



Oregon Legislature  
Senate Committee on Human Services  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

February 15, 2023

**SUBJECT: HB 2994 • Modifies requirements for health insurance coverage of hearing-related items and services.**

To the Chair Rep. Noose, Co-Vice Chair Rep. Goodwin, Co-Vice Chair Rep. Nelson, and the members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

Hello! This letter is intended to provide public education and increase awareness of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians. For so many years, this language and culturally marginalized group have been denied access to information, goods, and services in the State of Oregon. The final report in 2016 of the [Community-based Needs Assessment \(CNA\) of Oregon's Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#) communities conducted by the Research & Resource Center on Deaf communities at Western Oregon University as this was funded by the 2015 Oregon Legislature, we were able to learn countless challenges and barriers. Despite the assessment's findings, legislators did not pass proposed legislation in 2017 that would have met critical community needs, prompting the establishment of Bridges Oregon.

Bridges Oregon, Inc. is a nonprofit organization serving Oregonians who are Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing or face other communication barriers. It is in our mission to facilitate equity and inclusiveness and to provide a bridge to opportunities through advocacy, education and communication.

We strongly believe that access and affordability of care are paramount to the ability of people with hearing loss to thrive in our state.

I beseech you to recognize the need in modifying the requirement for health insurance coverage to make them accessible to Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians as they are culturally specific and linguistically marginalized population in our state. Please vote yes to HB 2994.

Sincerely,

  
Chad A. Ludwig, MSW, ADA-C, OHCI, CDI  
Executive Director

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