

December 14, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader McCarthy,

The American Academy of Audiology (AAA), the Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA), and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) write to share our support for Subtitle B, Subpart A (Medicare Coverage of Hearing Services) of the Senate Finance Committee's reconciliation measure that will expand access to hearing health care and recognize the critical role of the audiologist in providing needed services and supports to Medicare beneficiaries.

In particular, section 122101 includes provisions that will be essential to successful implementation of broader policy initiatives designed to improve access to hearing health care, including the following:

- Enabling Medicare beneficiaries to access both diagnostic and treatment services delivered by audiologists,
- Reclassifying audiologists as practitioners under Medicare so that they can be more efficiently utilized within the Medicare system, and
- Removing the physician order requirement to streamline beneficiary access to hearing health care, which will reduce duplicative services and delays in treatment, while lowering consumer costs for unnecessary visits to physicians.

AAA, ADA, and ASHA strongly support these provisions and encourage their inclusion in any final version of the Build Back Better Act the House and Senate may consider. Together, they will ensure that new benefits such as coverage of hearing aids will result in optimal functional outcomes for beneficiaries and the best return on the investment of taxpayer resources.

Thank you for your efforts to improve the hearing health of America's seniors. We look forward to continued collaboration to improve Medicare beneficiary access to the full range of diagnostic and treatment services provided by audiologists.

American Academy of Audiology
Academy of Doctors of Audiology
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association