



Audioear® Hearing Aid Centers, Inc.

Sunset Plaza

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Sun City, Arizona 85351

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October 10, 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 small business owner and a nationally board certified licensed hearing health care provider, I write with regards to hearing aids. I have participated in all aspects of the hearing aid field over the past 35 years.

As the AARP has confirmed, hearing aids are highly effective, but are dramatically underutilized medical devices.

I am very concerned with reports that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has reportedly sent you a proposal for revising the current regulations governing the dispensing of hearing aids in this country that would dramatically increase the cost of hearing health care services and restrict access to hearing health care providers.

Please stop and carefully consider the impact that this proposed rule will have on the nation's hearing impaired and on the nation's small business hearing aid specialists.

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 hearing health care services for millions of Americans now and in the years to come.

Sincerely yours,

Merrill B. Hunter, NBC-HIS
President

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