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Details:

(FORM UPDATED: 07/12/2010)

**WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ...
PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS**

2007-08

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

**Committee on ... Transportation and Tourism
(SC-TT)**

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**
- Record of Comm. Proceedings ... **RCP**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt**
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule**
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions
(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
(**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

Eloise Schwarz
2533 North 113th Street
Wauwatosa, WI 53226-1215

June 27, 2007

The Honorable Roger Breske
Wisconsin State Senate
State Capitol Room 316 South
Post Office Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

RE: AB 133 and SB 88 Insurance for Hearing Aids and Implants

I am someone who is concerned about disability issues and am writing to you today to give you my thoughts on the above proposed legislation. Each bill would require insurance companies to cover the costs for hearing aids and cochlear implants for children 11 years old and under who are deaf or hard of hearing.

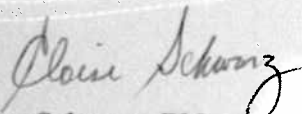
The ability to hear impacts a child's development, acquisition of spoken language, and learning. Hearing aids and cochlear implants are proven interventions to assure that children who are deaf or who have hearing loss acquire spoken language and learn in school.

The respective bills have been referred to the Assembly Committee on Insurance and the Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Insurance.

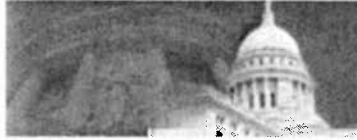
I am asking for your support for these bills as well as *your help to get public hearings on the agenda in each committee*. Again, these proposed bills would help children who are deaf and hard of hearing get the necessary intervention for their growth and development.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

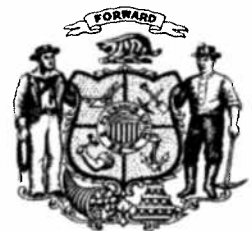
Sincerely,



Eloise Schwarz, RN, MBA, CCM
(414) 259-0431 office
(414) 259-9313 fax
(414) 807-4373 mobile
Eloise6376@wi.rr.com



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



SB88

Judith A. Wagner, R.N.
609 E. Eastwyn Bay Drive
Mequon, WI 53092

July 9, 2007

Wisconsin State Senator Roger Breske
Chairman Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Insurance
316 South
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Breske,

In your role as chairman for the Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Insurance, I am writing to you in regard to the **2007 Senate Bill 88** requiring health insurance coverage of hearing aids and cochlear implants for infants and young children which is the companion bill to **Assembly Substitute Amendment 1, to 2007 Assembly Bill 133**

I am writing as a nurse, patient advocate and grandmother of my 3½- year- old grandson, Dylan, who was recently diagnosed with bilateral sensorineural hearing loss, when he had his initial speech therapy evaluation. (Dylan's newborn screening test for hearing was normal) Speech therapy was instituted due to clarity of speech issues at home and in preschool. His preschool teacher noted strong manual dexterity skills, but difficulty during group reading time and interacting in large groups.

One of the first testing that is done before initiating speech therapy is a complete hearing evaluation, which was when we became cognizant of the real reason for Dylan's inability to be completely audible to everyone and his journey to greater communication and social interaction began. He has had his "ears", as Dylan calls them, since late December. In 3 months his audibility improved from 30% to 50% and they project that it will be 75% by the end of December. Dylan realizes that these hearing aids are of real benefit to him and he wants them in the first thing when he gets up. He is already beginning to turn them off and on and they are becoming a part of him, just like any other prosthetic device. He also is able to tell his parents if one of his "ears" is not working, which strongly reinforces how much this child is already realizing the benefits of hearing.

A prosthetic device is defined as an artificial part which aids or replaces a body part or function and which is designed, manufactured or adjusted to fit a particular individual. "Adjusted to fit a particular individual" means that the prosthetic device must be altered solely for the use of a particular person. A one-size-fits-all type of device that can be adjusted by the individual for a better fit, such as a pair of crutches, would not qualify as a prosthetic device. (1) A hearing aid is just such an artificial part.

As I have begun to increase my knowledge of sensorineural hearing loss, I was greatly surprised to learn that most insurance companies do not pay for hearing aids even for children. Upon going to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Website I found that 7 states, Connecticut,

Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Minnesota, require that hearing aids are covered for children by insurance companies and that coverage varies by state (2) Rhode Island requires coverage for both children and adults

“Hearing loss often is not detected until a child is 2, 3 or even 4 years old. Since the critical period for language development is from birth to age 3, the failure to identify hearing loss at a young age can have serious implications for a child's speech”(3) “It is important to identify hearing loss as early as possible since even slight hearing loss in one ear can have an impact on a child's speech and language development.”(3) “Treating a child before 6 months of age can make a huge difference in language and speech development.”(3)

“There are four major ways in which hearing loss affects children”

1. It causes delay in the development of receptive and expressive communication skills (speech and language).
2. The language deficit causes learning problems that result in reduced academic achievement.
3. Communication difficulties often lead to social isolation and poor self-concept.
4. It may have an impact on vocational choices(4)

Thus I strongly request that you and your committee closely review and investigate the importance of early detection and intervention for hearing loss and that this committee moves this bill forward. By providing hearing aids for children, they are given the “tools” or as Dylan says “the ears” to open up their world, so there will be but a few career paths they will be unable to follow and their ability to contribute to society will be unending.

