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November 15, 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

Subject: Nebraska Credentialing Review for the Nebraska Hearing Society Application

Dear Chairperson Rosenthal and Members of the Committee,

As an Audiologist and business owner of Beltone Audiology and Hearing Centers to ask you to approve the proposed credentialing changes for Hearing Instrument Specialists (HIS).

A typical hearing exam can take up to ninety minutes to complete. The goal of these changes is to authorize Nebraska's licensed hearing instrument specialists the ability to provide our patients with comprehensive hearing healthcare services and reduce their burden. When our patients have a cerumen blockage, we must reschedule their appointment. Therefore, creating a large void in our practice schedule. By removing inconveniences and additional unnecessary medical visits, we can increase access to quality hearing healthcare across the state.

Throughout the country, there are neither medical basis nor state disciplinary actions taken that would warrant preventing licensed HIS from providing their patients with cerumen and/or tinnitus management or conducting tympanometry testing.

As a supervisor for training over fifteen HIS candidates over the last twenty-six years there is no reason that these procedures should be restricted. In combination with the current IHS study material the revised proposal addresses training concerns by requiring a licensed HIS to obtain the training, knowledge, and skills necessary to perform tinnitus and cerumen management. These are skills that should be within the scope of practice for licensed HIS in Nebraska.

Patient safety is always our highest priority. Any time a licensed HIS encounters a "red flag" circumstance, they immediately stop what they are doing and refer their patient to an ENT physician (Otolaryngologist). This best practice will not change, and we will continue to provide care for our clients with their safety in mind.

This proposal creates a commonsense approach to help the patients in Nebraska.

I respectfully ask you to approve the credentialing review for Nebraska's HJS. This will help thousands of residents with hearing loss receive more efficient and less expensive access to hearing healthcare services. This is a good health care policy for Nebraska.