

October 30, 2000

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The Honorable Donna Shalala, Secretary
U S Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 639-G
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Honorable Donna Shalala:

I took the liberty to send this to you via e-mail and am now sending a copy to your office.

I am a small business owner in Margate, NJ, providing hearing health care services to hundreds of hearing-impaired Americans in NJ. I understand that the Food and Drug Administration, after more than eight years of rewriting, is now rushing to propose new rules governing the way hearing aids are sold in this country.

Ironically, the FDA rule would reportedly impede access to hearing health care services by allowing the states to erect new and unjustified barriers to health care services. This makes no sense at all especially given the fact that hearing aids are a tremendously beneficial yet dramatically underutilized medical device. Indeed, the AARP recently wrote that although almost everyone with a hearing loss hears better with a hearing aid, only 20% of those who need a hearing aid have one.

PLEASE don't let the FDA propose this new rule. It's bad for the hearing impaired and bad for small business hearing health professionals. Please write the President urging that the FDA not be allowed to propose this new rule that would adversely affect millions of Americans who are hearing impaired. I would greatly appreciate a copy of any correspondence you send on behalf of the hearing impaired that I serve.

Sincerely,



Irvin Wiener, Owner
Atlantic Hearing Aid Center
9400 Atlantic Avenue,
Margate, NJ 08402

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