I look forward to this bill being presented to the Senate and respectfully ask that there be an opportunity for a public hearing so that all voting representatives will be aware of the issue and the public can be heard. This rests in the hands of your committee.

Sincerely,

Judith A. Wagner R.N.

Cc: Representative Marlin Schneider

Representative James Ott

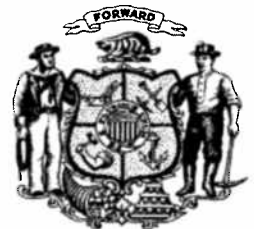
Dr. Joseph Schneider, Advanced Health Care

Dr. Carl Eisenberg, Advanced Health Care

Senator Alberta Darling



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Piliouras, Elizabeth

From: Sen. Breske
Sent: Tuesday, July 10, 2007 6:09 AM
To: Piliouras, Elizabeth
Subject: FW: A message from Judy Wagner RN
Attachments: Senator Roger Breske Letter.doc

From: Judith A Wagner [mailto:rwagner12@wi.rr.com]
Sent: Monday, July 09, 2007 5:14 PM
To: Sen. Breske
Subject: A message from Judy Wagner RN

Dear Senator Breske,

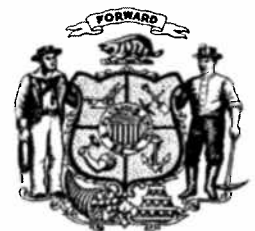
Attached you will find my letter that I hope you will review as Chair of the Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Insurance and also share with the other members. I was pleasantly surprised when I read your biography that you represented Eland and Wittenberg. As a young girl I spent every summer in my teens in Wittenberg with the Ed(Beau) Harvey family, who ran a seatcover business on Hwy 45 and 29. I have fond memories of Wittenberg.

Thank you for any help you can give.

Judy Wagner



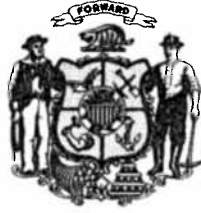
WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



ROGER BRESKE

STATE SENATOR

12th District



Capitol Address:

State Capitol, South Wing
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882
(608) 266-2509

Toll Free:

1 (800) 334-8773

Home Address:

8800 Hwy. 29
Eland, WI 54427
(715) 454-6575

E-Mail Address:

Sen.Breske@legis.state.wi.us

July 24, 2007

Bernadette Hasenberg
467 1/2 N Main St.
Eagle River, WI 54521

Dear Bernadette:

Thank you for sharing your support for Senate Bill 88 and its companion Assembly Bill 133, which would require health insurance coverage of hearing aids and cochlear implants for infants and young children. I wholeheartedly appreciate hearing from you on this important matter.

Providing adequate health care coverage to every resident of Wisconsin has been one of my top priorities throughout my tenure in the State Senate. As you know, Senate Bill 88 (SB88) and Assembly Bill 133 (AB133) would require health insurance to cover the cost of hearing aids or cochlear implants for children under the age of five that are certified as deaf or severely hearing impaired.

AB133 has been referred to the Assembly Committee on Insurance, and SB88 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Insurance. As Chair of the Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Insurance, I look forward to receiving public comments on the merits of this legislation.

Again, thank you for contacting me. Best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Breske".

ROGER BRESKE
State Senator, 12th District

RB/tag

OFFICE OF SENATOR ROGER BRESKE

Date Received: 7/12/07 Entered in Forward: Date Closed: _____

Name: Bernadette Hasenberg

Address: 467 Main St

City & Zip: Eagle River, WI 54521

Phones: (H/W/M) 715-479-6753

(H/W/M) _____ Assigned to: ADAM

- visit at _____
- phone call
- e-mail
- letter
- voice mail
- office hours at _____
- Roger personal contact
- referred from _____

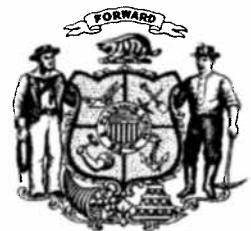
Nature of Problem: _____

Details: hearing on AB 133 + SB 88

Cochlear implants for children under 11
- require insurance company to cover it
- wants a public hearing on bills



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



October 9, 2007

Cindy Wolfe
2858 W. Sunnyside
Madison, WI 53712
(608) 274-7919

Senator Roger Bueske
Chair of the Committee on Transportation, Tourism & Insurance
316 South
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Bueske,

I strongly encourage you to hold a hearing for Senate Bill 88 as soon as possible.

Senate Bill 88 would greatly benefit children by requiring insurance companies to pay for hearing aids & cochlear implants.

