

February 4, 2023

Chair Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
House Health & Government Operations Committee
Taylor House Office Building, Room 241
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401


RE: HB401 Practice Audiology -- Definition
Position: SUPPORT

Madam Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Ariana Kelly, and Committee Members,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing in regards to HB401. As an audiologist serving a largely rural and underserved area, I hold my patient's needs and access to care paramount. When the FDA created two distinct hearing aid categories — OTC and "prescription" — they unknowingly created potential barriers to care for my patients. While the FDA used the terms "order" and "prescription/prescribe" in their ruling, the reality is that these hearing aid devices have not changed. They are the same type of technology that audiologists have been providing for decades. As such, it is imperative that the semantics in our state laws be updated to match the new federal guidelines. By doing so, you will help ensure the continued access to hearing healthcare for our local communities.

Thank you for support of HB401 legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kari Harsh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "H".

Kari Harsh, Au.D.
Maryland License #01443