



Senator Liz Boldon
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3201
St. Paul, MN 55155

6 March 2023

Dear Senator Boldon,

On behalf of the Minnesota Academy of Audiology (MAA), we would like to thank you for sponsoring Senate Bill 2105, expanding insurance coverage for hearing aids for all Minnesotans. As the organization that represents Audiologists in the state of Minnesota, we are devoted to promoting high standards of care for people with hearing and balance problems and, supporting the audiologists who care for them. The expansion of insurance coverage would give more Minnesotans important access to affordable hearing care.

We know that hearing loss in middle age (those of us between 45 and 65) is the single highest modifiable risk factor for long term cognitive decline. Hearing loss increases the likelihood of loneliness, depression, and isolation by creating barriers to good communication between individuals with hearing loss and their loved ones. In addition, research is clear that individuals with untreated hearing loss are also more likely to earn less than those without hearing loss. As Audiologists, we see daily the impact hearing loss has on our patients. We see the disappointment when resources are limited, and insurance does not cover the necessary treatment.

MAA supports an ethical and transparent insurance benefit for hearing aids and hearing care coverage; a benefit that is easily understood by the patient and the provider alike. We believe individuals with hearing loss should continue to be able to use their preferred providers and access important hearing care services, especially in rural areas. A transparent monetary benefit truly increases affordability of appropriate hearing devices for patients and decreases the amount of knowledge patients are required to obtain to navigate insurance policies and devices. Several states have paved the way, including Illinois, New Hampshire, and Connecticut.

Communication is vital to life and individuals with hearing loss deserve access to care covered by their insurance.

Respectfully,

Rebecca A. Younk, Au.D.

Chair – Government Relations Committee for the Minnesota Academy of Audiology