I am a parent of two boys (ages 3 and 5). Nicholas & Parker are deaf. They both have a cochlear implant and are speaking, can hear and are doing tremendously well. If they didn't have a cochlear implant, they wouldn't be speaking & wouldn't be doing well in school.

We had to fight our insurance company to get them to pay for our first child's cochlear implant. It was stressful and

a time-consuming process.

Without a cochlear implant, Nicholas (age 5) wouldn't be mainstreamed into kindergarten. He would require a special class and an interpreter through his school years.

The only support services he needs is a FM system and speech therapy a few hours a week. By having a cochlear implant, he can be independent & successful in school. It is also saving taxpayers a tremendous amount of money.

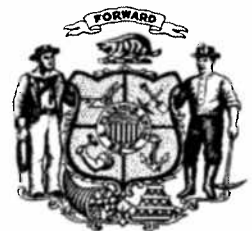
I am willing to testify at the hearing.
Thank you for considering this bill.

Sincerely,

Cindy Nettek



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Elizabeth Luedtke
208 KARL ST
BEAVER DAM, WI 53916
920-319-0464

10/9/07

Senator Roger Breske
Chair of the Committee on Transportation,
Tourism and Insurance

316 South
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Breske,

As a parent of a Seven-year-old son who is deaf and a Cochlear Implant Recipient I'm requesting that you hold a hearing for Senate Bill 88 in the committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Insurance as soon as possible.

This bill is so important for children age 11 and under who, should it pass, would receive their much needed hearing aids and cochlear implants by means of insurance coverage. As the development of children who are

2

deaf and hard of hearing in Wisconsin
is much dependant on these instruments,
please put this bill on your committee's
top priority list.

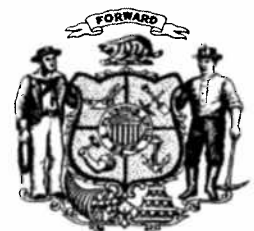
Please contact me to let me know
if I will have the opportunity to testify
at the hearing for Senate Bill 88.

Thank You!

Toby Ledwith



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Carolyn Bossert
207 8th St
Mineral Point, WI
53505
608-987-3487

Oct 10, 2007

Senator Roger Breske
Chair of the Committee on Transportation, Tourism & Insurance
316 South
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Breske,

I am writing you to request a hearing for Senate Bill 88 in the Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Insurance as soon as possible.

I feel strongly that this bill deserves a hearing as it would require insurance companies to cover hearing aids and cochlear implants for children under the age of 11.

I am a parent of two children with a hearing loss and feel Senate Bill 88 is important to the development and ongoing healthcare for children who are deaf and hard of hearing. I would appreciate the opportunity to testify at a hearing about why this bill is important.

I encourage you to put this bill on your committee's agenda for a hearing. Please contact me to inform me of your plans for putting Senate Bill 88 on the agenda of the Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Insurance.

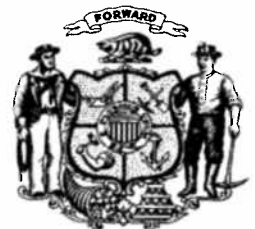
Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Bossett



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Alicia Boehme
15 Phoenix Court
Madison, WI 53719

October 11, 2007

Senator Roger Breske
Chair of the Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Insurance
316 South
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Breske,

I am writing you to request that you hold a hearing for Senate Bill 88 in the Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Insurance as soon as possible.

This bill deserves a hearing. Senate Bill 88 would require that hearing aids and cochlear implants for children under the age of 11 who are deaf or hard of hearing are covered by insurance companies.

I am a parent of a child with hearing loss, and feel that this bill is very important to the healthcare and development of children who are deaf and hard of hearing. I want the opportunity to testify at a hearing about my thoughts and about why this bill is important to Wisconsin.

I strongly encourage you to put this bill on your committee's agenda for a hearing. Please contact me to let me know your plans for putting Senate Bill 88 on the agenda of the Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Insurance.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this issue.

Best regards,

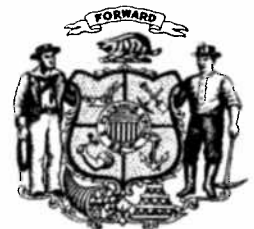


Alicia Boehme

Cc: Committee members of the Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Insurance



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



17 October, 2007

Senator Roger Breske
Room 316 South
State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Breske:

I am respectfully writing to you today to share my thoughts on the proposed legislation AB 133/SB88 for hearing aids and cochlear implants to be covered by insurance companies for children under 11 years old.

As the parent of a 9 year old daughter that has a bi-lateral, moderate to severe hearing loss that was not diagnosed until almost 2 years of age, I can attest first hand to the long term struggles that an inability to hear causes for a child and the child's family. The impact of this on the child's development and acquisition of spoken language is a huge obstacle to typical growth and development. The added financial burden on a family, in order to acquire hearing aids or a cochlear implant because insurance does not currently cover them, can be enough to cause a significant change in the family's financial status.

