

POLICY PERSPECTIVES AND UPDATES FOR THE Hearing Healthcare Professional

Presented by: International Hearing Society

Medicare Coverage of Hearing Aids

In the 117th Congress (2021-2022)

Current political status:

- Democrats in power in the White House, U.S. House of Representatives, and U.S. Senate, through 2022. No guarantee of maintaining House or Senate majority in 2023.
- Medicare expansion to cover hearing has been identified as a top priority for several key Congressional leaders.
- IHS is presently taking all necessary steps to advocate for appropriate and fair policies (lobbying, coalitions, etc.).
- The primary vehicle is the "budget reconciliation" bill, which requires only a simple majority vote in the Senate.
- The budget bill will fund the 2022 FY Federal Budget.

Medicare Coverage of Hearing Aids

IHS' Policy Goals

What would the House bill do?

Would newly authorize coverage for hearing aids and related tests. Hearing aids would be defined as prosthetic devices, and be available to Part B beneficiaries who have moderately severe to profound hearing loss, one per ear every 5 years, beginning in 2023.

In the original bill, hearing aid specialists were not included as providers.

What has IHS accomplished?

In the House-passed bill, hearing aid specialists are included as Medicare providers of hearing assessments and can provide the direct order for a hearing aid.

IHS is still actively engaged in discussions to refine and improve the language with Senate staff.



Medicare Coverage of Hearing Aids

Past, Present, and Future

- Next up, the Senate will consider its reconciliation bill language, which is expected to differ from the House reconciliation bill language.
- The two chambers will need to agree and pass the same language.
- The bill then goes to the President for signature.
- The Senate Majority Leader is targeting a Senate vote before Christmas, but this timeline may slide.
- IF Medicare expansion passes, many of the details will be decided by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. IHS will also be very involved in this process, and will ensure IHS members receive useful information about Medicare participation. It will be up to businesses to decide whether they want to participate.



For more information

Start here

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- Action alerts
- Bills
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- Relevant news

International Hearing Society Sign Out Alissa Parady Cart elect contact) 💌 🖶 🖬 On Behalf Of: **IHS Advocacy** Medicare Coverage of Hearing Aids Advocacy US Federal Affairs IHS Updates State and Provincial Affairs 8/30/2021: Read the I<u>HS update to members</u> containing Provider and Patient Calls to Action 8/30/2021: Hearing organizations send letter to Senate Majority Leader Schumer and House Speaker Pelosi regarding Medicare IHS Policy Statements hearing aid access concerns 7/15/2021: Read the <u>IHS update to members</u> about the Senate Democrats' announcement of a spending package Payer Advocacy IHS Advocacy Alliance History and IHS Policy IHS Advocacy Center Since the inception of Medicare in 1985, hearing aids and "examinations there for" have been specifically excluded from coverage though some Medicare Advantage plans offer a hearing aid benefit. Practice Management Recent activity from the National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders and the National Anademies of Science Professional Development Engineering, and Medicine focused on increasing accessibility and affordability of hearing aids for adults has contributed to new evidence and dialcoue about expanding Medicare coverage to add hearing aids. Marketing Resource Center In September 2019, the IHS Board of Governors adopted four guiding principles for its Medicare policy approach Member Resources Hearing Aid Specialists be added to the list of Medicare providers to provide hearing evaluations and hearing aid dispensing Hearing wild opeoalists to above us will also interview provide a pro-services, including sural rehabilitation. Coverage include both hearing aids and hearing aid dispensing services, including those services consistent with the standard of care of care Hearing alds be defined to, at minimum, include capability for assistive device connectivity/interoperability; and beneficiaries be granted the ability to "top up" (contribute to the cost of more advanced technology) Hearing Ald Specialists and Audiologists be treated equally as it relates to requirements forlagainst a physician order prior to dispensing a hearing aid IHS is actively meeting with Congressional offices and other stakeholders to encourage adoption integration of these policy object into future legislative proposals. Congressional Activity and News Legislation in the 117th Congress (2021-2022) H.R. 1118. Medicare Hearing Aid Coverage Act of 2021. Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI 1.11.11.110. Information within (c) no experimentation of the second International Hearing Society (HS ... Published by Loomly 🕗 · September 2 at 7:59 AM · 🔇 Have hearing loss? Congress is debating Medicare coverage for hearing aids, yet omitting hearing aid specialists as providers would







Take Action on Medicare Hearing Aid Expansion

Colleague

The time for you to take action has arrived! The House and Senate are returning from recess and are turning attention to the details of the budget reconciliation package Democratic leaders in both chambers, as well as President Biden, have expressed their intention to include Medicare hearing aid coverage in the final budget package.

We need your help to influence the outcome. Below we outline ways you can participate in our efforts.

