

Submitter: Heysell Cruz Pacas  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB943

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and members of the committee,

I am writing to you as an Audiology student and a hearing health patient to ask you to support SB 943. The support of my audiologist in my hearing journey has been indispensable and their ability to do more for patients like me in Oregon will change lives. Your support of this bill will ensure that every Oregonian has timely access to quality hearing health care.

It was noted I had a hearing loss at 5 years old because I had just immigrated to this country and hearing screenings are not a norm in my country so I failed mine but no one knew if it was because of the language barrier or a hearing loss. My screening was not done by a hearing health professional and this lack of proper education resulted in inconsistent follow up. Due to the lack of education regarding how hearing loss can impact a child's development as well as not knowing how to counsel a family regarding hearing loss in their child especially a family who did not speak any English resulted in me not seeing an audiologist until I was 8 years old. I was trying to learn English while navigating a new country with a moderate hearing loss. I would not wish that on anyone. My family was absolutely shocked by my hearing loss and even more furious when they found out no one from my school had taken the time to follow up on the failed screenings I had every year. The moment my audiologist came into my life, everything changed. I blossomed and finally loved going to school. My audiologist made me feel normal in a world where I was considered "abnormal." I see my audiologist more than I see any other health professional due to the relationship that has cultivated which has lead me in the path of choosing this for my career. No one should have to experience what I did as a child just because the law isn't clear on what classifies as a professional for a specific field. SB 943 allows for further clarity for hearing health professionals to prevent patients like me from falling through the cracks.

SB 943 will improve access to timely, high quality hearing health care for Oregonians like me. My partnership with my audiologist has allowed me to live a better life and inspired me to become an audiologist hoping to improve the future of health care even if it is with a simple support letter for SB 943. I want others to have a better opportunities for improved communication and quality of life.

Thank you in advance for supporting this bill and patients like me,

Heysell Cruz Pacas  
Hillsboro, OR