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DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

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Operations Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Health Occupations
and Long Term Care

Insurance and Pharmaceuticals

House Chair, Joint Committee on
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 161- Health Occupations - Licensure of Audiology Assistants
February 4, 2021

Madam Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk, and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB161- Licensure of Audiology Assistants. As the title implies, this legislation will introduce Audiology Assistants to the Maryland healthcare system creating jobs, increasing access to care, and reducing costs to consumers.

Similar to other medical and healthcare assistants, Audiology Assistants will be an “extension” of the licensed Audiologist, completing tasks delegated to them, thereby allowing the Audiologist to work to their highest scope of practice: diagnosing and treating hearing and balance disorders.

Licensed audiology assistants will help reduce the backlog and ensure patients receive necessary care in a timely and convenient manner. Audiology Assistants will increase access to care by offering routine services and troubleshooting/triage service. This will be especially helpful in rural areas where there are not enough audiologists as in busy metropolitan practices.

Twenty-two states currently have Audiology Assistants and additional states expected to act on legislation this year. HB 161 mimics other professions who have assistants, including physicians, dentists, and speech-language pathologists. Passing HB 161 will guarantee that individuals who work with patients are qualified and the Board of Examiners can ensure consumer safety.

I will be offering a sponsor amendment that represents an agreement between the Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers and Speech-Language Pathologists, and the Maryland Academy of Audiologists. As all the stakeholders are in agreement with that amendment, I am asking for a favorable committee report on HB161- Licensure of Audiology Assistants.