Hearing aids and cochlear implants are critical interventions to assuring that children who are deaf or hard of hearing have access to spoken language, which, in turn, enriches the child's life exponentially. Insurance coverage for these critical interventions will help ensure that children get this intervention even faster, due to removal of the financial constraints that often have to be resolved first.

This legislation has been referred to the Assembly Committee on Insurance and the Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Insurance. I would like to request committee hearings on these bills so that our voices can be heard and insurance that you support this legislation so that children who are deaf and hard of hearing get the necessary intervention for their growth and development.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Please do whatever is in your power to bring these bills to committee hearings.

Sincerely,

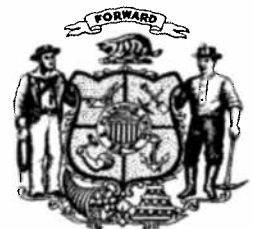


Christine M. Herden
W299N9375 Hartley Rd.
Hartland, WI 53029

cc: Sen. Jeffrey Plale
Sen. Jon Erpenbach
Sen. David Hansen
Sen. Dan Kapanke
Sen. Dale Schultz
Sen. Joseph Leibham
Rep. Frank Lasee
Rep. John Nygren
Rep. Phil Montgomery
Rep. Karl Van Roy
Rep. Joan Ballweg
Rep. Terry Moulton
Rep. Bill Kramer
Rep. David Cullen
Rep. Terese Berceau
Rep. Robert Ziegelbauer
Rep. Joseph Parisi
Rep. Steve Hilgenberg



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Ronald & Sherri McDermott
W 3431 Sunshine Road * Helenville, WI 53137

October 21, 2007

Senator Roger Breske
Room 316 South
State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Breske:

I am respectfully writing to you today to share my thoughts on the proposed legislation AB 133/SB88 for hearing aids and cochlear implants to be covered by insurance companies for children under 11 years old.

As the aunt of a 9 year old niece that has a bi-lateral, moderate to severe hearing loss that was not diagnosed until almost 2 years of age, I can attest first hand to the long term struggles that an inability to hear causes for a child and the child's family. The impact of this on the child's development and acquisition of spoken language is a huge obstacle to typical growth and development. The added financial burden on a family, in order to acquire hearing aids or a cochlear implant because insurance does not currently cover them, can be enough to cause a significant change in the family's financial status.

Hearing aids and cochlear implants are critical interventions to assuring that children who are deaf or hard of hearing have access to spoken language, which, in turn, enriches the child's life exponentially. Insurance coverage for these critical interventions will help ensure that children get this intervention even faster, due to removal of the financial constraints that often have to be resolved first.

This legislation has been referred to the Assembly Committee on Insurance and the Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Insurance. I would like to request committee hearings on these bills so that our voices can be heard, and encourage that you support this legislation so that children who are deaf and hard of hearing get the necessary intervention for their growth and development.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Please do whatever is in your power to bring these bills to committee hearings.

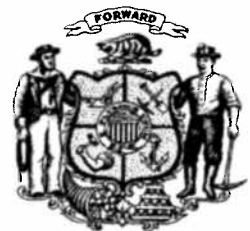
Sincerely,


Sherri A. McDermott

cc: Sen. Jeffrey Plale Sen. Jon Erpenbach
 Sen. David Hansen Sen. Dan Kapanke
 Sen. Dale Schultz Sen. Joseph Leibham
 Rep. Frank Lasee Rep. John Nygren
 Rep. Phil Montgomery Rep. Karl Van Roy
 Rep. Joan Ballweg Rep. Terry Moulton
 Rep. Bill Kramer Rep. David Cullen
 Rep. Terese Berceau Rep. Robert Ziegelbauer
 Rep. Joseph Parisi Rep. Steve Hilgenberg



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Jerry & Stefanie Saltern
4512 Jenewein Road
Fitchburg, WI 53711
stefsaltern@yahoo.com

October 22, 2007

Senator Roger Breske
Chair of the Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Insurance
316 South
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Breske,

We are writing you to request that you hold a hearing for Senate Bill 88 in the Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Insurance as soon as possible.

This bill deserves a hearing. Senate Bill 88 would require that hearing aids and cochlear implants for children under the age of 11 who are deaf or hard of hearing are covered by insurance companies.

We both have grown up with hearing loss and feel this bill is very important to the healthcare and development of children who are deaf and hard of hearing. We want the opportunity to testify at a hearing about our thoughts and why this bill is important to Wisconsin.

