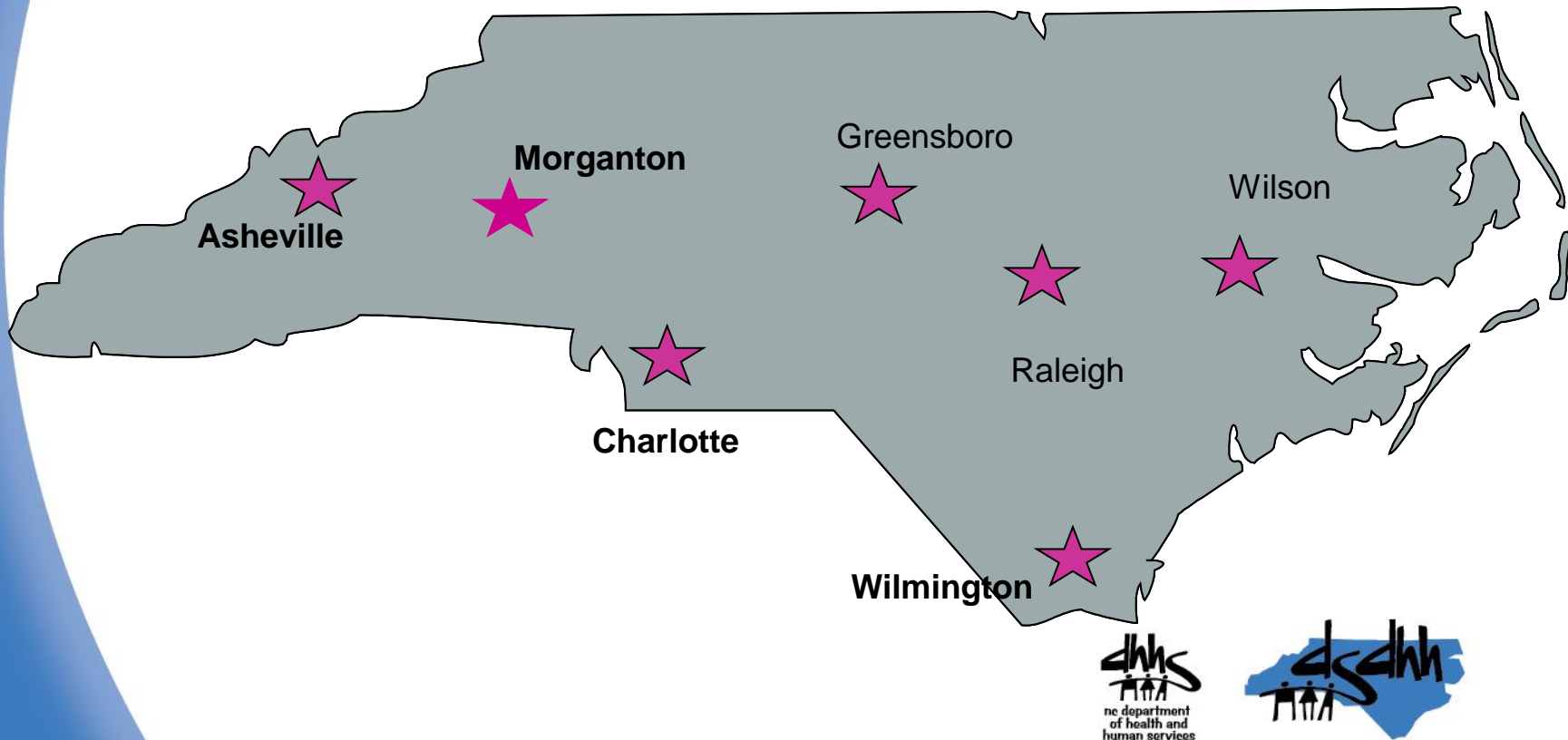
DSDHH Services

- Advocacy for Communication Accessibility
- Information and Referral
- Counseling
- Consultation
- Outreach and Training
- Equipment Distribution—for eligible individuals
 - Provision of 1 hearing aid for telephone use effectiveness.
 - Amplified telephones, alerting devices, and emergency weather radios.



N.C. Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing

Seven Regional Centers Serving All 100 Counties of NC



Successes Serving Veterans

- 9% of all equipment applicants are Veterans.
- Participant agency / presenters for NC STRIVE events.
- Women Veterans Summit and Expo.
- Stand Down events.
- Hearing Health Fair for Veterans in collaboration with VA Medical Center in Salisbury.
- Kinston Veterans Community.
- Support group for Veterans with hearing loss established in partnership with Randolph County VSO.



New Pilot Project

- Seeking to employ part-time Veteran(s) with hearing loss to work with other Veterans and / or Veteran groups to assist in the process of hearing loss adjustment, hearing aid use, etc.
- Projection for program is the Eastern, Central, and Western regions of NC.
- For details, contact David Litman, Hard of Hearing Services Coordinator, at:
 - David.Litman@dhhs.nc.gov



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Wilson & Wilmington Regional Centers

Hearing Loss and the Military



WHERE: Jacksonville Commons Recreation
Center

100 Recreation Lane, Jacksonville

WHEN: September 15, 2017

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Lion's Vision/Hearing Screening van, vendors
who provide services to veterans, light lunch

Contact: Pam Poretti – 910-251-5702

Diana Charbonneau – 252-243-3104



N.C. Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing

Having trouble hearing on the phone?

***Have you been asking people
to repeat themselves?***

***Have people been telling you
to turn the TV down?***

Ringings in your ears?

You
may be one
of **60%**
of returning
combat veterans
experiencing ringing
in the ears or hearing loss.

**Your homecoming is important – don't let
your hearing difficulties get you down!**

*Contact us for counseling, training and specialized equipment
so you can reconnect with your family and friends and stay connected
with your military buddies. **There is no charge for our services.***



North Carolina Division of Services
for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing

(919) 874-2212 (v) | (800) 851-6099 (v/tty) | (919) 890-0859 (VP)

www.ncdshs.gov/dsdhh



THANK YOU!

Questions?

For further information or to arrange presentation and training opportunities, contact:

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(919) 527-6946

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