



February 8, 2023

To all Members of the Oregon Legislature,

We unequivocally support the passage of HB 2994.

HB 2994 amends Oregon's preeminent 2018 Hearing Devices Law, HB 4104. HB 4104 passed almost unanimously and included support from Oregon's insurance providers. HB 4104 became a national model requiring quality healthcare for deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) citizens. HB 2994 improves on the spirit of HB 4104.

Deaf/hard of hearing (DHH) children served by soundSTART have benefitted from the mandates included in HB 4104. However, there have been some exceptions.

Here are examples of issues HB 2994 will address:

- A child is denied coverage of a remote microphone system that would allow her to hear her soccer coach. Children need Assistive Listening Devices (remote microphone systems) to access spoken language when involved in activities outside of school.
 - HB 2994 requires commercial plans to cover these.
- A mother asks about the repercussions of postponing her son's annual check-up. They have a high-deductible plan. Even for two working parents, the cost of care is a financial burden.
 - Under HB 2994, hearing health care is not subject to the deductible.
- A single mother misses two days of work to bring her sons for cochlear implant programming. Commercial insurance plans limit reimbursement to one cochlear implant per day.
 - HB 2994 requires commercial plans to reimburse for programming both (two) cochlear implants on the same day.
- A family pays out of pocket for ear molds that attach to the hearing aids. Their child's ears have grown so the current ones are too small. At the age of nine, their child is allowed one new ear mold per year.
 - HB 2994 requires ear molds to be covered when medically necessary.

I hope that you will support HB 2994 so that Oregon can continue as a national forerunner for hearing healthcare. Deaf and hard-of-hearing children deserve the services needed to achieve their potential.

Thank you,

Kim Atwill, Ph.D.
Executive Director