



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

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|--|-------------------------------|---|
| BILL NUMBER: HB 1918 | | DATE: 2/13/2024 |
| COMMITTEE: Healthcare Reform | | |
| TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES | | |
| WITNESS NAME | | |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: BECKY DAVIS | | PHONE NUMBER: 573-298-6752 |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING | | TITLE: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR |
| ADDRESS: 3216 EMERALD LANE, SUITE B | | |
| CITY: JEFFERSON CITY | | STATE: MO |
| | | ZIP: 65109 |
| EMAIL: becky.davis@mcdhh.mo.gov | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/13/2024 11:10 AM |

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Dear Committee, Thank you for the opportunity to submit my support of HB1918. I am the current Director of the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. While we currently run a program to assist low-income families with the purchasing of hearing aids, we are only able to assist approximately 35-40 people a year. We are often restrained by rules of our program funding leaving people to find assistance elsewhere or to reapply for the next cycle. Adding hearing aids under Mo HealthNet would allow for many individuals new to hearing loss or experiencing late onset of hearing loss an easier way access devices that would have significant impact on their daily lives.



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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| REGISTERED LOBBYIST: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: BRENT HEMPHILL | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| REPRESENTING: MO SPEECH LANGUAGE HEARING ASSOCIATION | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 156 | | |
| CITY: JEFFERSON CITY | | STATE: MO |
| | | ZIP: 65101 |
| EMAIL: | ATTENDANCE: | SUBMIT DATE: 2/13/2024 12:00 AM |
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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: BRIAN KLEBER | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: bkk1945@hotmail.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/11/2024 2:28 PM |
| THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo. | | |

Hearing aids have made a big change in my life and opened up my world.



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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: CAROLINE GRACE | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: carolinegrace@charter.net | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/13/2024 10:45 AM |
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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: CHRISTINA KOEHLER | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: christina.koehler@gmail.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/10/2024 11:58 AM |

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

As an audiologist, I am deeply concerned about the accessibility to life-changing hearing devices for persons with hearing loss in state of Missouri. As you may know, hearing aids and implantable hearing devices (cochlear implants and bone conduction implants) are used to help those with hearing loss. These devices are not a covered benefit for adult MO Healthnet beneficiaries in the state of Missouri which has created an inequity in access to these vital technologies among the most vulnerable of our population. HB1918 currently being considered by the Missouri General Assembly addresses this access issue by expanding coverage for hearing devices to adult Medicaid beneficiaries. I am writing to ask that you support this legislation. I am happy to relay stories and experiences from patients where hearing technology such as the cochlear implant has significantly impacted their lives.



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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: ELIZABETH BRENNAN | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: kohlea77@yahoo.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/9/2024 12:22 PM |

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

I am writing in support of HB1918 Doll- MO Healthnet Coverage of hearing devicesAs an audiologist for the past 20+ years I have seen firsthand the impact of hearing loss. Countless studies have shown the negative impact untreated hearing loss has on communication, learning, employment, overall health across all ages and more recently, increased risks of dementia. While Missouri has made progress in supporting our pediatric patients, there remains a critical need to support our older citizens. Without access to hearing technologies such as hearing aids and cochlear implants, our citizens will be placed at greater risk of socio-economic challenges which in turn impacts the community at large. There is incredible hearing technology available which should not be viewed as a luxury reserved only for those with the means to pay for it. The ability to hear and participate within ones family, school, employment and overall health is a basic need that all individuals deserve. Please support this Bill to grant access to all Missourians with hearing loss.



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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: GREGORY BAUM | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: glbaum@gmail.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/11/2024 2:40 PM |
| THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo. | | |

My niece was born with almost total hearing loss, and the only reason she can hear is because my brother has a good job with excellent insurance - they were able to provide her with a cochlear implant. Many people do not have that option. Please expand these services to the most vulnerable members of our society.



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| WITNESS NAME | | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | | |
| WITNESS NAME: JACQUELYN BROWN | | PHONE NUMBER: | |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: | |
| ADDRESS: | | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: | ZIP: |
| EMAIL: jbrown.home@sbcglobal.net | | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/9/2024 2:46 PM |

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

I urge legislators to support HB 1918 so eligible hearing impaired Missourians can have essential hearing aids and CIs. I wore hearing aids for about 40 years partially paid for by private insurance but mostly out of pocket paid. I am very grateful for a left ear CI in year 2022 and a right ear CI in 2023 thanks to Medicare. I had difficulty in school hearing, answering questions correctly, and socially due to my hearing loss. I was 19 in college before people around me mentioned my hearing loss. It's very unfortunate children are hearing impaired when learning language and to read! My husband, children, and friends became my interpreter when I missed what was said. After writing notes at our family Thanksgiving gathering in 2021, I decided it was finally time to get a CI. I was hearing maybe 10 percent with hearing aids, now with CIs, maybe 50-60 percent and hopefully better after audio rehab and another mapping.



