

Is it time to see an audiologist? Know the signs

When you think about getting your health checked, you probably think of visiting a primary care doctor or dentist. But have you ever thought about your hearing? If you've noticed changes in how you hear or experience things like ringing in your ears or dizziness, it may be time to visit an audiologist.



TREY CLINE

WHAT IS AN AUDIOLOGIST?

An audiologist is a licensed healthcare professional who specializes in evaluating, diagnosing and managing hearing and balance disorders. Audiologists work with patients of all ages, from newborns to older adults, and play an essential role in helping people stay connected to their world through better hearing and communication.

Audiologists can:
Complete comprehensive hearing tests to assess the type and degree of hearing loss

Recommend appropriate intervention options such as hearing aids, cochlear implants, and/or assistive listening devices

Complete advanced testing to assess and manage balance disorders related to the inner ear

Fit and manage hearing aids, cochlear implants, and assistive listening devices

Diagnose and manage tinnitus (ringing or buzzing in the ears)

Offer counseling and education for patients and families

Provide hearing protection and preventative care for those at risk of noise-induced hearing loss

HOW DO I KNOW IF I NEED TO SEE AN AUDIOLOGIST?

Hearing loss is often gradual and many people may not notice the signs right away. Here are some common symptoms that may indicate it is time to schedule an evaluation with an audiologist:

You frequently ask people to repeat themselves

Conversations are hard to follow, especially in noisy environments

You think others are mumbling or speaking too softly

You need to turn up the volume on the TV or radio

You hear a ringing or buzzing sound (tinnitus) that nobody else hears

You feel off balance or dizzy, especially when standing or walking

You avoid social situations because it's hard to hear or keep up

Even children can benefit from audiologic care. If your child isn't meeting speech and language milestones, doesn't respond to their name, or has frequent ear infections, an audiologist can help determine if hearing is part of the issue.

WHY HEARING HEALTH MATTERS

Hearing is critical to communication, relationships, learning, and safety. Untreated hearing loss has been linked to social isolation, depression, and even cognitive decline in older adults. The good news is that early intervention can improve quality of life and overall well-being.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT AN AUDIOLOGY APPOINTMENT

A typical visit with an audiologist includes a detailed conversation about your hearing history, symptoms, and lifestyle needs. You'll undergo a comprehensive audiologic evaluation (hearing test) in a sound-treated booth to determine your hearing sensitivity. Based on the results, the audiologist will discuss management options — whether that's hearing aids, a cochlear implant evaluation, medical referral, communication strategies, or simple hearing protection tips.

TAKE THE FIRST STEP

If you suspect you're experiencing hearing or balance issues or simply want to take a proactive approach to your health, an audiologist can provide the answers and support you need. Just like eye exams and dental visits, hearing check-ups should be part of your routine health care, especially as individuals age or have been regularly exposed to loud environments.



Ephraim McDowell Foundation gives \$9,700 to Camp Can Do

DANVILLE — The Ephraim McDowell Health Care Foundation, Inc. has awarded \$9,700 — entirely funded by donor support — to fund this year's Camp Can Do, a therapeutic summer camp for children with special needs. This annual investment ensures that children who would not otherwise be able to attend a traditional summer camp can experience the fun, friendships, and freedom of summer in a safe and adaptive environment.

"Each summer, Camp Can Do provides a safe and adaptive environment for past and current clients of Ephraim McDowell Kids Can Do Pediatric Therapy Center," said Vanessa Welty, occupational therapist at the center. "Camp activities are modified to ensure each camper's success, along with one-on-one volunteers to facilitate activities and support camper safety. Our success

would not be possible without the Ephraim McDowell Health Care Foundation's financial support."

Camp Can Do was established in 2003 and has touched the lives of more than 500 children with special needs from Danville and the surrounding communities. Hundreds of volunteers, many from across Ephraim McDowell's service area and beyond, help make the camp possible each year. The camp is hosted at Camp Horsin' Around in Perryville, providing a fun, inclusive, and accessible outdoor experience for children ages 5 to 18.

This year marks a special milestone for one former camper, Michael, who is celebrating his 15th summer at Camp Can Do. Once a young participant, Michael now returns as a volunteer, paying forward the life-changing experience he received as a child.

"When we talk about our mission of enhancing the healing environment, Camp Can Do is exactly what we mean. It's joyful, transformative, and only possible because our community chooses to give," said Laura Richard, Executive Director of the Ephraim McDowell Health Care Foundation.

As Camp Can Do continues to grow and serve more children, the resources needed to support this life-changing experience grow as well. This year's expanded programming fully utilized the generous funds available in the Kids Can Do fund. To ensure the camp can continue offering this incredible opportunity next summer, the camp invites the community to join in supporting Camp Can Do. Your gift helps people like Michael — and so many others — experience the joy and empowerment of a camp created just for them.

