

Twenty-six ANers and friends including all ANA/NJ Board members registered for our first ‘Zoom with Speaker’ meeting held Sunday, 1-3 pm, October 24, 2021. The topic was “Options for Better Hearing.” Our speaker and leader for the Q&A was Dr. Jed Kwartler, the Director of Otolaryngology/Neurotology at Summit Health in Berkeley Heights, NJ. Dr. Kwartler is a long-standing, dedicated member of our Medical Advisory Board. Many thanks go also to Board member Dave Belonger for arranging and moderating this special Zoom session.

Dr. Kwartler’s helpful ‘Introduction’ with video and the following open Q&A discussion made clear that “Options for Better Hearing” for acoustic neuroma patients is not to be thought of as a convenient list of available devices for everyone to choose from. It’s not a ‘take your pick’ list. Rather, the options are a continuum of rehabilitation, depending upon each patient’s special needs and circumstances, and ranges from conventional in-one-ear air conduction aids, to dual-ear CROS air conduction systems, to non-surgical or surgical bone conduction devices, to surgical cochlear implantation (CI) and even auditory brainstem implants (ABI). The technology is advancing rapidly. Dr. Kwartler called attention to two examples: the ADHEAR by Med-El, a non-surgical external adhesive bone conduction system (see the Newsletter, October 2020; and V. Dahm et al, “First Results with a New Pressure-free Adhesive Bone Conduction Hearing Aid,” *Otology and Neurotology*, Vol 39, 2018); and the OSIA by Cochlear, a redesigned bone conduction system with a very thin implant and no through-the-skin abutment (see the Newsletter, October 2020; and M.Goycoolea et al, “Clinical Performance of the Osia System, a New Active Osseointegrated Implant System,” *Acta Otolaryngol*, Vol. 140, March 2020), thus avoiding the earlier Baha problem of skin overgrowth. For dealing with single-sided deafness, there was much interest in favorable patient evaluations of the BiCROS system by Phonak routing sound from the affected ear to the contralateral/better hearing ear. (We note that the company currently recommends a CROS P for the poor ear to send sound to an Audéo Paradise in the good ear.) The currently proposed Medicare expansion for coverage of Over-the-Counter (OTC) hearing aids and audiology services was touched upon briefly. Maybe take a look at the helpful ALDA News articles on this subject on the website of the Association of Late-Deafened Adults (www.alda.org).