

ROSS HEARING AIDS

Jennifer Ross Rodgers, BC-HIS

Board Certified in Hearing Instrument Sciences

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10/23/2000

Honorable Donna Shalala
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Room 615F
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Shalala,

As a Board Certified Hearing Instrument Specialist and a member of the hearing health care team I write to you with respect to hearing aids.

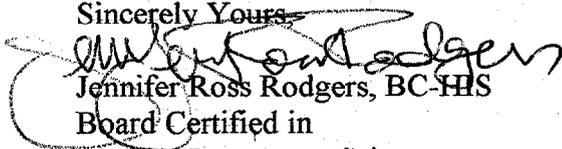
I am very concerned with reports that the Food and Drug Administration has reportedly sent to you a proposal for revising the current regulations governing the dispensing of hearing aids in this country. The revisions contained in this rule would serve to dramatically increase the cost of hearing healthcare services while restricting access to hearing healthcare providers.

Presently all three members of the hearing healthcare delivery system (hearing aid dispensers, audiologists and ear, nose and throat physicians) are recognized as qualified entry points into the hearing healthcare delivery system. The rule the FDA is advocating would allow only audiologists, without any justification, to install themselves as the sole entry point into hearing healthcare. The FDA rule proposes to accomplish this by allowing only audiologists to conduct the necessary hearing testing on consumers prior to purchasing a hearing aid.

Respectfully I ask you to please stop and carefully consider the impact that this proposed rule will have on the nations estimated 28 million hearing impaired citizens as well as the many small business hearing aid specialists who serve the hearing impaired community. In particular, please ensure that any proposed rule meets the obligations of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act.

Hearing impairment is a major health care concern. Please don't let the FDA put forth their proposed rule that would impede access to needed health care services for millions of Americans.

Sincerely Yours,


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