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**Better Hearing Institute Urges People with Diabetes to Get Their Hearing Checked and Joins in Global Effort to Promote World Diabetes Day**

**Washington, DC, November 2, 2009** – This year, for the very first time, the Better Hearing Institute (BHI) is joining in the global effort to promote World Diabetes Day, which is celebrated every year on November 14, and is urging anyone with diabetes to get their hearing checked. To help in the effort, BHI has made available a free, quick, and confidential online hearing test at [www.hearingcheck.org](http://www.hearingcheck.org) to help people with diabetes determine if they need a comprehensive hearing check by a hearing professional.

Hearing loss is about twice as common in adults with diabetes compared to those who do not have the disease, according to a [study](#) funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. Yet hearing screenings typically are not part of the regular regimen of care that people with diabetes are routinely recommended to receive.

“For years, physicians who treat people with diabetes have regularly ensured that their patients receive regular vision check-ups,” said Sergei Kochkin, PhD, BHI’s executive director. “But they also need to encourage each of their patients to get their hearing checked as well.”

World Diabetes Day (WDD) is the primary global awareness campaign of the diabetes world. It was introduced in 1991 by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in response to the alarming rise in diabetes around the world. In 2007, the United Nations marked the Day for the first time with the passage of the United Nations World Diabetes Day Resolution in December 2006, which made the existing World Diabetes Day an official United Nations World Health Day.

According to the IDF, roughly 250 million people worldwide are now living with diabetes, and more than 300 million people worldwide are estimated to be at risk for type 2 diabetes. In many cases, type 2 diabetes can be prevented by helping and encouraging those at risk to maintain a healthy weight and exercise regularly.

“It’s so important that people with diabetes ask their doctors to check their hearing,” Kochkin said. “Hearing loss affects virtually every aspect of a person’s life, making it all the harder for people with diabetes to cope with their disease. A hearing check is invaluable in determining whether or not someone with diabetes does have a hearing loss and will help to ensure that they get the treatment they need.”

Numerous studies have linked untreated hearing loss to a wide range of physical and emotional conditions, including irritability, negativism, anger, fatigue, tension, stress, depression,

avoidance or withdrawal from social situations, social rejection and loneliness, reduced alertness and increased risk to personal safety, impaired memory and ability to learn new tasks, reduced job performance and earning power, and diminished psychological and overall health.

"World Diabetes Day is a critically important initiative because it raises awareness of a very serious global health problem," said Kochkin. "It's also important that people with diabetes understand that they may be at an increased risk of hearing loss as a result of their disease. We urge anyone with diabetes to take a quick and confidential online hearing test today, at [www.hearingcheck.org](http://www.hearingcheck.org), to determine if they need a comprehensive hearing check by a hearing professional."

For more information about World Diabetes Day, please visit [www.worlddiabetesday.com](http://www.worlddiabetesday.com).

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*Founded in 1973, The Better Hearing Institute (BHI) conducts research and engages in hearing health education with the goal of helping people with hearing loss to benefit from proper treatment. To receive a free copy of BHI's 28-page booklet "Your Guide to Better Hearing," visit its website at [www.betterhearing.org](http://www.betterhearing.org), or call the Better Hearing Institute hotline at 1-800-EAR-WELL.*