

# RAPIDSOS +



## RapidSOS and Hearing Health Foundation team up for improved mobile safety and security

- 240 million<sup>1</sup> 9-1-1 calls are made every year in the U.S.; over 70%<sup>2</sup> are from mobile phones, which fail to provide exact location to emergency dispatchers
- 48 million<sup>3</sup> Americans have some degree of hearing loss, which can make communication with emergency dispatchers difficult
- Haven represents a transformation in access to emergency services – from a phone call solely dependent on voice to a robust data connection for voice, text, medical/demographic data

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - New York City (October 10, 2016).**

Today, [Hearing Health Foundation](#) (HHF) announced its collaboration with [RapidSOS](#), an advanced emergency technology start-up revolutionizing personal safety and connectivity. RapidSOS will offer the Haven smartphone app for free to those associated with HHF, providing enhanced access to emergency services for individuals with hearing loss and tinnitus.

Working together, RapidSOS and HHF will support those with hearing loss and tinnitus by connecting them to their loved ones and providing peace of mind that emergency help is one touch away, whenever they need it. With one tap on Haven, the app connects the user with the nearest dispatch center anywhere in the contiguous U.S., enabling a voice connection and a data pipeline to 9-1-1 to transmit:

- Text messages: Haven converts the text message into verbal speech, if the dispatch center does not have the capability to receive texts. Currently works one-way (user to 9-1-1); two-way coming in future
- GPS location
- Type of emergency
- Relevant medical and demographic data

When setting up the app, users conveniently enter medical conditions, allergies, and medications, so that lifesaving information is communicated directly to 9-1-1 when an alert is triggered. Haven's "Can't Speak" function allows users to notify 9-1-1 that they cannot speak and/or have difficulty hearing. When a user taps "Can't Speak," their location and relevant information is automatically transmitted to the dispatcher, without the need for a verbal back-and-forth. The user can then send text messages to 9-1-1 to further explain their emergency. Currently, only 6%<sup>4</sup> of dispatch centers have the technology to receive text messages from those placing a 9-1-1 call. Haven fills this gap through its universal texting technology, which converts the text to verbal speech automatically. Currently universal texting works one-way (user to 9-1-1), with two-way communication coming in future.

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<sup>1</sup> National Emergency Number Association. <http://www.nena.org/?page=911Statistics>

<sup>2</sup> National 911 Program. *Review of Nationwide 911 Data Collection*. <http://www.911.gov/pdf/current911datacollection-072613.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Hearing Loss Prevalence in the United States, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3564588/>

<sup>4</sup> National 911 Program. *State of 911 Webinar*. [http://www.911.gov/pdf/Stateof911webinar\\_December2015.pdf](http://www.911.gov/pdf/Stateof911webinar_December2015.pdf)

“Regardless of hearing loss or auditory challenges, it is vital that everyone can communicate clearly with 9-1-1,” said RapidSOS co-founder and CEO Michael Martin. “We are dedicated to using all available technology so that individuals can communicate reliably with emergency services.”

The Haven app also includes access to RapidSOS’ Family Connect feature. For the first time, people can call 9-1-1 on behalf of a loved one, transmitting their loved one’s location and relevant data directly to the dispatch center closest to them. Additionally, Family Connect allows users to share their location with loved ones, see family members’ real-time locations without the distraction of a phone call or text, and easily ask family and friends for help.

“We’re excited that this partnership with RapidSOS allows HHF to bring a critical safety tool to individuals with hearing loss, tinnitus, and other hearing disorders,” said Laura Friedman, HHF’s Communications and Programs Manager. “During emergencies it is crucial that communication is clear between all parties. Haven provides peace of mind to all, especially for those with hearing loss, that they will be able to effectively communicate with 9-1-1 personnel.”

RapidSOS is offering free access to Haven for one year to those associated with Hearing Health Foundation, and free access for two years for new donors, if they sign up for Haven [here](#). The Haven app is available for iPhone and Android devices and works anywhere across the contiguous U.S. and Hawaii, with one touch emergency calling in over 250 countries and jurisdictional territories. For more information about RapidSOS and the Haven app, visit [www.rapidsos.com](http://www.rapidsos.com).

### **About RapidSOS**

RapidSOS was formed in 2012 by a team of M.I.T., Harvard, and Stanford grad students who had personal experiences with the challenges of the existing emergency communication infrastructure. Working closely with the 9-1-1 community, tech and telecom companies, and leading investors, RapidSOS is developing technology to predict and preempt emergencies before they occur, dynamically warn people in harm’s way, and ensure that first responders are one touch away globally. Learn more at [www.RapidSOS.com](http://www.RapidSOS.com)

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### **About Hearing Health Foundation**

Hearing Health Foundation (HHF) is the largest non-profit funder of hearing research, with a mission to prevent and cure hearing loss through groundbreaking research, and to promote hearing health. Since 1958 HHF has funded hearing and balance research through its Emerging Research Grants program, including work that led to cochlear implant technology and many of today’s standard treatments for otosclerosis and ear infections. Since 2011, through its Hearing Restoration Project, HHF is working toward better therapies and cures for hearing loss tinnitus. HHF also publishes *Hearing Health* magazine, a free consumer resource on all things hearing health. To learn more, please visit [www.hhf.org](http://www.hhf.org).

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