



The Honorable Jason Gallion
Maryland General Assembly
420 James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Hearing Aid Coverage; SB 397

Dear Senator Gallion:

The Maryland Speech-Language-Hearing Association (MSHA) represents speech-language pathologists and audiologists living and working in Maryland. Our clients are adults and children with communication, cognition, and swallowing disorders. Consumers of our services in Maryland can benefit from this effort to reduce untreated hearing loss.

MSHA supports SB 397, which specifies that hearing aid purchases are subject to a minimum benefit of \$1,400 per hearing-impaired ear every 36 months.

The National Institutes on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NICDC) cites statistics on hearing loss in the US. <https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/statistics/quick-statistics-hearing#:~:text=One%20in%20eight%20people%20in,based%20on%20standard%20hearing%20examination s.&text=About%202%20percent%20of%20adults,adults%20aged%2055%20to%2064.>

- One in eight people in the United States (13 percent, or 30 million) aged 12 years or older has hearing loss in both ears, based on standard hearing examinations.
- About 2 percent of adults aged 45 to 54 have disabling hearing loss. The rate increases to 8.5 percent for adults aged 55 to 64. Nearly 25 percent of those aged 65 to 74 and 50 percent of those who are 75 and older have disabling hearing loss.

We appreciate the support for citizens of Maryland who experience hearing loss. If you have questions, you or your staff may contact MSHA at 301-304-7001, or via e-mail president@mdslha.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Lee Casper".

Mary L. Casper, MA, CCC-SLP, ASHA Fellow, FNAP
MSHA President
Maryland District 15 resident