OUT

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asked, peering up at me, a tinge of fear in the

child's eyes, perhaps anticipating that I would say "no." When I asked why, I learned he was afraid of losing his footing on the slippery bap-

tristry floor and sliding under the water.

"Of course you can, Davey," I answered, hugging him. "You wear whatever helps you keep steady."

Neither then nor now will he lose his footing as long as he stays grounded in Jesus Christ, who carries us in his arms on rainy

days at the river as well as dry days in the warm water of a church baptism.

In rain or snow, sunshine or storms, our Lord is the same, guiding us out of the water, from the river's shore through the valley of death's shadow, and to the green pastures of life with him forever.

Gov. Beshear announces new Public Health Commissioner

FRANKFORT, KY — Last week, Gov. Andy Beshear announced Dr. John Langefeld will become the new Commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH). Dr. Langefeld, a seasoned leader within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), succeeds Dr. Steven Stack, who will transition to his new role of CHFS Secretary on July 1.

Gov. Beshear praised Dr. Langefeld's experience across clinical care, health care policy, and Medicaid services.

"Team Kentucky believes that health care is a basic human right — one which Dr. Langefeld has dedicated his life to," said Gov. Beshear. "With his wealth of experience and proven commitment to the health and well-being of Kentuckians, I am confident that Dr. Langefeld will help us build on our efforts to keep Kentuckians informed, healthy and safe."

"Public health touches the lives of every Kentuckian in some way," said Dr. Stack, current Commissioner for Public Health. "Team Kentucky has been through a lot together in recent years, and I am

reassured that Dr. Langefeld will lead the Department for Public Health with deep commitment, compassion, and a hopeful vision for all Kentuckians to reach their full human potential."

Dr. Langefeld currently serves as the Medical Director for Health Insights and Innovation at CHFS, where he leads Kentucky's Health Quality Initiative. Dr. Langefeld has more than 30 years of health care leadership experience, including having served as Kentucky Department for Medicaid Services Chief Medical Officer.

"I am honored to continue serving Kentucky in this critical capacity. My focus will be on shifting our focus upstream, from not only treating illness but nurturing health and well-being," said Dr. Langefeld. "This means enhancing social supports, expanding mental health resources, prioritizing preventive screenings, enhancing health policy through community engagement, and innovative, data-driven strategies. Our true measure of success will not just be the treatments we deliver, but how the people

in our communities grow healthier, stronger, and more resilient."

KDPH is responsible for developing and operating state public health programs and activities for all Kentuckians. The mission of KDPH is to improve the health and safety of people in Kentucky through prevention of negative health outcomes, promotion of healthy lifestyles and protection from diseases, injury and environmental health impacts.

Dr. Langefeld is a native Kentuckian and earned his medical degree from the University of Louisville School of Medicine after graduating from Berea College with a bachelor's degree in biology. He completed his residency in family medicine at St. Elizabeth Medical Center in Edgewood and is a diplomat of the American Board of Family Medicine. Dr. Langefeld and his wife, Jessica, have five children, one grandchild, and a Bichon. They enjoy traveling and spending quality time with friends and family.

Dr. Langefeld's appointment to Commissioner of KDPH is effective July 1, 2025.

AG Coleman urges Congress to back youth drug prevention

FRANKFORT — Attorney General Russell Coleman announced last week he's urging the U.S. Congress to dedicate additional federal resources to youth substance use prevention. In a letter sent to U.S. Congressional leaders signed by attorneys general from 36 states, General Coleman urged passage of the Youth Substance Use Prevention and Awareness Act as an important and evidence-based step toward reducing youth drug use through education and engagement.

"Showing young Kentuckians that their lives are better without drugs is one of

the best ways we can help them have the opportunity to fulfill their potential," said Attorney General Coleman. "Just like we're promoting youth prevention here in Kentucky through the 'Better Without It' initiative, Congress has the chance to invest in programs to build a stronger, healthier future for the Commonwealth."

The federal legislation would authorize federal grant programs for youth-focused advertisements that warn of the dangers of deadly drugs and the promise of a healthy lifestyle.

Earlier this year, General

Coleman launched the 'Better Without It' campaign, a first-of-its-kind, youth-centered drug prevention program. With \$3.6 million from the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission (KYOAAC) the Commonwealth is teaming up with student athletes, influencers and other stakeholders across Kentucky, through NIL deals and other partnerships, to promote a positive message about a drug-free lifestyle.

Last September, the KYOAAC unanimously approved the Attorney General's two-year, \$3.6 million proposal to establish the research-backed youth education campaign.

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