Quick Intervention Guide for Sudden Hearing Loss

Timely recognition of sudden sensorineural hearing loss by the initial evaluating physician affects the availability of treatment options as well as the treatment success rates.
Immediately see the patient complaining of sudden hearing loss or refer the patient to urgent care:

- Examine the ear to rule out common causes of conductive hearing loss:
  - Cerumen
  - Fluid behind the tympanic membrane
- A tuning fork test can assess conductive versus sensorineural hearing loss.

If the ear canal and tympanic membrane are normal, assume a sensorineural hearing loss:

- Start high dose oral steroids (60 mg prednisone for two weeks, followed by a taper).
  - If the patient cannot take oral steroids due to comorbidities, an otolaryngologist can perform a steroid injection into the ear.
- Order a brain MRI of the internal auditory canal with contrast.
- Make an urgent referral to otolaryngology and audiology for a hearing test and evaluation. State the reason for referral: sudden hearing loss.
  - Call 443-997-6467.