HEARING AID CONSULTANTS
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October 16, 2000

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

Dear Secretary Shalala:

The Food and Drug Administration may shortly propose changes to the way hearing aids are sold that could put me out of business and impede access to hearing care services for million of our nation's seniors.

I am a board certified, state-licensed hearing instrument specialist. For many years, I have provided hearing health care services to hundreds of our state's hearing-impaired. Presently, all three members of the hearing health care delivery team (hearing aid specialists, audiologists and physicians) are recognized as qualified entry points into the hearing health care delivery system. The rule FDA is advocating would allow audiologists -- without any justification – to install themselves as the sole entry point into hearing health care by allowing states to require tests that only audiologists conduct prior to purchase of a hearing aid.

Allowing audiologists an exclusive role in the hearing aid delivery system, without unqualified medical data evidencing that such role is necessary for public health reasons, would severely undermine public health and safety and would increase costs to the hearing impaired.

Please write to the Secretary of Health and urge that this FDA proposed hearing aid rule be withdrawn.

I look forward to your response and would appreciate a copy of any letter you send on my behalf.

Sincerely yours,

Dexter L. Spencer PA, BC HIS

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