We strongly encourage you to put this bill on your committee's agenda for a hearing. Please contact us to let us know your plans for putting Senate Bill 88 on the agenda of the Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Insurance.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

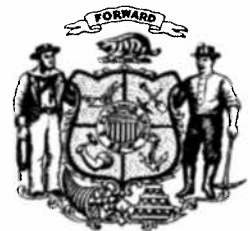


Jerry & Stefanie Saltern

CC: Committee members of the Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Insurance



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



BRENDA ARNDT

October 25, 2007

Senator Roger Breske
Room 316 South
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI. 53707-7882

Dear Senator Breske,

I am writing this letter to let you know that I personally feel that it's time to take action on Senate Bill 88--the bill that would require insurance coverage for hearing aids and cochlear implants for children under the age of 11. I feel that it is a very important bill and deserves a hearing. I can say this because I personally have worn hearing aids for over 38 years and recently received a cochlear implant. A good quality hearing aid today costs in the range of \$2,000-\$4,000 and requires batteries, ear molds, and audiology check-ups which could add up to an additional \$2,000 a year. Hearing aids have a life expectancy of at the most 6 years---for children it is much less. As a former teacher, I know that hearing---especially in the first 3 years of life is essential for speech development. My cochlear implant cost in the vicinity of \$70,000. Fortunately, my husband's insurance at work covered most of the cost. It has been a life-altering experience for me in that I am able to understand speech and many other "lost" high frequency sounds that I haven't heard for over 25 years! To me it is nothing short of a miracle. However, I would NOT have received the implant if insurance had not covered it, because the cost would have been prohibitive. This is often the case with many children and adults who would benefit from hearing aids/cochlear implants--the cost outrides the need.

Therefore, I am urging you to have a hearing on this bill as soon as possible. I may not be able to testify due to time and travel constraints; however, I do have friends and fellow constituents that will.

Thank you so much for your time and best wishes on your work.

Sincerely,



Brenda Arndt
Member of the Hearing Loss Association of Wisconsin



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



25 October, 2007

Senator Roger Breske
Room 316 South
State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Breske:

I am respectfully writing to you today to share my thoughts on the proposed legislation AB 133/SB88 for hearing aids and cochlear implants to be covered by insurance companies for children under 11 years old.

My dear friends are parents of a 9-year-old daughter that has a bi-lateral, moderate to severe hearing loss that was not diagnosed until almost 2 years of age. I can attest first hand to the long term struggles that an inability to hear cause for a child and the child's family. The impact of this on the child's development and acquisition of spoken language is a huge obstacle to typical growth and development. The added financial burden on a family, in order to acquire hearing aids or a cochlear implant because insurance does not currently cover them, can be enough to cause a significant change in the family's financial status.

Hearing aids and cochlear implants are critical interventions to assuring that children who are deaf or hard of hearing have access to spoken language, which, in turn, enriches the child's life exponentially. Insurance coverage for these critical interventions will help ensure that children get this intervention even faster, due to removal of the financial constraints that often have to be resolved first.

This legislation has been referred to the Assembly Committee on Insurance and the Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Insurance. I would like to request committee hearings on these bills so that our voices can be heard, and encourage that you support this legislation so that children who are deaf and hard of hearing get the necessary intervention for their growth and development.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Please do whatever is in your power to bring these bills to committee hearings.

Sincerely,

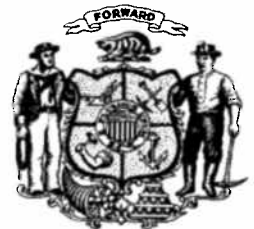


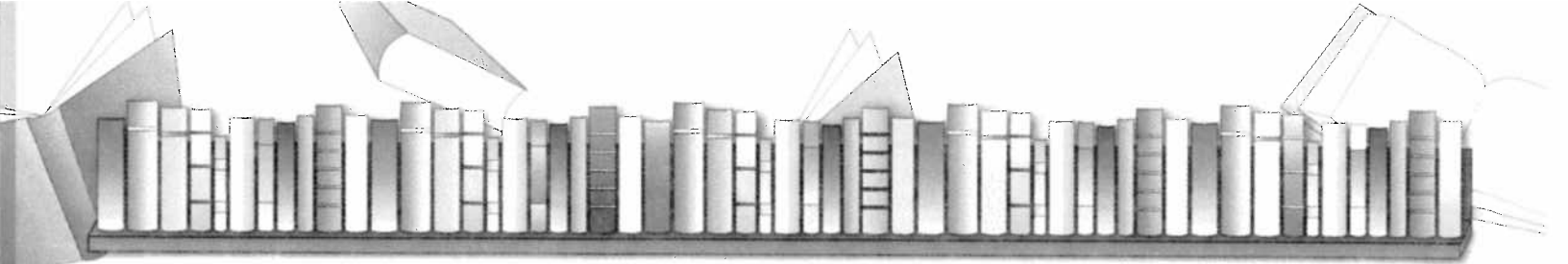
Eric Fischer
N55W30619 County Hwy K
Hartland, WI 53029

cc: Sen. Jeffrey Plale
Sen. Jon Erpenbach
Sen. David Hansen
Sen. Dan Kapanke
Sen. Dale Schultz
Sen. Joseph Leibham
Rep. Frank Lasee
Rep. John Nygren
Rep. Phil Montgomery
Rep. Karl Van Roy
Rep. Joan Ballweg
Rep. Terry Moulton
Rep. Bill Kramer
Rep. David Cullen
Rep. Terese Berceau
Rep. Robert Ziegelbauer
Rep. Joseph Parisi
Rep. Steve Hilgenberg



