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Columbus Speech & Hearing Center Urges Area Residents to Listen Up in a Down Economy and Address Hearing Loss During Better Hearing and Speech Month

(Columbus, OH), April 27, 2009 – May 1 marks the start of Better Hearing and Speech Month, a month dedicated to educating consumers about the need to assure that their hearing is healthy. This year, Columbus Speech & Hearing Center is joining with the Better Hearing Institute (BHI) to educate Americans on how hearing health affects job security, performance, and employment opportunities. Columbus Speech & Hearing Center is encouraging people of all ages who are either seeking employment or who want to protect their jobs to make sure that unaddressed hearing loss doesn't pose a barrier to employment success. BHI is offering an online hearing test (www.hearingcheck.org) where people can quickly and confidentially assess if they need a comprehensive hearing check by a hearing professional.

"Never before has good hearing been so important," says Karen Mitchell, Vice President & Director Audiology & Hearing Aid Services at Columbus Speech & Hearing Center. "Hearing your best can be a smart job security strategy in a tough job market. How an employee is perceived by employers is effected by how he or she hears. Job candidates need to sound sharp during an interview. And employees who aren't sure what an employer is asking can't answer their best."

According to the International Listening Association (ILA), listening is one of the top skills employers seek in entry-level employees and in those being promoted. Individual performance in an organization is found to be directly related to listening ability or perceived listening effectiveness.

When people with even mild hearing loss use hearing aids, they improve their job performance, increase their earning potential, enhance their communication skills, improve their professional and interpersonal relationships, stave off depression, and better their quality of life.

According to a BHI national study – “Impact of Hearing Loss on Household Income” – Americans with unaddressed hearing loss make less money than people with normal hearing. The study found that wearing a hearing aid reduces the amount of income lost. Specifically, untreated hearing loss negatively affects household income, on-average, up to \$23,000 per year depending on the degree of hearing loss. The use of hearing aids mitigates those negative effects by about 50 percent.

“Treating hearing loss early is no longer an option,” says Sergei Kochkin, PhD, Executive Director of BHI. “It is a career imperative. Great workplace communication is critical to both job performance and to getting a job. Great communication starts with great listening. And great listening starts with the ability to hear. We urge everyone to take that first, most critical step to ensuring career success by visiting www.hearingcheck.org. Do it today.”

Columbus Speech & Hearing Center, founded in 1923, is a non-profit United Way organization serving more than 10,000 people annually. Services include hearing evaluations, hearing aids, speech therapy for children and adults, occupational therapy and treatment, and vocational services for people who are Hard-of-Hearing, Deaf and Deaf-Blind through the Comprehensive Program for the Deaf and Ohio Deaf-Blind Outreach Program. Generous charitable giving from the community help offset the cost of the Center’s valued services for low-income families.