Our highest priority is ensuring that hearing aid specialists are added as Medicare providers if hearing aids and related services are covered. Hearing aid specialist inclusion is a critical component of providing meaningful coverage through access.

How can you help?

- 1. Send an email to your members of Congress. Click here to quickly send a prewritten email, which you can customize with additional messaging.
- 2. Encourage your patients to contact their members of Congress as well. Share this link to a pre-written email specifically for consumers that they can use to support our efforts

If you reside in the district of a member of any of the following committees or Congresspersons listed below, your action is especially important at this time. Click the committee link to view a list of members. These committees are crafting the bill language and the members are very impactful in the process.

- Senate Finance Committee
- House Ways and Means Committee

PROVIDERS: Urge Addition of Hearing Aid Specialists for Medicare Hearing Aids

Take action now! Complete the below contact information form using your HOME address, and if desired, include a personalized message in the exitable section of the message that will be delivered to your Senators and U.S. Representative. Your personalize comments should be focused on the possible consequences on patients and your community if hearing aids were covered by Mer. Part B but hearing aid specialists were not included as providers.

Once done, click on the "Send Message" on the bottom right of your screen. "Please note that the Send Message button may appea hidden in some web browsers but can be easily viewed/accessed by reducing the page size.

With questions, contact the IHS team at advocacy@ihsinfo.org. Thank you for your help Recipients

Your Senators
Your Representative

Contact

• Title:

Phone Number

Remember me, What's this? If you take action and have not already registered. you will receive periodic updates and communications from International Hearing Society.

Message

Required fields • First Name:

Ensure Access for Medicare Hearing Aid Coverage Dear [Decision Maker]. If Medicare is expanded to include hearing aids, meaningful coverage can

only be achieved if all points of access are available to Medicare beneficiaries, including hearing aid specialists. Hearing aids and related exams have been excluded from Medicare since its

Last Name: Hearing aids and related exams have been excluded from Medicare since inception, and only for that reason have hearing aids specialists not been added as Medicare providers up until this point. Now is the time to add hearing aid specialists, who provide half of all hearing aids to the general puble, including the elderly population, serving as trusted and qualified points of entry into the hearing healthcare system. Your Email Address 1:





Hearing aid specialists are more accessible in rural areas where a disproportionate number of older Americans reside, provide high-quality care, and participate with federal and state programs, and insurance plans If hearing aid specialists are not added as Medicare providers of hearing

It nearing als specialiss are not accesed as interciate providents or nearing aids and related services. America's Medicare-eligible population will be faced with long wait times for appointments, traveling long distances to attain care, and may cost to go without, thereby sacrificing their quality of ife, safety, and other health outcomes.

Personalize your message

resultate pour insearch and specialist, presently 00-05% of my patients are 65 and older. Not only do we have an established relationship, but loss an usefulgate. Not only do we have an established relationship, but los an audiologist who may be many miles area; and whose schedules are already full, will not only unnecessarily inconvenence then, if they are allo to travel that full, but also places may are trick of closing my doors - which would sufficient hinder access for those in need of hearing are in my community.

OVER THE COUNTER HEARING AIDS

Proposed Rules and Timing Key Dates:

- FDA released proposed rules on October 20, 2021.
- Comments are due January 18, 2022.

The Subjects of the Rules:

- Adds new classification of Over the Counter Hearing Aids, and includes labeling, specifications, intended use, preemption details, and more.
- Changes the rules governing traditional hearing aids, to be called "prescription hearing aids," removes the physician clearance/waiver requirement for all ages, heavily reliance on labeling.



OVER THE COUNTER HEARING AIDS

Proposed Rules and Timing IHS performed a detailed analysis of the proposal, for which we have several areas of concern and recommendations.

IHS is:

- Developing and will be submitting comments
- Providing guidance to members and other stakeholders on drafting comments
- Meeting with state licensing boards upon request to encourage them to comment on issues of concern
- Working with other national organizations to coordinate comments as appropriate



OVER THE COUNTER HEARING AIDS

Take action!

We need **YOU** to submit comments when the comment period opens!

- Federal agencies, including FDA, need input from stakeholders and subject matter experts. This is obtained during the comment period.
- The FDA reviews each comment submitted and must respond to comments in their final rulemaking documentation.
- FDA looks for data, science, and reasoning in making its determinations.
- The more comments in favor of our positioning, the more attention our recommendations will receive.
- Form letters have less impact than individualized, personal comments.
- Consumers, consumer electronics, and others will advocate for their own positions, which will likely be different from ours (at least in part).