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





Eloise Schwarz
2533 North 113th Street
Wauwatosa, WI 53226-1215

October 25, 2007

The Honorable Roger Breske
Wisconsin Senate
State Capitol Room 316 South
Post Office Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

RE: SB 88 Insurance for Hearing Aids and Implants

I am someone who is concerned about our future's well being and am writing to you today to give you my thoughts on the above proposed legislation. Each bill would require insurance companies to cover the costs for hearing aids and cochlear implants for children 11 years old and under who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The ability to hear impacts a child's development, acquisition of spoken language, and learning. Hearing aids and cochlear implants are proven interventions to assure that children who are deaf or who have hearing loss acquire spoken language and learn in school.

I am asking for your support for these bills as well as *your help to get public hearings on the agenda in each committee*. Again, this proposed bill would help children who are deaf and hard of hearing get the necessary intervention for their growth and development. As a hearing impaired professional, I am advocating for those who can not hear and speak for themselves and would be honored to meet with you.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

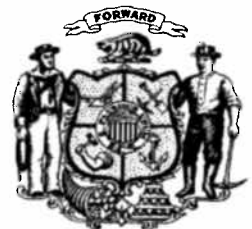


Eloise Schwarz, RN, MBA, CCM
(414) 259-0431 office
(414) 259-9313 fax
(414) 807-4373 mobile
Eloise6376@wi.rr.com
Governor's Council for the
Deaf and Hard of Hearing,
Member





WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



November 2nd, 2007

Senator Roger Breske
Room 316 South
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Senator Breske,

My name is Gina Lindwall and I am an Audiology student at UW-Madison. I am writing to you because I am aware that Senate Bill 88, regarding the requirement for insurance companies to cover hearing aids and cochlear implants for children under age 11, will be soon coming to your attention. As a student, I have spoken with many families of children with hearing loss who faced the financial stress of having to pay for these devices out-of-pocket. We know that hearing aids and cochlear implants are instrumental in the speech and language, social, emotional, and educational development of children. In recent years, Wisconsin has enacted Universal Newborn Hearing Screening, meaning that every newborn is screened for hearing loss at birth. The goal of the program is for babies to be diagnosed with hearing loss by 3 months of age and have proper intervention (including hearing aids and cochlear implants) by 6 months of age. However, how can we meet these goals if families are unable to pay for these important hearing devices?

I believe that Senate Bill 88 deserves a public hearing so I ask that you please schedule a hearing on this matter. I fully support the public hearing and want to emphasize that there should be a vote on the bill since it does affect so many children and families.

I am excited to be a part of changing the current insurance situation regarding the coverage of hearing aids and cochlear implants for children. I believe this is a huge opportunity to execute a positive change in the way insurance handles such situations.

Thank you very much for your time and attention on this very important matter.

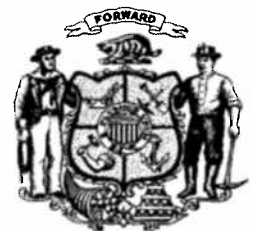
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gina Lindwall". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Gina Lindwall



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



November 6nd, 2007

Senator Roger Breske
Room 316 South
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Senator Breske,

My name is Lyndsey Persak and I am an Audiology student at UW-Madison. I am writing to you in response to the Senate Bill 88, regarding the requirement for insurance companies to cover hearing aids and cochlear implants for children under age 11, which will soon be coming to your attention. As a current doctoral student with an interest in pediatric audiology, I have worked with many families who have children with hearing loss. I have seen firsthand the financial burden placed on families who have to pay for their child's hearing aids and related costs out-of-pocket. Hearing aids and cochlear implants are necessary for a child's language acquisition, social, emotional, and educational development, and not having access to hearing aids, as well as proper rehabilitation services as a young child will have an adverse affect on their development and overall well-being.

I am in full support of Senate Bill 88, and feel strongly that it deserves a public hearing. This is an important issue that affects many families in Wisconsin. After all, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association estimates that one to six in every 1,000 children in the United States are born with hearing loss, making it the most prevalent disability that affects newborns.

I am excited to be a part of changing the current policies regarding the coverage of hearing aids and cochlear implants for children, and hope that you give Senate Bill 88 the attention it deserves.

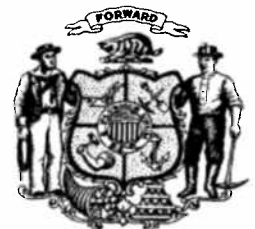
Thank you very much for your time and considerations on this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Lyndsey Persak
Audiology Graduate Student, Class of 2009
1308 Eberhardt Ct. 1
Madison, WI 53715



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



November 6, 2007

Senator Roger Breske
Room 316 South
State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Senator Breske,

I am writing to you in regards to the **Senate Bill 88**, and asking for your support in ensuring that insurance companies will provide reimbursement for hearings aids and cochlear implant devices provided to children 11 years and younger.

