

AGUSTINAS/FDA

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Advanced Instruments

1525 B Farmers Lane, Santa Rosa, CA 95405
(707) 575-3590 • 1-800-CAN U HEAR

"Professional Hearing Instrument Specialists"

September 22, 2000

Honorable Bill Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President: Clinton

I am deeply concerned that the government may put me out of business and I am writing to you for assistance.

I am a hearing instrument specialist and operate a small business in Santa Rosa, CA serving over 10,000 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 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 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 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 10,000 of hearing-impaired Americans in Santa Rosa that my co-workers and I serve, I ask that you contact Secretary of Health Shalala and urge that the FDA hearing aid rule be stopped.

Please keep me apprised of your efforts.

Very truly yours,

Gregg L. Hackett ACA, BC-HIS, MCAP
Advanced Instruments

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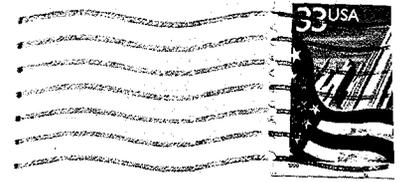
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