

Hearing Systems, Inc.

2315 Windsor Court

Davenport, IA 52807-1438

Sears Hearing Aid Centers

Northpark Mall, Davenport, IA 52806 (319)388-1691

Southpark Mall, Moline, IL 61265 (309)736-2616

October 12, 2000

Honorable Donna Shalala
Secretary of Health and Human Services
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Shalala:

I am a state-licensed hearing aid dispenser in Illinois and Iowa.

The FDA may put me, and others like me, out of business and impede hearing care services to millions of citizens nationwide. Hearing Instrument Specialists in both Illinois and Iowa are licensed to dispense hearing aids under the same testing, evaluation, and continuing education criteria as audiologists. The FDA is advocating a rule that would position audiologists, without justification, to be the sole gatekeeper to the hearing impaired.

There is no unqualified medical data that supports such a role is necessary for public health reasons. Actually, such a step would dramatically increase costs and significantly limit access to hearing care.

Please do not let the FDA put perfectly qualified Hearing Specialists out of business, while also limiting health care access to the public.

Sincerely,



Sharon Hobart, HIS

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