

May 7, 2021

Chairman Lipps, Vice-Chairman Holmes, Ranking Member Russo and members of the House Health Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 198, which would require health plan issuers to cover hearing aids and related services for persons twenty-one years of age and younger.

Right now, many commercial plans consider hearing aids “cosmetic” and therefore do not cover them or related services. I am a pediatric audiologist in support of HB 198 because I see the need for this on a regular basis at my pediatric hospital, as most private insurances do not cover hearing aids. Without hearing aids, children with hearing loss cannot develop appropriate speech and language and can quickly fall behind in school and social situations.

One of my teenage patients has been trying to find funding for aids on his own (including on GoFundMe), because his parents' insurance doesn't cover aids. This should not be something a 15 year old has to worry about. When a family has insurance which DOES cover aids, we tell them to keep it as long as they can, as it truly is rare for a private insurance to have this benefit.

With early access to hearing aids, kids will do better in school, they will be safer, and they will face fewer problems (socially and academically) as they get older. Thank you for your support and please reach out with any questions or concerns.

Please vote yes on HB 198.

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