

Wednesday, Feb. 15th, 2023
House Behavioral Health & Health Care Committee
Hearing Room F
3:00 - 4:30 pm

HB 2994 - Insurance Coverage Fixes for Children's Hearing Aids
Representative Lisa Reynolds

Good Afternoon Chair Nosse, Acting Chair Goodwin,
Vice-Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, and Members of the House
Behavioral Health & Health Care Committee.

For the record, my name is Lisa Reynolds. I am a pediatrician and the
state representative for Oregon House District 34 which covers
northeast Washington County.

I am here today to express my strong support of HB 2994, a bill that
would clarify and require insurance coverage for children's hearing
aids, cochlear implants, and other assistive listening devices.

This proposal first came across my desk a year and a half ago, when
a constituent reached out to discuss issues they heard from families
and kids trying to get access to these services. That constituent is the
President of the PNW chapter of AG Bell, whose mission is to ensure
that those who are deaf and hard of hearing can communicate with
spoken language. Since then, I've been working on this policy and am
grateful to be collaborating with Rep. Pham, and his chief of staff
Medha Pulla, on this concept.

As explained earlier, this bill is more of a technical fix. It would clarify
the language of our current laws to ensure that all insurers can
implement coverage as originally intended back in 2018. This means:

- Coverage of the most medically appropriate hearing aids,
cochlear implants, and assistive listening devices. This includes

components required for hearing device function such as minor parts for prosthetic devices, bone-conducting headbands, etc.;

- Coverage of ear molds four times per plan year or more as medically necessary for kids under eight, and once per year or more as medically necessary for kids 8-18 years old;
- Creation of a resolution service within a health benefit plan for individuals to challenge any coverage denials.

Lastly, the one major addition to HB 2994, which was left out of the past few years of implementation, is the inclusion of children receiving care through Medicaid/the Oregon Health Plan. A child's access to this necessary care should not be dependent on their parent's income, OR their zipcode.

Let's do the right thing and ensure Oregon becomes the best and most equitable state for all of our children to grow by supporting our deaf and hard-of-hearing kids and passing HB 2994 this session.
Thank you.