

# GRAND ISLAND HEARING AID CENTER, INC.

"Technologically Advanced Hearing Care At Prices To Fit All Budgets"

721 W. 7th (Corner of 7th and Eddy) • Grand Island, NE 68801 • (308) 382-9169  
P.O. Box 992 • Grand Island, NE 68802 • Long distance in NE 1-800-382-9169

**Roxann T. Ellison, \*BC - HIS**  
Hearing Instrument Specialist  
Certified by the NE Dept. of Health • Lic. # 440 and the  
National \*Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences

**Alan L. Ellison, \*BC - HIS**  
Hearing Instrument Specialist  
Certified by the NE Dept. of Health • Lic. # 55 and the  
National \*Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences

Satellite Locations — Aurora • Ord • Broken Bow

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

Dear Secretary Donna E. Shalala:

I am deeply concerned that the government may put me out of employment and I am writing to ask for your assistance.

I am a hearing instrument specialist and help operate a small business in Grand Island, Nebraska serving over 3,000 hearing-impaired Americans. The Food and Drug Administration is now, after seven years of inaction, rushing to publish a proposed rule to revise the way hearing aids are sold in this country. The FDA is reportedly planning to allow the states to pick and choose which tests must be required before a hearing aid can be purchased and which hearing and health providers are qualified to conduct such tests.

Presently, hearing instrument specialists, physicians, and audiologists are essential and fully qualified entry points into the hearing health care system. If the FDA defers to the states, audiologists have indicated that they would endeavor to position themselves as the sole entry point into hearing and health care. Such gatekeeper status could be achieved by lobbying states to require expensive hearing tests that only audiologists provide. This would not only force hearing instrument specialists such as myself out of business, but it would greatly increase costs and impede access to hearing health care services for the nation's hearing impaired.

Hearing impairment is a major health care concern. Only approximately 20% of the 28 million hearing-impaired Americans who could benefit from a hearing aid actually use one. The proposed rule that the FDA is advocating would impede access to needed hearing health care services for millions of Americans. Please don't let this happen.

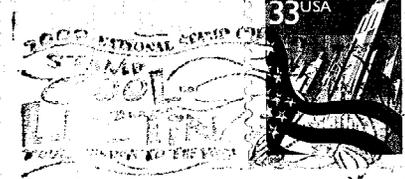
On behalf of the thousands of hearing-impaired Americans in Central Nebraska that I and my co-workers serve, I ask that you contact Secretary of Health Shalala and urge that the FDA hearing aid rule be stopped.

Respectfully,

Misti Lutt-Chmiel, HIS  
Hearing Instrument Specialist  
State of Nebraska License #641  
Active Member Nebraska Hearing Society  
Active Member International Hearing Society

- 93N 0372
- C4721
- HOUSE, HOSPITAL & NURSING HOME CALLS •
  - HEARING AIDS • ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICES • BATTERIES • REPAIRS •
  - ACCESSORIES • HEARING CONSERVATION • HEARING AND SPEECH EVALUATIONS •
  - VIDEO OTOSCOPY • TYMPANOMETRY •

 GRAND ISLAND  
**HEARING AID CENTER, INC.**  
721 W. 7th Street • Grand Island, NE 68801  
P.O. Box 992 • Grand Island, NE 68802



Honorable Donna E. Shalala  
Secretary of Health & Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue SW Room 615F  
Washington, D.C. 20201