Access Information

Learn about commenting and access talking points here: <u>https://bit.ly/IHSOTCWebpage</u>

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IHS leaders with U.S. Congressman David McKinley (R-WV), Co-Chair of the Congressional Hearing Health Caucus

Direct to Consumer & Over the Counter Hearing Aids

IHS Policy National Policy Updates Take Action

IHS Policy

The purchase of hearing aids direct by consumer using the internet, in-person, without the involvement of a licensed and trained hearing healthcare professional, compromises outcomes and places consumers at risk of missed, and sometimes serious, medical pathology, or being improperly and/or inappropriately fitted with hearing devices. IHS strongly urges anyone who suspects they may have hearing loss to see a licensed professional - a hearing aid specialist or audiologist - to determine whether hearing aids can help or medical intervention may be necessary. IHS encourages providers and the public to review its best practices and position statement for further information.

IHS Best Practices for Fitting and Dispensing Hearing Aids IHS Position Statement on Direct to Consumer Sales

National Policy Updates

In recent years, several workgroups and policymakers have taken steps to establish an over-the-counter hearing aid classification in order to meet the needs of individuals who require this approach to obtain hearing assistance. These efforts led to the passage of a new law in 2017, contained

Related Resources

IHS Resources

IHS, AAA, ADA, ASHA Consensus Paper "Regulatory Recommendations for OTC Hearing Aids: Safety and Effectiveness" Joint Statement on Direct-to-Consumer Sales and

Consumer-Administered Hearing Testing IHS Webinar: OTC Hearing Aids and PSAPS: Implications of the PCAST and NAS Reports (6/28/16)

Federal/Agency Resources

Congress: PL 115-52, FDA Reauthorization Act -Containing 2017 Over the Counter Hearing Aid Act EDA: Suidance on Personal Sound Amplifiers EDA: How to Get Hearing Aids EDA: Letter to Industry re: OTC hearing aids (7/24/18) FDA: Immediately in Effect Guidance Document; Conditions for Sale for Air-Conduction Hearing Aids (2/21/26) FDA Workshop: "Streamlining Good Manufacturing Practices for Hearing Aids" (4/21/16) FTC: U.S. Federal Trade Commission April 2017 workshop: "Now Hear This: Competition Innovation,

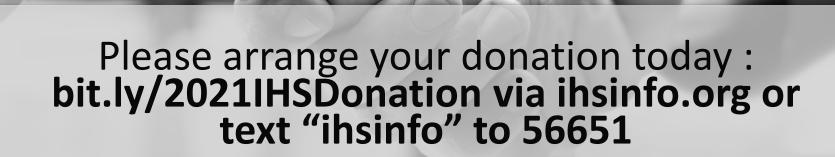
and Consumer Protection Issues in Hearing Health

Care*

NASEM: June 2016 National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine Report on Hearing Care: <u>Summary and Full Report</u>

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Licensure Preparation Tools 3rd. Ed. Trainer Manual & Trainer Toolbox

This Total Training Solution is a companion to the Distance Learning for Professionals in Hearing Health Sciences course!

Trainer Toolbox resources include:

- Best practices for recruiting and hiring, leadership and management, and skills for mentoring
- IHS Clinical Practice Guidelines and policy statements
- ✓ Key links to industry news
- Helpful tools to share with your apprentice(s)
- Webinars for clinical and business skills







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Business Tools and Resources



AMERICAN COCHLEAR IMPLANT ALLIANCE

Free for one year: membership to the American Cochlear Implant Alliance

IHS members may enjoy a complimentary one-year membership to the ACI Alliance. Affiliation with ACI Alliance elevates you as a knowledgeable resource amongst your clients and community. No matter which country you reside in, you receive access to resources that expand your network and knowledge about cochlear implants, and allow you to better serve clients by making cochlear implant (CI) referrals when appropriate. Sign up today!

Use code IHS to receive one year of FREE Membership

(subject to 2021 IHS Membership verification)





Business Standards and Compliance Compliance Plan Development Guide

Exclusively for IHS members, the Compliance Plan Development Guide offers the small hearing aid business a simple step-by-step outline for developing a compliance plan, tips to increase its effectiveness, and a sample plan for reference. If you don't yet have a compliance plan or want to refine your existing one, this FREE resource can help you get started.

Effective use of a compliance plan contributes to:

- Minimizing organizational and individual risk
- Avoiding serious sanctions through plan implementation and observance
- Preventing and detecting unethical/illegal conduct
- Establishing a uniform process and procedures for staff and business associates to follow



The IHS Compliance Plan Development Guide is available for FREE download on the <u>IHS</u> <u>member website</u>, under Resources.

Not an IHS member yet? Don't delay. JOIN NOW!

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International Hearing Society

Already a member? Thank you for your support and membership in IHS!

Questions? Contact IHS at 734-522-7200 or interact@ihsinfo.org