

August 22, 2023

Daniel Rosenthal, PE, Chair of Hearing Care Professionals Technical Review Committee

DHHS Licensure Unit

Attn: Ron Briel, Credentialing Review

PO Box 94986

Lincoln, NE 68509-4986

Mr. Rosenthal,

I am writing today as a Nebraska Social Worker in favor of the proposed scope of practice changes for Hearing Instrument Specialists. The proposed changes would improve the quality of life and increase access to needed health care for the communities we serve.

The changes proposed for Hearing Instrument Specialists would allow for a greater number of services to be provided onsite at various residential and long-term care facilities, where transportation can be limited and costly. Barriers to transportation can make access to additional healthcare impossible for elderly and mobility-challenged populations. Long drives, strict schedules, and unpredictable weather exacerbate the inconvenience, particularly in rural areas of the state, where patients often must travel great distances for the closest care.

By providing these expanded services on-site, we can reduce the number of doctor's visits our clients need, which increases access to hearing healthcare. These changes would positively impact the quality of life for citizens across Nebraska-allowing them to save time, money, and still receive the hearing care they need.

It is prudent to adjust the current hearing healthcare regulations to ensure more people have the opportunity to receive quality treatment.

I urge the committee to support the proposed changes. Improving access to hearing healthcare is one of many ways we can better serve Nebraskans.

Sincerely,

Katie Van Boskirk, CSW