A parent who receives the news that his/her child is hearing impaired is devastating. Taking the financial burden off of the parents is the humane and logical step to make. Ensuring that children are diagnosed and treated for hearing loss as early as possible ensures normal speech and language development, which in turn results in normal social, psycho-emotional, and academic development.

Without early intervention and proper treatment (hearing aids and cochlear implants), hearing impaired children will only reach a sixth grade reading level and will probably not become tax bearing citizens, but dependent on public aid for the rest of their lives.

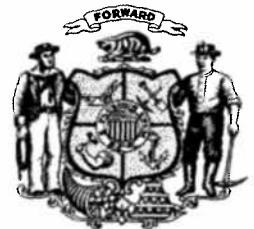
The cost of hearing aids and cochlear implants may be high, but society will pay the consequences in the future.

Please take these matters into consideration when making your decision whether to support the Senate Bill 88.

Sincerely,
Dana Truttmann, Au.D.
(Doctor of Audiology)
855 10th Ave.
New Glarus, WI 53574



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Piliouras, Elizabeth

From: Sen.Breske
Sent: Tuesday, November 06, 2007 2:20 PM
To: Piliouras, Elizabeth
Subject: FW: Senate Bill 88

-----Original Message-----

From: Melissa Wilson [mailto:mwilson4@wisc.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, November 06, 2007 1:13 PM
To: Sen.Breske
Subject: Senate Bill 88

November 6, 2007

Senator Roger Breske
Room 316 South
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Senator Breske:

One to 6 per 1,000 newborns in the United States are born with a hearing loss. It is vitally important that a child with hearing loss receive appropriate access to the world of sound through either hearing aids or a device called a cochlear implant. These instruments allow children to hear again and develop speech and language, which is associated with better cognitive, emotional, and educational growth.

Audiology is the study of hearing. I write today as a Doctor of Audiology student at UW-Madison. As an audiologist, I will evaluate and treat those with hearing loss, including children. Already, I often see that one of the greatest frustrations parents face when having a child with hearing loss is that of finances. Hearing aids and cochlear implants are expensive medical devices, and insurance companies and health plans do not always cover the cost. However, Connecticut, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, and Oklahoma require that health benefits plans in their state pay for hearing aids for children. Why not Wisconsin? It is critical that this injustice to Wisconsin children change.

Therefore, I am writing to show support for Senate Bill 88, which would require insurance coverage of hearing aids and cochlear implants for children under age 11. I applaud that Senate Bill 88 will be up for a public hearing tomorrow, on November 7, 2007, and I urge that you and your committee afterwards vote on this important bill.

SB 88 represents an excellent opportunity to execute a positive change in the way insurance companies care for Wisconsin's children.

Thank you very much for your time regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

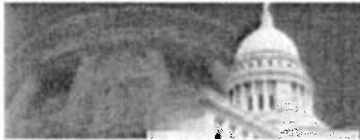
Melissa Wilson

**Chapter Co-President, National Association of the Future Doctors of Audiology Doctor of Audiology
Student, UW-Madison**

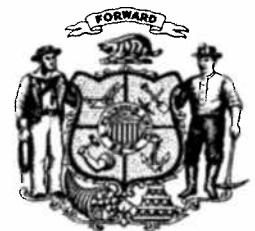
433 West Wilson Street #1

Madison WI, 53703

608-628-4122



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



GOOD AFTERNOON

My name is Eloise Schwarz. I am a Registered Nurse with a hearing loss since birth. I am 55 years old and received my first hearing aids 5 years ago through a short-lived workplace accommodation.

Difficulty in blending into the world of the hearing, I have stumbled along without benefit of acceptance, collaboration, or employment opportunities. While I can hear some conversation and noises, I was not given the benefit of hearing tests, accommodations or aural rehabilitation early in my life when appropriate or necessary.

To help smooth the speedbumps that our future generations are presently encountering, that being diagnosis without interventions, high costs associated with the technology that can facilitate communications, and proper follow through for successful outcomes, I am testifying on behalf of those who can not speak, listen, talk or interact with their environments.

Specific to this, I am requesting two amendments to be added the Senate Bill 88 before us.

The Assembly version of this bill has correctly identified the age of the child to the age of 11 when speech and verbalization is at the level of comprehension and self-actualization.

The Second amendment identifies that fact that children with severe hearing loss or are deaf should include those who have been certified as having mild and moderate hearing loss as well - all of these children require interventions to preserve what hearing they have at the time of diagnosis. Time and intervention is critical in their lives.

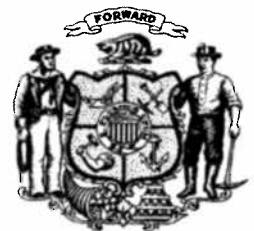
Infants and children who do not receive early intervention for untreated hearing loss costs our school system an additional \$420,000 per child – over a life time – they are our “million dollar babies,” as noted by the White paper addressing societal costs of hearing loss and issues in 3rd party reimbursement by Audiology Online –

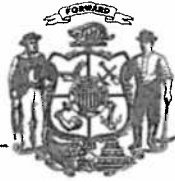
http://www.audiologyonline.com/articles/article_detail.asp?article_id=1204 and the CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dd/hi4.htm> and other notable organizations.

