

October 23, 2019

The Honorable Representative Allison Russo  
77 S. High Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Rep. Russo,

My name is Marsha Moore and I am a service provider/advocate/community member who resides in your district.

I am writing to show my support for HB 243 which would require private insurance companies to cover hearing aids for all Ohioans under the age of 22. The majority of Ohio's deaf and hard of hearing children do not have insurance coverage for hearing aids, only for cochlear implants. We need to have hearing aids covered for all Ohioans since it costs anywhere around \$1,200-\$3,500 for just one digital hearing aid. It's a very expensive but much needed device for many of us, but especially for youngsters who are acquiring language development.

Furthermore, the ***benefits are far greater*** of having a hearing aid (being able to hear, speak and communicate well with others) is significant than the ***small*** increase it may have on the cost of insurance. In states that already cover hearing aids, the increase cost for insurance was only ***7 cents to 35 cents*** per insured, per month. That is such a small price to pay for greater accessibility and hearing in the hearing world every day.

I was born deaf and grew up with hearing aids. My hearing aids have allowed me use what hearing I have left to alert me of my environment surroundings, speak as clearly as I can and also is the best tool to reduce annoyance related to tinnitus. I do not hear the ringing when my hearing aids are on. Moreover, my parents are also deaf and have also used hearing aids over the years as well. So, for a family of 3 deaf individuals, it can get quite expensive over time with new aids and battery replacements. In fact, our lifetime total for purchasing hearing aids before age 22 is over \$35,000, not counting batteries and without insurance coverage. If we had insurance coverage that helped defray some of the costs, we would only pay less than \$5,000. It makes no sense to punish the people who happen to be deaf with expensive devices that helps them hear better. It is also cost-effective to both persons who is deaf and teachers or employer if the person worn hearing aids and is productive in school or in the workplace.

Please vote for HB 243 and represent the 1.3 million people in the state of Ohio who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Sincerely,  
Marsha Moore  
8322 Amberleigh Way  
Dublin, OH 43017