

Dear Senate Committee on Health and Welfare,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Vermont Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America in support of the bill, S.132 that is currently in the Senate Committee on Health & Welfare.

Hearing Loss is an invisible, but common health issue and is now a public health issue according to multiple studies conducted by the National Academy of Science and the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. I am sure that you are familiar with many of the statistics surrounding hearing loss...

- 17% of the nation's population overall suffers from hearing loss
- Vermont's population is 625,000, so potentially 62,000 to 125,000 Vermonters of all ages experience some degree of hearing loss
- For those 65 and older the incidence can be as high as 33% - 50%
- Potentially 39,000 – 59,000 older Vermonters have hearing loss
- The aging demographic in Vermont guarantees that this number will continue to rise

Untreated hearing loss is associated with a variety of negative health outcomes. *Subsequent treatment of a wide range of these negative outcomes would be far more expensive than simply taking the step to provide hearing aids for all those who need them.*

However, the most outrageous statistic of all is that currently, **Vermont is the *only* state in New England that does not require some type of hearing aid insurance coverage for its citizens!!**

On behalf of the 62,000+ Vermonters who suffer some form of hearing loss, we thank you for sponsoring this bill and we urge you and your colleagues to pass S.132 as expeditiously as possible.

Thank you for your attention...
Carol DeVine
Communications Coordinator
Vermont Chapter HLAA