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| WITNESS NAME | | | |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION: | | | |
| WITNESS NAME: JEANETTE MOTT OXFORD | | PHONE NUMBER: 314-289-4303 | |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: PARAQUAD | | TITLE: PUBLIC POLICY & ADVOCACY MANAGER | |
| ADDRESS: 5240 OAKLAND AVENUE | | | |
| CITY: SAINT LOUIS | | STATE: MO | ZIP: 63110 |
| EMAIL: jmo.mott.oxford@gmail.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/13/2024 9:27 PM | |
| THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo. | | | |

Paraquad is one of Missouri's 22 centers for independent living, advocating for equity and independence for people with disabilities through services, partnerships, education, and advocacy. We provide five core services: peer counseling, advocacy, independent living skills training, information and referral, and transitions (from nursing home to community, from youth to post-secondary life, etc.). The MO Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has gone on record in support of this bill. We respect this ally organization that is important to our staff members and program participants who are deaf, so we add our voices to theirs.



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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: JOSHUA M. SAPPINGTON, MD | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: joshua.sappington@slucare.ssmhealth.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/13/2024 11:12 AM |

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

My name is Joshua M. Sappington, MD and I am a neurotologist and lateral skull base specialist at Saint Louis University School of Medicine. My career and practice is dedicated to caring for patients with hearing loss. The current gap in hearing restoration coverage for Missouri residents on Missouri Medicaid is something that needs to be addressed immediately. Individuals over the age of 21 with hearing loss face significant challenges secondary to their medical condition. They are not able to interact with their world around them leading to an inability to work, decreased compensation at work, decreased quality of life and potential neurocognitive decline later in life. To make it simple if a person cannot hear and cannot communicate efficiently they will not maximize their potential compensation and/or cannot work. This has long ranging implications for the individual patient with their finances and retirement, the local and state economy as individuals will work lower paying jobs or not at all. Patients who are unable to work face economic hardship and the potential of being on disability which is far more expensive than a hearing restoration device. To further compound this hearing loss is a life long disease which is progressive in nature. Unfortunately, patients will not improve their hearing as they age which means that the hearing patients have today is the best hearing they will have the rest of their life. Missouri residents who need services for hearing aids, cochlear implantation, or osteointegrated implants have a critical medical need that we need to address. I fully support expansion of hearing devices for all Missouri Medicaid adults over 21 as a hearing specialist, someone who has battled hearing loss personally, and has a family member who has received cochlear implantation. Thank you for your consideration.



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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: JOYCE KELLER | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: jmkeller99@yahoo.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/13/2024 11:35 AM |

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As an older person with hearing loss I recognize the importance of hearing aids for normal functioning



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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: JULIE L ADOLPHSON | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: julie.hydrogenalpha@gmail.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/11/2024 3:07 PM |

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

VOTE YES on HB 1918. I have been hearing impaired since birth. I was fortunate to have good health insurance so I was able to get my first pair of hearing aids in 2013. I fully support coverage for all, most especially those who need the but can not afford them. MO HealthNet payments are made for eligible children in need, pregnant women, and blind persons, for among other services, hearing aids. This bill authorizes coverage of hearing aids and cochlear implants for all eligible persons in need as described in Chapter 208, RSMo. VOTE YES on HB 1918!



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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: KATHLEEN SINKS | | PHONE NUMBER: 314-749-4091 |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: CENTER FOR HEARING AND SPEECH | | TITLE: DIRECTOR OF AUDIOLOGY |
| ADDRESS: 9835 MANCHESTER RD | | |
| CITY: ST. LOUIS | | STATE: MO |
| | | ZIP: 63119 |
| EMAIL: | ATTENDANCE: | SUBMIT DATE: 2/13/2024 12:00 AM |
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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: KATHY J MARINCEL | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: kmarincel@yahoo.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/12/2024 1:24 PM |
| THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo. | | |

MO HealthNet payments are made for eligible children in need, pregnant women, and blind persons, for among other services, hearing aids. This bill authorizes coverage of hearing aids and cochlear implants for all eligible persons in need as described in Chapter 208, RSMo



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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: LAURA BURKHARDT | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: laburkhardt3@gmail.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/13/2024 7:23 PM |
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| WITNESS NAME | | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | | |
| WITNESS NAME: MAHREE SKALA | | PHONE NUMBER: | |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: | |
| ADDRESS: | | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: | ZIP: |
| EMAIL: skalamahree@yahoo.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | | SUBMIT DATE: 2/12/2024 5:16 PM |
| THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo. | | | |

MoHealthNet should be able to pay for hearing aids and cochlear implants for all people who are eligible for MoHealthNet services. These devices can change people's lives, making them more productive citizens.



