

**Representative Hai Pham, DMD**  
**House District 36**



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Friday, May 5th, 2023**

Dear Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez and Members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means,

I am writing today to **share my strong support of [HB 2994A](#)**, a bill that would ensure the state keeps a promise we made to our children years ago.

**Like many of my colleagues in the legislature, the well-being of Oregon's children is of the utmost importance to me.** As a pediatric dentist, I spend my time outside of the legislature ensuring kids get the best dental care possible to ensure their health for years to come.

HB 2994 addresses a different aspect of a child's health and wellness - hearing. While not all children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing choose to get hearing aids and cochlear implants, for some, access to these devices can vastly improve their quality of life. Consistent, clear access to sound helps children with spoken language acquisition and reduces barriers in school and their social life.

Five years ago, the legislature passed [HB 4104](#), almost unanimously through both chambers, to address this issue and require insurers to cover hearing aids, cochlear implants and certain assistive listening devices. **Many of you on the Joint Ways & Means Committee voted in favor of the bill to support the health of our deaf and hard-of-hearing children.**

Unfortunately, several issues cropped up during the implementation of HB 4104, namely, different insurers implemented the bill in different ways, leaving families confused and kids without access to these critical devices and services.

HB 2994A would provide more clarity in statute of covered services and devices. Most notably, the bill will waive the need to meet a deductible before coverage of these devices and services, and extend coverage to children who receive care through the Oregon Health Plan (OHP), Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB), and Oregon Educators Benefit Board (OEBB).

This bill passed out of the House Behavioral Health & Health Care Committee unanimously with a small fiscal of \$517,750 for the biennium to cover children on OEBB. As you will see from the public hearing and on OLIS, over 170+ parents, providers, and advocates posted testimony in support of this bill as they know how important it is to our kids' futures.

**I strongly urge the Committee's support and funding of HB 2994A this session - let's make sure ALL of Oregon's children have the best chance at life.**

Sincerely,

**Representative Hai Pham, DMD**