Thank you for holding this hearing today and for voting in favor of this bill with the additional amendments as noted.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





JULIE LASSA

STATE SENATOR

Senate

PUBLIC HEARING ON SENATE BILL 88 **Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Insurance**

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

1:00 PM

300 Southeast

Chairman Breske and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on Senate Bill 88.

Every year, about 200 Wisconsin infants are born with permanent hearing loss. Sometimes, hearing loss often is not detected until a child is 2, 3 or even 4 years old. Hearing loss in children affects language development, academic achievement and can lead to social isolation. Statistics have shown that most deaf and hard-of-hearing children read at a 4th grade level upon high school graduation and have a 76% unemployment rate after graduation.

Hearing aids and cochlear implants greatly reduce these problems for kids. Unfortunately, Wisconsin law does not mandate that insurance companies cover hearing aids or cochlear implants and parents must pay out of pocket – as much as \$3,000 per hearing aid, for their children. Many children wear two hearing aids that need to be replaced about every three years, resulting in a cost of \$18,000 through their childhood.

Many families are forced to drain their savings accounts, use their children's college funds, use credit cards or take out second mortgages just to give their children a chance to overcome the obstacles they face. Yet most insurance policies state that hearing aids are cosmetic in nature, and do not cover them.

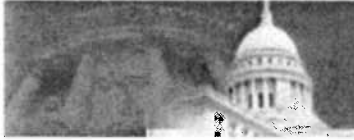
Currently, nine states, including Illinois and Minnesota, mandate that insurance companies cover hearing aids.

Senate Bill 88 guarantees that all children up to the age of 5 who are diagnosed as deaf or severely hearing impaired by a physician or by an audiologist licensed can receive hearing aids or cochlear implants through their parent's insurance policy. I have an amendment to make Senate Bill 88 mirror Representative Schneider's companion bill, Assembly Bill 133, to increase the age eligibility to 10 years old.

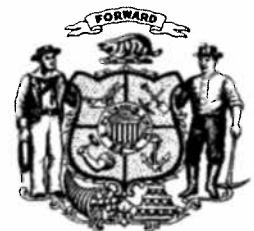
The coverage requirement applies to both individual and group health insurance policies. Currently, Medical Assistance and BadgerCare programs pay for hearing aids and implants so this legislation may modestly reduce the costs to MA and BadgerCare if private insurance companies begin to pick up these costs.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this issue. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have!

OFFICE: State Capitol, P.O. Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882 PHONE: (608) 266-3123
TOLL-FREE: 1-800-925-7491 E-MAIL: sen.lassa@legis.state.wi.us DISTRICT NUMBER: (715) 342-3806



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce

Wisconsin Manufacturers'
Association • 1911
Wisconsin Council
of Safety • 1923
Wisconsin State Chamber
of Commerce • 1929

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James R. Morgan
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Michael R. Shoys
Vice President
Administration

To: Chairperson Roger Breske
Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation and
Tourism
From: R.J. Pirlot, Director of Legislative Relations
Date: November 7, 2007
Subject: **Opposition to Senate Bill 88**, relating to requiring health
insurance coverage of hearing aids and cochlear implants for
infants and young children.

SB 88 mandates all fully-insured employers pay for hearing aids or cochlear implants for any insured child, under five years of age, who is certified as deaf or severely hearing impaired.

SB 88 Will Raise Health Care Costs, Jeopardizing Affordability

Government insurance mandates inevitably lead to higher health care insurance costs, meaning employers and employees will have to pay more for health insurance coverage. As health care insurance costs go up, typically the hardest hit are Wisconsin's small businesses and their employees.

Rising health care costs are already forcing Wisconsin employers to shift health care cost increases to their employees, reduce health care coverage, or both. SB 88 will make the affordability problem worse.

SB 88 Will Jeopardize Access to Health Care Insurance

As health care insurance costs rise, fewer and fewer individuals and businesses can afford to insure. An increase in premium costs to employers will have a negative impact on the number of people insured in Wisconsin. Only 26 percent of the Wisconsin population will be affected by SB 88—the population that depends on state-regulated health insurance plans for their coverage. This population is declining as health care costs rise.

Wisconsin businesses and their employees are already struggling to help pay for employee health care benefits. SB 88 will make the access problem worse.

Health Care Costs Are Rising and Hurt Economic Development

Rising health care insurance costs are a major concern for businesses, big and small, as they strive to stay competitive. Rising health care costs undermine the ability of Wisconsin companies to offer health care benefits and, significantly, impede their ability to create and retain good-paying jobs in Wisconsin. Again, SB 88 will make the access and affordability problems worse.

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