



Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

PO Box 36401, Towson, Maryland 21286 ♦ www.mota-members.com

Committee:	Senate Finance Committee
Bill Number:	Senate Bill 778 – Health Insurance - Hearing Aids for Adults - Coverage
Hearing Date:	February 28, 2024
Position:	Support

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports *Senate Bill 778 – Health Insurance - Hearing Aids for Adults - Coverage*. This bill requires insurers, non-profit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations (collectively known as carriers) to provide coverage for all medically appropriate and necessary hearing aids for an adult who is covered under a policy and may limit the benefit payable to \$1,400 per hearing aid for each hearing-impaired ear every 36 months.

It is not unusual for an occupational therapist to work with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing; because of the many causes of hearing loss and different areas of the body it can affect, occupational therapists are important members of a treatment team that can provide meaningful activities to help people participate fully in their lives. Hearing loss comes with a host of negative consequences. Mild hearing loss has been found to double the risk of developing dementia and moderate loss tripled the risk. People with a severe hearing impairment were found five times more likely to develop dementia.¹ It is also linked with social isolation, walking problems, and fall risks.

This bill will make hearing aids more accessible to adults Marylanders and ultimately improve lives. We urge a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

¹ <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/the-hidden-risks-of-hearing-loss>