



May 2025

KY HEARS

CARE IS HEAR

**Removing
Barriers
Increasing
Access**

KY HEARS East

Exciting News!

KY HEARS has partnered with the Martin County Health Department in Inez, KY. Our goal to address access to hearing healthcare in rural Kentucky is being realized due to this new collaboration. The MCHD graciously offered us space in their building to provide a more consistent presence in the area. With this opportunity, we will have office hours twice a month beginning in June. This allows our patients to have faster access to our professional staff when they need assistance and support. We are grateful to the amazing staff at MCHD for partnering with us and making hearing healthcare a priority.



For questions about this event or to speak to a member of the KY HEARS team, please call 800-958-9610 and we will be happy to help you.

Speech and Hearing in Kentucky: Local Challenges, Resources, and Hope for the Future

Speech and hearing are essential to communication, education, and quality of life—and in Kentucky, these vital functions are receiving increasing attention through public health initiatives, education programs, and technological innovation.

The Kentucky Connection: Why Speech and Hearing Matter Here

In Kentucky, more than 700,000 residents are affected by some degree of hearing loss, according to the Hearing Loss Association of America. Speech disorders, including articulation and language delays, also affect thousands of children and adults across the Commonwealth. Rural areas, which make up a significant portion of the state, often face barriers to accessing timely diagnosis and treatment.

Hearing and speech are especially important in Kentucky's educational system, where early intervention can determine a child's long-term academic and social outcomes. Language development starts in infancy and is largely influenced by a child's ability to hear clearly. Without proper hearing, a child may struggle to develop speech, which in turn can affect learning, confidence, and relationships.

Local Challenges and Disparities

Kentucky faces unique challenges when it comes to hearing and speech care:

- **Rural Access:** Many counties in Eastern and Western Kentucky are designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), with limited access to audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs).
- **High Rates of Pediatric Hearing Loss:** Due to risk factors like premature birth, ear infections, and genetic conditions, Kentucky has one of the higher rates of childhood hearing loss in the region.
- **Limited Screening Follow-up:** While newborn hearing screenings are mandatory, follow-up care is sometimes delayed, particularly in underserved communities.

Leading Resources in Kentucky

- **KY HEARS:** Since the launch of KY HEARS in 2022, the team has traveled to 30 counties providing hearing healthcare to children and adults. Through partnerships with multiple community organizations, KY HEARS provides screenings, full diagnostic testing, hearing amplification devices, and follow-up care, with a strong focus on equity and early intervention.
- **Heuser Hearing Institute:** A nonprofit leader in audiology and hearing healthcare, Heuser Hearing Institute offers comprehensive services including hearing evaluations, hearing aid fittings, cochlear implant services, and auditory rehabilitation. Their team of specialists works with both children and adults, serving thousands of Kentuckians each year.
- **Heuser Hearing & Language Academy:** Formerly known as the Louisville Deaf Oral School, this nationally accredited school provides early childhood education for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Academy combines speech-language therapy with academic instruction to help children develop strong communication and literacy skills, preparing them for success in mainstream classrooms.
- **First Steps:** A statewide early intervention program offering services to children from birth to age 3 with developmental delays, including those related to speech and hearing. Services are often provided in the home or community settings.
- **University Clinics:** Both the University of Louisville and the University of Kentucky offer speech-language pathology and audiology services through their campus clinics. These are valuable low-cost options for families and adults needing evaluation or therapy.
- **Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH):** A state agency that provides resources, education, and advocacy to promote equal access for individuals with hearing loss across Kentucky.

Moving Forward: Raising Awareness and Strengthening Services

To improve outcomes, Kentucky continues to focus on:

- Increasing the number of certified SLPs and audiologists in underserved areas.
- Enhancing school-based support services.
- Expanding telehealth reimbursement policies to make remote services more accessible.

Speech and hearing are not just medical issues, they are educational, social, and economic ones too. In Kentucky, bridging the gap in care through innovation, collaboration, and public awareness can help thousands of individuals lead healthier, more connected lives. Whether in a rural Appalachian town or a bustling city like Lexington, access to timely and effective communication support is essential for every Kentuckian.



May is
Better
Speech &
Hearing
Month!

Upcoming Events

Event Information

Hearing Clinic Martin County

Please call 800-958-9610 to schedule an appointment. We still have a few opening left.

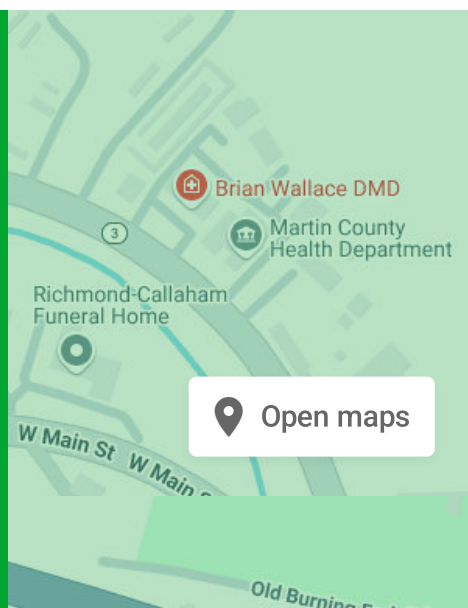
When?

Tuesday, May 6, 2025, 09:00 AM

Where?

136 Rockcastle Road, Inez, KY, USA

Event Information



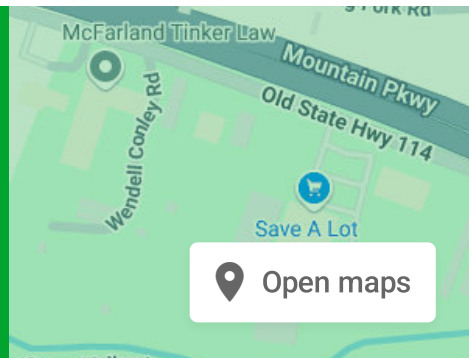
Hearing Clinic Magoffin County

Please call 800-958-9610 to schedule an appointment
When?

Friday, May 9, 2025, 09:00 AM

Where?

752 Tom Frazier Way, Salyersville, KY, USA



Event Information

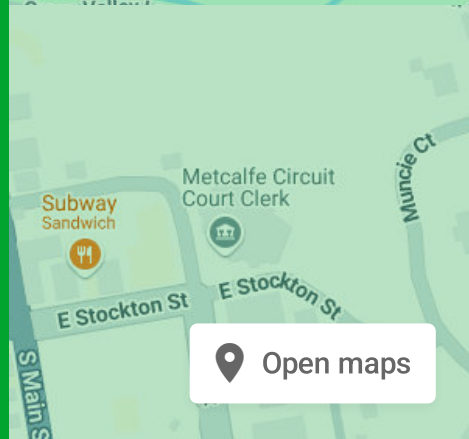
Hearing Clinic Metcalfe County

Please call 800-958-9610 to schedule an appointment
When?

Wednesday, May 28, 2025, 09:00 AM

Where?

201 East Stockton Street, Edmonton, KY, USA



Devon Woodlee

Devon is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters