

Submitter: Tori Larson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2994

Children with hearing loss who rely on spoken language must use hearing devices, such as hearing aids and cochlear implants, for communication. Wearing these devices requires frequent follow-up care to ensure the child maintains good access to language, which is essential for healthy development. These services should be covered in full under insurance (regardless of deductibles), and audiologists should be reimbursed fairly for providing these services.

I am a pediatric audiologist who works with hearing aids and cochlear implants in Portland. I have seen firsthand the negative effects that the lack of insurance coverage for these devices and services can have on a family. Not only is it a financial burden, but it also creates confusion and distrust within the patient/provider relationship as families expect full coverage for services that are essential for their child to communicate. Insurance companies should not be allowed to continue to find ways around what previous legislation requires them to do. Parents should be able to focus on the needs of their child rather than worry about the cost of care, and audiologists should be able to focus on providing that comprehensive care rather than explaining the shortfalls of insurance companies. This bill is needed to ensure all children with hearing loss have the opportunity to access the hearing world around them if they so choose!