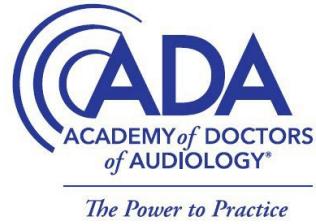


January 20, 2026



Senator Julie A. Morrison
311 C Capitol Building
Springfield, IL 62706
Sent via Email

RE: SB 2838 – Consumer Protection, Hearing Care Plans

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Morrison and Members of the Illinois General Assembly,

On behalf of the Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA), I write to express ADA's strong support for Senate Bill 2838, legislation that establishes meaningful consumer protections, increases transparency in hearing care plan contracts, and promotes fair and ethical participation by licensed hearing care professionals.

ADA represents audiologists in Illinois and across the nation, who are committed to advancing patient-centered, evidence-based hearing and balance care. ADA members serve patients across Illinois in hospitals, clinics, academic institutions, private practices, and community-based settings. SB 2838 directly addresses long-standing concerns raised by both consumers and providers regarding hearing care plans that are marketed as "benefits" but are frequently only discount plans with limited transparency.

Protecting Consumers Through Transparency and Clear Disclosure

SB 2838 establishes clear and necessary standards requiring hearing care organizations to accurately disclose whether benefits are funded or unfunded, specify allowable rates, and clearly identify what items and services are covered versus noncovered, from initial marketing all the way through care delivery.

By requiring written communication of benefits, prohibiting the misrepresentation of unfunded discounts as covered benefits, and applying consumer fraud enforcement mechanisms, SB 2838 empowers patients to make informed decisions about their hearing health. These provisions align with ADA's long-standing commitment to transparency, informed consent, and patient autonomy.

Supporting Ethical, Sustainable Audiology Practice

Equally important, SB 2838 addresses contract practices that compel audiologists and other providers to deliver noncovered items and services at fees set by hearing care plans. This practice undermines professional judgment, devalues clinical services, and ultimately threatens patient access to high-quality care.

The bill appropriately clarifies that only covered items and services may be subject to plan-established fees, while preserving the ability of licensed professionals to charge usual and customary fees for noncovered services, with full disclosure consistent with federal No Surprises Act requirements. These provisions promote fairness, sustainability, and ethical care delivery without limiting consumer choice.

Alignment with ADA Managed Care Initiatives

SB 2838 is consistent with ADA's broader policy agenda to reform problematic managed care practices in hearing health care. ADA has consistently advocated for:

- Clear distinctions between insurance benefits and discount programs
- Fair reimbursement for professional services
- Transparency regarding third-party administrator and manufacturer involvement
- Protections against coercive contracting practices

This legislation reflects many of the same principles advanced by ADA at the state and federal levels and serves as a model for balanced regulation that protects consumers while respecting licensed professionals. Disclosure of manufacturer ownership and product limitations is especially important to maintaining patient trust and preventing conflicts of interest that could compromise clinical decision-making.

Conclusion

SB 2838 represents thoughtful, well-balanced legislation that protects Illinois consumers, supports ethical hearing health care delivery, and increases accountability within the hearing care plan marketplace. ADA commends Senator Morrison for her leadership and urges members of the Illinois General Assembly to support this important bill.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input and stand ready to serve as a resource as this legislation advances.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Czuhajewski, MPH, CAE
Executive Director
Academy of Doctors of Audiology