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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Legislature Passes Landmark Bill to Expand Access to Hearing Aids and Cochlear Implants for Children

After five years of advocacy, deaf and hard-of-hearing children will have improved access to critical devices and services

SALEM, Ore. - Today, the Oregon Senate passed [HB 2994B](#), a bill that extends coverage of hearing aids, cochlear implants, and assistive listening devices to children.

“In both my time on the House and Senate Health Care Committees, I’ve been proud to champion legislation that puts the health of families and children first,” said [Senator Wlnsvey Campos](#) (D-Aloha), a co-sponsor of the bill. “Now as Co-Chair of the Joint Ways & Means Human Services Subcommittee, I had the privilege of helping shepherd [HB 2994B](#) through the funding process and off the Senate floor. I am grateful for Rep. Hai Pham’s leadership on this issue and am excited that every child in the state will have access to services that can help them thrive.”

[HB 2994B](#) provides more clarity in statute of covered services and devices and establishes a process through which children and their families can work together with insurance companies to find the most medically appropriate care.

Most notably, the bill will address affordability issues by waiving the need to meet a deductible before coverage of these devices and services, and extend coverage to children who receive care through the Oregon Health Plan (OHP), Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB), and Oregon Educators Benefit Board (OEBB).

“I am proud to be a co-chief sponsor of this policy because I want to make sure that children and their parents have meaningful agency to decide if hearing aids and cochlear implants are right for their child,” said [Representative Charlie Conrad](#) (R-Eastern Lane County), one of the bill’s co-chief sponsors. “They can’t make that decision if the cost of these devices and fitting services are unaffordable.”

Not all children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing choose to get hearing aids and cochlear implants. For some who do, access to these devices can vastly improve their quality of life. Consistent, clear access to sound helps children with spoken language acquisition and reduces barriers in school and their everyday lives.

“The passage of [HB 2994B](#) was truly a community-led effort. I am honored to have championed it this session alongside hundreds of parents, advocates, and providers who have been working for five years to ensure better access to care for kids,” said [Representative Hai Pham](#) (D-South Hillsboro & West Beaverton), the bill’s chief sponsor. “I am grateful that we had so much bipartisan and bicameral support for this legislation and look forward to working more in the future to meet the needs of our deaf and hard-of-hearing communities.”

[HB 2994B](#) passed the House 52-2 and passed the Senate 24-0.

Now, the bill heads to the Governor’s desk for approval.

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