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March, 10, 2025

The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk  
House Health and Government Operations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 240  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Submitted Via Email**

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee,

On behalf of the American Academy of Audiology, the world's largest professional organization of, by and for audiologists, I want to share with you the benefits of HB 1298 to Maryland patients and healthcare providers.

This legislation focuses on efficiency and reducing barriers to patients' access to timely, coordinated, and effective care. Under HB 1298, audiologists would be authorized to order necessary imaging, cultures, and bloodwork testing to support a streamlined referral process. This enhanced process could result in the elimination of unnecessary office visits and the development of faster diagnoses and treatment plans.

Audiologists are the primary healthcare professionals who evaluate, diagnose, treat, and manage hearing loss and balance disorders in individuals of all ages, from infants to older adults. The audiologic evaluation is the first step in determining if a need exists for further medical intervention and referral. Through HB 1298, the audiologist could order necessary testing to ensure that the consulting provider has critical diagnostic information needed to move forward in determining a treatment plan.

The American Academy of Audiology recognizes the need to modernize outdated statutes and regulations that stymie the practice of audiology and its evolution to meet the needs of patients. Efforts at the federal and state levels to remove barriers and expand access are critical to supporting audiologists to practice at the top of their license. HB 1298 prioritizes patient care by ensuring full access to comprehensive hearing and balance healthcare services in the most efficient way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia Gaffney AuD, MPH".

Patricia Gaffney. AuD, MPH  
President