



Maryland Retired School Personnel Association

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House Bill 1339
In Support Of
Health Insurance – Hearing Aids for Adults – Coverage
Health and Government Operations Committee
Hearing: March 7, 2024 – 1:00 p.m.

Dear Honorable Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Chair, and Honorable Delegate Mark Chang, Vice Chair, and other distinguished Health and Government Operations Committee members,

The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA) strongly supports HB 1339 Health Insurance – Hearing Aids for Adults – Coverage.

Two of MRSPA's Legislative Priorities are maintaining our health benefits and ensuring a proper quality of life in retirement. This bill supports both of those priorities. It is long past time for insurance companies to recognize that hearing loss affects not only the person with the loss but all those around them. Expensive hearing aids prevent many seniors (and others) from accessing the tools they need to be active participants in conversations, in work, medical, and personal decision making, and in general everyday life.

This often leads to isolation which can also lead to diminished capacity for selfcare and even to mental health issues including dementia. The link between hearing loss and dementia is well documented. Hearing aids can be a real difference maker.

HB 1339 is a step in the right direction for helping Maryland seniors. Requiring insurance companies to cover \$1,400 will help hundreds if not thousands of Maryland seniors access the hear aids they need. If you have ever walked into the home of someone in need of hearing aids and tried to carry on a conversation with them or watch TV with them, you know immediately that they are miserable, as are the people around them who do not need hearing aids. You don't have to be a doctor to see the need and know how much better their lives would be if that person had hearing aids.

On behalf of the 12,000 members of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, we strongly urge support for HB 1339.

Sincerely,

Carla J. Duls
President

Virginia G. Crespo
Legislative Aide