CT Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance
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Public Hearing: Insurance and Real Estate
Testimony: Melissa Marshall, Coordinator, CT Cross Disability Lifespan Aliance
Date: February 11, 2019
Position: in Favor
Written Testimony to the Insurance and Real Estate Committee on HB 5213 AA
EXPANDING REQUIRED HEALTH INSURANCE FOR HEARING AIDS

Senators Lessor, Representative Scanlon and distinguished members of the Committee,

My name is Melissa Marshall, I am the Coordinator of the CT Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance, (CCDLA), a coalition of over 200 members representing people with all disabilities. I am writing in support of HB 5213 AA EXPANDING REQUIRED HEALTH INSURANCE FOR HEARING AIDS.

Hearing aids are not a convenience to the health and well being of children and adults in Connecticut. Because they are not necessary for survival adults and families of children with hearing loss often delay, or forgo entirely, the purchase of hearing aids.

While it may appear expensive to require insurance companies to cover the cost of hearing aids, this must be weighed against the cost to the state of Connecticut to for individuals with hearing loss to go without them.

Across the lifespan unmitigated hearing loss can lead to social isolation and stigmatization which in turn can lead to depression.

The General Assembly has previously passed legislation requiring coverage for hearing aids for children under 12. Fir children over 12 the lack of hearing aids impact a youth's ability to be successful in school and have positive relationships with peers which can lead to dropping out or failure to perusing higher education.

For working age adults, unmitigated hearing loss can lead to lower productivity on the job and be career limiting and even lead to unemployment. It interferes with parenting, family life and can cause social isolation.

For older adults unmitigated hearing loss is linked to memory loss and dementia https://www.alzheimers.net/the-connection-between-alzheimers-and-hearing-loss/ . In addition to wreaking havoc on families lives dementia cost insurance companies and the state much more money than hearing aids.

Just as insurance companies are required to pay for other types of durable medical equipment, they should be required to pay for hearing aids. We urge the General Assembly to stand behind the right of Connecticut residents to have the quality of health care that they need to be productive tax payers with a high quality of life.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.