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February 5, 2023

Late Written Testimony

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,

Thank you for your time in considering my SUPPORT of HB 401. I currently practice as an audiologist at a private practice in Ellicott City, MD. I am also President-Elect of the Maryland Academy of Audiology. I have been practicing as a licensed audiologist, including fitting hearing aids, in the state of Maryland since 2005.

I would like to request your support of HB 401, which serves to update language in the definition of "practice audiology." Recent federal regulations created a new class of hearing aids, "OTC hearing aids," and reclassified hearing aids fit by professionals as "prescription hearing aids." In addition, the FDA applied the words "order" and "prescribe" to the fitting of "prescription hearing aids." Hearing aids now deemed "prescription" are no different from hearing aids deemed "restricted" prior to October 2022, other than potential technology improvements and updated model names that are introduced routinely by hearing aid manufacturers. I am as qualified to fit these devices today as I was prior to October 2022. The updated verbiage proposed in HB401 would remove any inconsistencies between federal and state language and prevent unintended barriers for patients to obtain professionally fit hearing devices.

Thank you once again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Kincaid, Ph.D.
Clinical Audiologist