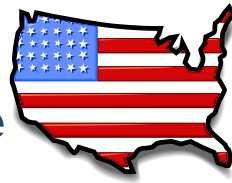


Citizen Request: South Carolina Mandate for Hearing Aid Coverage



South Carolina's Charge To Help Citizens with Hearing Loss

Your assistance is greatly needed to **establish legislation requiring** that each individual, group, and blanket **health insurance** contract, provide:

- coverage per individual hearing aid, per ear for children covered as a dependent by the policy holder;
- up to \$2,500 per hearing impaired ear, every 36 months, for hearing aids for children up to age 22;
- coverage to include fitting and dispensing services, including providing ear molds as necessary to maintain optimal fit;
- the option for the insured to choose a higher priced hearing aid and pay the difference in cost; and
- the requirement that hearing aids be prescribed by a licensed audiologist and dispensed by a licensed audiologist or hearing instrument specialist.

Currently, 18 States have Hearing Aid Legislation

Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, **North Carolina**, Oklahoma, and Oregon require that health benefits plans in their state pay for hearing aids for children. Arkansas, New Hampshire and Rhode Island require coverage for both children and adults. Wisconsin requires coverage for both hearing aids and cochlear implants for children.

North Carolina Legislation

Effective January 1, 2011, health plans are required to provide coverage for one hearing aid per hearing-impaired ear up to two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) per hearing aid every 36 months for covered individuals under the age of 22 years.

Statistics...How Hearing Loss Impacts SC?



United States: Everyday in the United States, approximately 1 in 1,000 newborns (or 33 babies every day) is born profoundly deaf with another 2-3 out of 1,000 babies born with partial hearing loss, making hearing loss the number one birth defect in America.

Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program.



South Carolina: Roughly four percent of South Carolina's infants fail the newborn hearing screening due to deafness or some degree of hearing loss (n=2,167). *Source: 2007 Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program.*



United States: When children are not identified and do not receive early intervention, special education for a child with hearing loss costs schools an additional \$420,000, and has a lifetime cost of approximately \$1 million per individual. *Source: Hearing Loss Association of America.*



South Carolina: In 2008, 1,112 students ages 3-21 had a recorded primary disability of deaf and hard of hearing and 24,726 students with a Speech or Language Impairment. *Source: The South Carolina Department of Education – Office of Exceptional Children 2008 Child Count Data.*