

# Ohio Chapter

INCORPORATED IN OHIO

## American Academy of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022

The Honorable Scott Lipps  
Chairman, Health Committee  
Ohio House of Representatives  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Lipps and Members of the House Health Committee—

On behalf of the nearly 3,000 members of the Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics, I am writing today to express our support for House Bill 198, sponsored by State Representatives Susan Manchester and Allison Russo. This legislation, which would enact *Madeline's Law*, seeks to help address the cost burden that families face in providing hearing aids for their children.

As you know, HB 198 would generally require health plans regulated by the Ohio Department of Insurance to cover hearing aids and related services for children up to age 21. This would include up to \$2,500 per hearing aid every two years as well as all services provided by an otolaryngologist or audiologist to support hearing aids for a child. Half of all states already provide mandated hearing aid coverage; this has shown to be an effective policy for these families.

Hearing aids can be a critical tool to help children develop and flourish. Presently, approximately 3 out of every 1,000 infants are born deaf or with a hearing impairment. This only represents a portion of children who may require hearing aids and related supports. Coverage of hearing aids by private health plans, as well as legislative efforts to expand coverage, is a top recommendation for improving access to hearing aids for infants and children.

In closing, it is my hope that you will pass HB 105 and take this important step to keep our children safe. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa Wervev Arnold".

Melissa Wervev Arnold  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

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#### Ohio Chapter

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