

Submitter: Laurie Harrison

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2994

My name is Laurie Harrison and I am the administrator of the Deaf/HH program at Northwest Regional Education Service District. In my role I supervise our Audiology program, where children from birth to age 21 are provided hearing evaluations, and where families are given the opportunity to purchase hearing aids for their children. Over the years, I have seen fewer and fewer families have the resources to pay for the hearing aids that are so crucial to their child's access to information and language and daily (as well as academic) communication. House Bill 4104 was intended to mandate that commercial insurance companies cover hearing aids, cochlear implants, and audiology services, but we continue to have insurance companies avoiding coverage beyond what was intended.

House Bill 2994 is crucial to the families we serve in that it will require insurance companies to provide needed services and equipment (without families being subject to paying a deductible) to the children we serve. It is not fair that families of children with disabilities should be required to pay thousands upon thousands of dollars out of pocket so that their child has access to even the most basic of language and safety sounds that impact so many aspects of life.

On behalf of infants, children, and young adults in Oregon who have a hearing loss and who require amplification, I cannot recommend this bill more strongly.