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| WITNESS NAME | | | |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION: | | | |
| WITNESS NAME: MALLORY RUSCH | | PHONE NUMBER: 314-306-8945 | |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: EMPOWER MISSOURI | | TITLE: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | |
| ADDRESS: 1750 JEFFERSON ST, #104900 | | | |
| CITY: JEFFERSON CITY | | STATE: MO | ZIP: 65110 |
| EMAIL: mallory@empowermissouri.org | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/10/2024 9:34 PM | |

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Date: February 12, 2024 To: Chairman Haden and Members, House Healthcare Reform From: Mallory Rusch, Executive Director, Empower Missouri RE: Our support for HB 1918 and HB 2626

Empower Missouri has spent more than 120 years fighting poverty in Missouri. Today, we come to present testimony on a bill which specifically targets our neighbors with the lowest incomes. On behalf of our staff, board, and coalition members we are asking you to support HB 1918 and HB 2626. Hearing aids and cochlear implants are critical resources for individuals with hearing impairment or a full loss of hearing. According to the Hearing Industries Association, the average cost of prescription hearing aids ranges between \$1,000 and \$4,000, depending on the severity of the hearing loss. In Missouri, the income cap for individuals receiving healthcare through MO HealthNet is \$19,392. The income cap for a family of four is \$39,900. I would implore this committee to consider your own families' annual income and expenses, and then consider if you feel like an individual or family earning this low of an income could manage to afford a \$2,500 medical bill just to be able to hear. If this issue is debated the way that I've seen similar issues debated in this committee, I'm sure that lobbyists for the health insurance industry will tell you that when you add additional services, like hearing aids, to healthcare plans, the prices will go up for everyone on those plans. That may be the case, but that is a choice made by the health insurance industry. Meanwhile, CEOs of major healthcare companies like Anthem, Aetna and United Healthcare are raking in between \$15M and \$25M annually in salaries, bonuses, and stock options. This is simply another case of forcing those with the least among us to beg for basic necessities while the rich get richer. As a taxpayer whose tax dollars go to fund programs like Medicaid, I want those funds to ensure that families covered by Medicaid aren't just surviving, but thriving. I know that there are many, many other Missourians who agree with me. The ability to hear is necessary to thrive. Please vote "do pass" on these bills.



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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: MARILYN MCLEOD | | PHONE NUMBER: 573-239-3708 |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MISSOURI | | TITLE: PRESIDENT |
| ADDRESS: 8706 MANCHESTER RD. | | |
| CITY: ST. LOUIS | | STATE: MO |
| | | ZIP: 63144 |
| EMAIL: marilyn_mcleod@yahoo.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/12/2024 6:34 PM |

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

The League of Women Voters believes that every US resident should have access to a basic level of healthcare and supports this bill authorizing funding for the coverage of hearing aids and cochlear implants for all eligible persons in need.



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| WITNESS NAME | | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | | |
| WITNESS NAME: MARK J. VAN ESS, DO, MHA | | PHONE NUMBER: | |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: | |
| ADDRESS: | | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: | ZIP: |
| EMAIL: mark.vaness@mercy.net | | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/13/2024 11:58 AM |
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I am a practicing Otolaryngologist subspecialized in Otology and Neurotology (ear and skull base surgery) serving in Springfield, MO. Our practice (and organization - Mercy) is one of a few committed to caring for the underserved in our region. I help provide medical and surgical care for adult and pediatric Medicaid patients that do or would benefit significantly from hearing devices (hearing aids and cochlear implantation). At this pint, I am the only Otolaryngologist in the region (South Missouri) performing these necessary services. Currently there is no hearing aid or Cochlear Implant coverage for adults on Missouri Medicaid over the age of 21 unless they are blind, pregnant, or in a long-term care facility. Despite my organization's commitment to providing care for these patients, they are being denied access to critical healthcare which directly affects their ability to maintain employment and communicate. Expansion of coverage in this area would help these patients obtain critical hearing health services. This would allow many of them to maintain or obtain employment and significantly improve their quality of life in a large majority of cases.



