

Subject: Favorable SB641//HB1355 Health Insurance - Required Coverage - Hearing Aids

Date: February 26, 2025

From: National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

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To: Senate Finance Committee

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the Senate Finance Committee to vote favorable on SB641//HB1355, a bill that will require insurance companies to cover the cost of hearing aids ordered, fitted, and dispensed by a licensed hearing aid dispenser.

Some people are both blind and suffer hearing loss. For instance, if a person has retinitis pigmentosa, which affects vision, they may also have Usher's disease, which affects hearing. For a blind person, it is very difficult to also have a hearing disability because in addition to having difficulty in communications, they also may have difficulty with orientation and mobility. They can miss some of the auditory and environmental cues that allow them to determine their location, so they have trouble traveling.

This bill will make it easier for those who need hearing aids to get them. Please vote in favor of SB641//HB1355.