



State of Rhode Island

# Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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## House Bill 7197

The House Health and Human Services Committee

State House – Room 135

March 19, 2024

<b>RI CDHH's Assessment:</b>	Very Beneficial
<b>RICDHH's Position:</b>	Recommendation of Passage
<b>RI CDHH's Rationale:</b>	Reduce financial burden on consumers who need hearing aids

- Facts:
- 1) This is consistent with the Massachusetts State Laws requiring the insurers to cover the hearing aids up to \$2,000 effective 2012. Massachusetts General Laws, Part I, Title XXII, Chapter 176B.
  - 2) Change to the existing mandate would not cost to the State of Rhode Island according to federal's Center of Medicare Services.
  - 3) It would eliminate age discrimination and it will be in line with the federal's Affordable Care Act. Anyone deserves hearing aids if they need one without additional financial burden on them.
  - 4) Most hearing aids come with telecoil (t-coil) technology that is used for American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Assistive Listening Devices. Telecoil technology allows hearing aid users easy access to sounds from telephone equipment, as well as a number of other electronic Audio equipment, including radios, CD players, MP3 players, public address systems, assistive listening devices, and many more.
  - 5) Hearing aids are in the range of \$4,000 to \$6,000 depending on individual's hearing level and personal needs.
  - 6) The top five (5) requests of our RICDHH Information and Referral Services received is financial assistance for hearing aids and hearing aid mandated insurance coverages.

It is already financial hardship for anyone who really needs one or two hearing aids. The RI CDHH supports this because it relieves financial hardship from people who need it. It does not make any sense for anyone who has the hearing challenge has to pay MOST of the costs.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, we fully support this bill.

Honorably Submitted by:

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