



Media Release

Phonak to release a game-changing Bluetooth hearing aid that connects directly to any cell phone* and TV, based on a revolutionary new chip technology

Stäfa (Switzerland), August 17, 2017 – Phonak, the leading global provider of hearing instruments and wireless communication solutions, today announces the Audéo™ B-Direct, a revolutionary hearing aid that directly connects to any Bluetooth® ** enabled cell phone*. The new hearing aid is the first product to make use of Sonova's revolutionary SWORD™ chip and wireless radio technology. Audéo B-Direct delivers excellent sound quality thanks for the proven Belong platform and AutoSense OS™. The low-voltage wireless chip has the lowest power consumption of any hearing aid using Bluetooth Classic. As it supports the classic Bluetooth protocol, it provides direct connectivity to cell phones – including Android™, iPhone® and even classic cell phones – with no extra body-worn streaming device required. Based on the innovative Belong™ platform, the Audéo B-Direct simplifies the life of consumers by offering them the freedom of direct connectivity, truly hands-free calling, and excellent TV sound quality¹. Phonak is also announcing an extension of its Belong platform to a new generation of Phonak Virto™ B customized products, the world's first hearing aids with Biometric Calibration. All new products will be available in the U.S. end of August with Europe and other countries worldwide following step by step from September 2017 onwards.

“For 70 years, Phonak has continued to develop life-changing solutions that break down barriers”, says Thomas Lang, Senior Vice President of Phonak Marketing. “With the Audéo B-Direct, we're now breaking barriers to accessibility and connectivity. Audéo B-Direct also works similar to a wireless headset. We're giving more hearing aid wearers access to proven Belong technology without limiting them to a single cell phone, manufacturer, or operating system. This is a true game-changer for our industry.”

True hands-free calling is now a reality

The [Audéo B-Direct](#) simplifies life even more thanks to real hands-free voice calling. Hearing aid wearers can answer or reject a phone call by simply pressing the push button on their hearing aid. The ringing of the phone is heard through the hearing aids and once the call is accepted, the conversation is instantly streamed. The wearer's voice is picked up by the hearing aid's intelligent microphone network and transmitted to the other caller similar to a wireless headset. All this is done without the hearing aid wearer ever having to physically touch the phone.

Hearing aids double as a wireless TV headphones

The new [TV Connector](#), using proprietary AirStream™ technology, is a state-of-the-art compact multimedia hub that seamlessly connects wearers to their favorite TV programming for an immersive audio experience. It's a true plug and play solution that automatically turns a pair of Audéo B-Direct hearing aids into wireless TV headphones. The TV Connector is also capable of connecting to multiple Audéo B-Direct hearing aids simultaneously, ideal for watching TV together.

Filling a significant gap in the industry

As a 'Made For All' hearing solution offering universal connectivity, the new Audéo B-Direct fills a significant gap for both hearing aid wearers and hearing care professionals. According to a recent report², over four in five smartphone buyers worldwide choose the Android operating system. The Audéo B-Direct addresses this sizeable so far neglected market while also providing compatibility with Apple's iPhone. In addition, the new solution addresses the more than 23 percent of hearing aid wearers ages 50+ who own a classic cell phone³. Universal connectivity to any cell phone is especially important considering the intense growth in smartphone ownership over the last decade. The pioneering Made For All solution is another result of Phonak's unwavering commitment to change people's lives for the better.

Phonak Virto B: the world's first hearing aids with Biometric Calibration

At the same time Phonak introduces [Phonak Virto B](#), the world's first hearing aids with Biometric Calibration. Each ear is unique and each ear hears differently. Identifying over 1,600 data points, the Phonak proprietary 3D modelling software calculates the unique calibration settings for each Virto B hearing aid. The result is a 2 dB improvement in directionality leading to better hearing performance¹. Virto B comes in a full product family launch. The new CROS B Custom for single sided deafness is also introduced to be compatible with Virto B.

* with Bluetooth® 4.2 wireless technology and most older Bluetooth phones

** Bluetooth is a registered trademark owned by Bluetooth SIG, Inc.; Android™ is a trademark owned by Google, Inc.; iPhone® is a registered trademark of Apple, Inc.

¹ Field Study News under development. Full details available in September 2017 at

<http://www.phonakpro.com/evidence>

² [Global mobile landscape 2016. eMarketer. November 2016](#)

³ www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/12/evolution-of-technology/

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About Phonak

In 2017, Phonak, a member of the Sonova Group, proudly celebrates its 70th anniversary.

Headquartered near Zurich, Switzerland, Phonak was born in 1947 out of a passion for taking on the most difficult hearing challenges. Seventy years later, this passion remains. As the industry's leading provider, we offer the broadest portfolio of life-changing hearing solutions. From pediatric to profound hearing loss, we remain committed to creating hearing solutions that change people's lives to thrive socially and emotionally. We believe in creating a world where 'Life is on' for everyone.

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At Phonak, we believe that hearing well is essential to living life to the fullest. For 70 years, we've remained true to our mission, creating life-changing hearing solutions to help people thrive socially and emotionally.
Life is on.