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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: MARQUITA GRANT | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: grantm@chsstl.org | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/8/2024 4:52 PM |

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

When a person is unable to hear, they often feel isolated. They are afraid to ask someone to repeat themselves, in fear of a negative response. People often get tired of repeating themselves when a individual has difficulty hearing. This can cause social isolation and depression. I have hearing loss in both ears, and my insurance does not cover hearing aids. Thankfully I am able to afford them, but what about clients who don't have the means to pay. All insurance companies should provide hearing aid coverage because hearing is a human right and a necessity.



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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: MARY ELIZABETH DUNCAN, AUD | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: marybeth.duncan@gmail.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/13/2024 9:46 AM |
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Hearing aids and cochlear implants are life changing technologies that provide individuals with hearing loss access to sound and spoken communication. Without these devices, their communication and safety are significantly impaired. Missouri Medicaid does not cover these devices for individuals over age 21 years, unless they are blind, pregnant, or in a long-term care facility. Children who have required these devices their entire lives celebrate their 21st birthday and then no longer have any coverage for their equipment. Access to hearing allows for continued education, employment, safety, and active community engagement. I am a pediatric cochlear implant audiologist, and I strongly support HB 1918.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

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| BILL NUMBER: HB 1918 | | DATE: 2/13/2024 |
| COMMITTEE: Healthcare Reform | | |
| TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES | | |
| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: MARY JANE LANE | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: mjflane@gmail.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/8/2024 7:45 PM |
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People have a right to hear. People have a need to hear to be able to participate in society as citizens. Please support HB 1918 for coverage of hearing devices. Hearing aid is not covered by insurance, and that is wrong. It impacts speech, and all relationships.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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| COMMITTEE: Healthcare Reform | | |
| TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES | | |
| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: MAUREEN FISCHER | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: mmstephens76@yahoo.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/12/2024 4:25 PM |

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Providing hearing aids to MO Medicaid will improve quality of life for Missouri residents living with hearing loss: <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/ebp/value-of-audiology-hearing-loss-cognitive-decline-factsheet.pdf> It is also fiscally responsible to provide hearing aids and cochlear implants as it will prevent Mo Healthnet recipients from utilizing more expensive benefits as they age. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6145737/> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31631893/>
This is a win/win situation for MO residents and their legislators.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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| COMMITTEE: Healthcare Reform | | | |
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| WITNESS NAME | | | |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION: | | | |
| WITNESS NAME: NICHOLE WESTIN | | PHONE NUMBER: 703-328-4375 | |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: AMERICAN COCHLEAR IMPLANT ALLIANCE | | TITLE: | |
| ADDRESS: PO BOX 173 | | | |
| CITY: MCLEAN | | STATE: VA | ZIP: 22101 |
| EMAIL: nwestin@acialliance.org | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/12/2024 9:18 AM | |

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

February 12, 2024
 Chairman Kent Haden
 Missouri House Committee on Healthcare Reform
 Jefferson City, MO
 Re: Support HB 1918
 Dear Chairman Haden and Members of the Committee:
 I am writing on behalf of the membership of American Cochlear Implant Alliance (ACI Alliance)—a non-profit organization of parents of children with hearing loss, adults with hearing loss, cochlear implant clinicians, and educators of children who are deaf and hard of hearing. We ask that you support HB 1918 which restores coverage for cochlear implants and hearing aids for adults under Missouri Medicaid. With passage of the bill, Missouri would join the majority of States that offer this life-changing intervention for adults. Cochlear implantation is a well-known and established procedure that has been approved by the FDA for use in adults since 1985 and in children since 1990. Cochlear implants play a critical role in restoring the ability to perceive speech and environmental sounds for appropriate individuals with moderate to profound hearing loss who do not benefit sufficiently from hearing aids because of the severity of their deafness. Cochlear implants allow recipients to communicate freely including participating in the workforce, caring for themselves and family members, and enjoying important quality of life improvements. Without intervention with appropriate hearing assistive technology, adults with untreated or undertreated hearing loss may experience a downward trajectory in quality of life. Not only does it impact communication and socialization, hearing loss also has comorbidities which increase chance of falls and dementia. The financial impact of adult hearing loss is growing. In 2002, lost productivity attributed to hearing loss was \$1.4 billion; this is expected to grow to \$9 billion by 2030 (Stucky, Wolf & Kuo, 2010). By providing hearing intervention for adults, your state will be able to mitigate some of this loss. This coverage will also benefit those who were implanted as children under Medicaid and transition at age 21. When a state Medicaid program does not cover cochlear implantation for adults, it can mean a person loses access to sound when their processor becomes obsolete or is damaged. Many of those young adults are still in school or getting started in their work life and do not yet have private insurance. Please support Hb 1918 for continued support of access to cochlear implantation. I am happy to answer any further questions. Sincerely,
 Donna Sorkin
 Executive Director
 American Cochlear Implant Alliance



