



Health and Human Services Committee Members:

My name is Lonnie Larson. I have been a licensed hearing instrument specialist since 2001. In 2010, I had the opportunity to take over a family owned practice that has been serving Kansas since 1948. As everything else changes over time, so has our industry. Change can be good. But changing what has worked for several decades is unnecessary.

I am concerned about the potential change of The Kansas Board of Hearing Aid Examiners to an advisory position under the Department of Aging and Disabilities. This board has been serving Kansans since 1968 and serves a great purpose to not only hearing instrument specialists like myself, but audiologists as well. When I have questions or concerns, they are promptly answered by the Board. I am doubtful that the suggested change will make the operations more efficient and I worry that having a larger body to govern will only complicate and slow things down. I also suspect that if this change occurs, the board will be dissolved within a few years to "save money". I'm sure you are aware that the board is fee funded and pays a percentage of revenue to the State of Kansas.

Another concern that I have is the motive. Why did KSHA find it so important to introduce this change during unrelated legislative action? Do they feel with more control they could take the industry away from licensed hearing instrument specialists? Would they like to restrict our abilities to help the hearing impaired? Will they find a way to make it more difficult for those wanting to become hearing instrument specialists to get a license? Will they try to restrict our scope of practice?

There are not enough audiologists alone to take care of the hearing impaired population in Kansas. Licensed hearing instrument specialists have played a large role in the hearing industry and they should continue to do so. Although this may not be the current concern, I do believe if KSHA succeeds in this back door action and the bill is passed, the concerns I mention will become actions down the road.

Again, thank you for your time.

Lonnie Larson, Manager
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