



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senate Concurrent Resolution 65, SD1 – Requesting the Auditor to Assess the Social and Financial Impacts of Requiring Health Insurers to Offer Coverage for Hearing Aids

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 65, SD1 - Requesting the Auditor to Assess the Social and Financial Impacts of Requiring Health Insurers to Offer Coverage for Hearing Aids. We are aware that it is a requirement for a study to be conducted related to the social and financial effects of requiring health insurers to offer coverage for hearing aids per sections 21-51 and 23-52, Hawaii Revised Statutes. DCAB supports this study in order to obtain necessary information to amend the statute in an informed and appropriate manner to mandate increased coverage for hearing aids.

Hearing is essential to most individuals in their daily lives (waking up to an alarm clock, listening for our family members, watching television, or talking on the phone). It allows us to be connected to others in our environment. A hearing aid enhances the person's ability to interact independently in the community, but the cost is prohibitive to the average adult and it may be multiplied when several members in one family need hearing aids. Being able to have more of the cost covered by a health plan would enable some individuals to be able to obtain a hearing aid without feeling guilty that the money is better spent on some other necessity. An individual should not have to choose between hearing or not hearing when a hearing aid is available as a viable option.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

BARBARA FISCHLOWITZ-LEONG
Chairperson

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director