

To: House Health Committee
From: Amanda Hvass
Date: 3/7/2017
Re: Support HB 2392

Chair Greenlick, members of the committee

For the record, my name is Amanda Hvass. I am the parent of a deaf child in Lane County. He is 7 years old and wears cochlear implants. I also am the Parent Guide in Lane County for a program called Guide By Your Side. In this part time job, I support families that have children with hearing loss. It is a privilege to serve these folks and have insight into their every-day lives.

Raising a child with hearing loss is unnecessarily expensive. We have found that although insurance will pay for the cochlear implants and the surgery, when it comes to upkeep, they are hands off. Our family pays \$800 a year just to insure the products... because if something breaks, neither the manufacturer nor our insurance company find it their responsibility to cover the cost. And beyond that, we are often on the hook for spending \$200 per reusable battery when one goes out.

I find this the case with other families that use hearing aids. Children grow fast and need replacements and new ear molds very often. Most families shell out thousands of dollars because their provider isn't covered under the way the insurance law is written. The hearing aid may be, but the actual professional needed to make it all work is not!

Because of the high costs, many children go without any amplification. This is a crying shame. I am at a loss for words when it comes to this. You see, my son was born with a portion of his brain missing. He works hard for EVERYTHING. Learning doesn't come easy to him. But for many kids, hearing loss is their ONLY disability. They simply need amplification to pick up language to learn. That's it.

I would love for you to consider changing this law. If insurance companies covered all that it takes to get children properly amplified, more children would have the tools necessary to learn. And from that, our communities would be better off with our youth being properly educated in a world that desperately needs responsible, well-educated citizens.

Thank you for taking this into consideration ☺

Sincerely,
Oliver Hvass (Ollie) and Amanda Hvass

