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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **WIDESPREAD ADDICTION TO PORTABLE MUSIC PLAYERS INCREASING POTENTIAL FOR PREMATURE HEARING LOSS IN YOUTH, ADULTS ALIKE - PT. 1**

With increased playing time, easy portability, higher peak decibel levels, and rapid growth in popularity, the portable personal music player has become a ticking time bomb for potential premature hearing loss. While precautions can be taken to handle the risk of damage, those unaware of how damaging their listening habits are may be less likely to change their behavior.

Experts argue that we are not stumbling on some new phenomena that is going to create pandemonium. What we are seeing is a resurfacing of the concerns raised in the 1980's when Sony put out the "Walkman". The '90's brought us the "Discman" and now, the millennium has graced us with the "iPod" and many other MP3 players available on the consumer market. The changes in technology have allowed consumers to listen to their devices anywhere, for longer amounts of time, at increased volumes.

Even though information as surfaced regarding the potential harm of personal devices, studies have shown that both adults and youth are not likely to change their listening habits. According to one study conducted by Zogby International for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), half of all youth and adults polled said they are not concerned with potential hearing loss, and approximately the same amount indicated they had no intention of taking preventative measures.

Dr. Marshall Chasin, AuD., M.Sc., Reg. CASLPO, Aud(C), an Audiologist and Director of Auditory Research at the Musicians' Clinics of Canada, indicates that the peak decibel (dB) level of these portable devices is approximately 136dB. However, depending on the style of headphones used in conjunction with the device, maximum output can reach anywhere from 50-140dB. To put that in perspective, 140dB is equivalent to a gunshot or firecracker. Listening to 80-85 dB (equivalent to an alarm clock, or telephone dial tone) for approximately 40 hours per week is safe without the worry of inflicting damage. However, for every 3 dB increase in the volume, the safe exposure time is cut in half. That's a lot of damage potential in a very short period of time.

While research to suggest that age does not affect an individual's susceptibility is limited, children nowadays are more likely to be exposed to personal music devices early on. As a result, the exposure is increased substantially from what it was for their predecessors. Children are more likely to get into the habit of relying on the portable players than their parents. Still, anyone is just as likely to suffer from the risks of loud noise. Remember, it's not important who you are and what you listen to, but how you listen to it, when you listen to it, and at what volume.

The goal at CHHA is to raise awareness of the hard of hearing community and educate individuals about hearing loss. To learn more about the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, and issues such as personal portable music devices, visit their website at <http://www.chha.ca> or call **Voice:** 613-526-1584 **TTY:** 613-526-2692, **Toll-Free:** 1-800-263-8068 (In Canada Only).