



Maryland Academy of Audiology

P.O. Box 710

Parkville, MD 21234

<https://maaudiology.org/>

Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 795 Health Insurance – Vision Benefits – Regulation of Insurers and Vision Benefit Managers

Position: FAVORABLE

March 04, 2026

Madam Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Maryland Academy of Audiology (MAA), I write to express our **strong support** for Senate Bill 795, state legislation that establishes meaningful consumer protections, increases transparency in vision care and eyeglass/contact contracts, and promotes fair and ethical participation by licensed vision care professionals.

The MAA represents nearly 600 licensed audiologists who practice in the state of Maryland and the patients we serve. Our mission is to enhance the ability of members to achieve career and practice objectives by fostering professional autonomy, providing quality continuing education, and increasing public and consumer awareness of hearing, tinnitus (audiologic), and balance (vestibular) disorders and the value of these services. Audiologists in Maryland work closely with federal, state, and private third-party payers/administrators (TPPs and 3PAs) to optimize coverage of services provided for the evaluation, diagnosis, management, and treatment of patients in our care.

SB 795 clarifies that only covered items and services may be subject to plan-established fees, while preserving the ability of licensed optometrists to charge usual and customary (U&C) fees for non-covered services, with full disclosure consistent with the federal No Surprises Act requirements. These provisions promote fairness, sustainability, and ethical care delivery without limiting consumer choice.

SB 795 aligns with efforts by MAA and national audiology associations to reform problematic managed care practices in hearing health care, including:

- Clear distinctions between insurance benefits and discount programs;
- Fair reimbursement for professional audiologic and vestibular services;
- Transparency regarding third-party administrator (3PA) and manufacturer involvement; and
- Protection against coercive contracting practices.

This legislation reflects principles advanced at both state and federal levels and serves as a model for balanced regulation that protects consumers while respecting licensed professionals. Disclosure of manufacturer ownership and product limitations is especially important to maintaining patient trust and preventing conflicts of interest that could compromise clinical decision-making.



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SB 795 represents thoughtful, well-balanced legislation that protects Maryland consumers, supports ethical vision health care delivery, and increases accountability within the vision care plan marketplace. The MAA appreciates the opportunity to provide input and stands ready to serve as a resource on healthcare policy matters.

The MAA requests a **favorable** committee report on SB 795 and looks forward to replicating the optometrist's success in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alicia D.D. Spoor, Au.D." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alicia D.D. Spoor, Au.D.
Doctor of Audiology
Legislative Chair, MAA