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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| WITNESS NAME | | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | | |
| WITNESS NAME: PAYTON GUINN | | PHONE NUMBER: | |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: | |
| ADDRESS: | | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: | ZIP: |
| EMAIL: | ATTENDANCE: | SUBMIT DATE: 2/13/2024 12:00 AM | |
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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| COMMITTEE: Healthcare Reform | | |
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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| REGISTERED LOBBYIST: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: RANDY SCHERR | | PHONE NUMBER: 573-636-6200 |
| REPRESENTING: MISSOURI HEARING SOCIETY | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: 101 E. HIGH,, BOX 1543 | | |
| CITY: JEFFERSON CITY | | STATE: MO |
| | | ZIP: 65102 |
| EMAIL: rjscherr@swllc.us.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/13/2024 9:31 AM |
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: SARAI GOMEZ | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: gomezs@chsstl.org | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/13/2024 10:01 AM |
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I am writing today to ask you to support HB1918/HB2626. I am an employee at the Center for Hearing & Speech and I have seen first hand how access to communication is vital for the overall health of individuals. I have witnessed patients being isolated, depressed and suicidal because they cannot afford proper amplification. By supporting HB1918/HB2626 not only will you change peoples lives, but it will also help our economy in the long run.



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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: STEPHANIE TITTLE | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: stephanietittle22@gmail.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/12/2024 7:55 PM |

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

I am testifying in favor of House Bill 1918 to increase coverage for adults with Medicaid to include hearing aids and cochlear implants. I am an audiologist practicing in Osage Beach and provide many hearing health services in our beautiful, rural, lake community. Everyday I evaluate adults with Medicaid, and these evaluations frequently result in a recommendation to obtain hearing aids and/or cochlear implants. I am often faced with a very uncomfortable conversation when I tell my adult patient that their Medicaid insurance does not provide any coverage for hearing technology. The cost to obtain hearing aids, let alone cochlear implants, is outside the realm of possibility for nearly all of my Medicaid patients. I cannot recall off the top of my head any adult patient with Medicaid who moved forward to obtain hearing aids. Lack of coverage for hearing technology ends up costing our healthcare system more money. A 2018 study from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health found that over a ten year span, untreated hearing loss in older adults resulted in 46% higher healthcare costs compared to those with treated hearing loss. In some cases, the savings could be further compounded: according to a national survey, compared to adults with treated hearing loss, adults with untreated hearing loss make \$12,000 less annually; furthermore, those with severe untreated hearing loss have an unemployment rate that is twice as high. Providing treatment for adults with hearing loss may result in higher employment rates, and in turn, these individuals would have access to employer provided health insurance and no longer need Medicaid. Expanding adult Medicaid coverage to include hearing aids and cochlear implants would save money for the healthcare system. I strongly favor House Bill 1918 and look forward to expanded coverage for adults with Medicaid needing hearing aids and cochlear implants. Sincerely, Stephanie Tittle Doctor of Audiology



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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: SUSAN GIBSON | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: Onesuegibson@protonmail.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/10/2024 1:03 PM |
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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: TAMMY RAMSEY | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: ramseyolympia@gmail.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/11/2024 9:17 AM |

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Have you ever tried living in a silent world of no communication - one where you cannot hear and you don't bother speaking because you won't hear any return communication? Try it. Just for one day. Put noise-cancelling headphones on and imagine a full day without one of the very things that sets us apart as humans. The ability to communicate. This bill is so very critical to ensuring our residents can live a life in fullness. Value peer-reviewed legitimate research shows that those not provided a means to communicate will be a greater burden on society without the ability to hear. Dementia, mental health disturbances, increased sickness, and more. So pay me now...or pay me later at a much greater expense.



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| WITNESS NAME | | |
| INDIVIDUAL: | | |
| WITNESS NAME: TERESA KLEBER | | PHONE NUMBER: |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: | | TITLE: |
| ADDRESS: | | |
| CITY: | | STATE: ZIP: |
| EMAIL: treetops46@gmail.com | ATTENDANCE: Written | SUBMIT DATE: 2/12/2024 12:52 PM |
| THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo. | | |