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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

Late Testimony

RE: HB401 Practice Audiology -- Definition
Position: **SUPPORT**

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

My name is Sofia Roller; I am a doctor of audiology and co-owner of an audiology clinic "The Hearing Wellness Center, LLC" serving all ages in the Baltimore area. I am writing to express my support of HB401 for the purpose of updating the language so that the Maryland statute is kept up to date with the new federal legislation that went into effect in October 2022 regarding over-the-counter hearing aids. With the OTC ruling, the FDA added a new category of "prescription" hearing aids (to be dispensed by licensed audiologists). Audiologists have always dispensed and treated patients with hearing aids as it is a monumental part of our scope of practice. There is no difference between the hearing aids we have dispensed/will continue to dispense and the "prescription" hearing aids that the FDA has indicated in the new legislation, however the semantical difference of labeling these same devices by using the words "prescription" and "order" has technically, accidentally, and unintentionally restricted the scope of practice for Maryland audiologists (and those in other states). While the devices are the same and our (audiologists') roles/scope of practice has not changed, this new wording causes a restriction in our services/practices. It is imperative that the language in our state's statute be updated to match and reflect this new language introduced by the FDA. By ensuring that our scope of practice on a state level continues to be symmetrical to that on a federal level, we can protect the patients'/consumers' access to healthcare by preventing any disruption/restriction to the providers' mission to identify, diagnose, and treat hearing loss among other hearing and balance disorders.

On behalf of the patients, consumers, audiologists, and constituents of Maryland, thank you for support of HB401 legislation.

Sincerely,

Sofia Roller, AuD.
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