

Submitter: Steven Smith

On Behalf Of: HB 2994

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2994

I am a pediatric audiologist in Eugene, Oregon. This is such an important bill for families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Parents / guardians of children in need of hearing aids and other hearing assistance face a number of challenges to meet the needs of their child. Having a child with a disability can be stressful and challenging. It is unfortunate how often I see one of the major stressors for these families is trying to figure out how to pay for hearing aids and other assistive technologies that are absolutely essential for supporting their child's cognitive, language, social and psychosocial development. While we have made progress on this front in Oregon, there are still some issues that need to be addressed to better help these families as outlined in this bill. I see these issues in my practice on a regular basis. It would be such a better scenario if I could simply provide these children with what they need without having to help families figure out the financial component. I am still having this conversation with these families even with the passage of HB4104 that required commercial insurance companies to cover hearing aids for children. The reasons for this are well outlined in this bill and really should be addressed. This bill has my full support, and I ask you to please consider this as well.