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# Oregon Academy of Audiology

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05 February 2023

**Re: HB 2994**

Dear Chair Nosse and members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care:

I am writing you on behalf of the Oregon Academy of Audiology (OAA) in support of HB 2994. OAA is a professional organization representing audiologists and audiology students across the state to support hearing health for patients and providers. We strongly believe that access and affordability of care are paramount to the ability of people with hearing loss – especially children with hearing loss – to thrive. HB 2994 will ensure that Oregon’s children and their families have access to adequate coverage of hearing aids, cochlear implants, and other assistive listening devices without unnecessary financial burdens.

In 2018, the Oregon Legislature passed HB 4104, which required insurers to cover the cost of cochlear implants, hearing aids, and some assistive listening devices for children. OAA lauds the Legislature for the near unanimous passage of that bill and we have seen the positive impacts of it since its passage. Unfortunately, in the intervening years some gaps in coverage and other issues have been discovered which have left young Oregonians without adequate amplification for their educational, social, and emotional growth and wellbeing.

HB 2994 remedies these issues by modifying the letter of the law established by HB 4104 to better align with the intention of the legislators who passed that bill in 2018. Children who do not receive proper support for hearing loss have been shown to perform worse in school, have more social and emotional problems, require more support from their educational systems, and have lower graduation rates and lifetime incomes than those with normal hearing or with properly supported hearing losses. The costs of this bill not passing – both moral and economic – are far too great for Oregon to bear.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our support for this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Bryan Greenaway, Au.D.  
President, Oregon Academy of Audiology