



February 10, 2017

As a hearing instrument specialist in Kansas for the past 10 years, I am concerned about potential legislation (H.B. 2195) moving the Kansas Board of Hearing Aid Examiners under KDADS. This move has been pushed by a small group of audiologists with KSHA, ultimately pursuing single licensure for audiology and hearing aid dispensing.

Although this move was initiated under the guise of cost savings, the true intention is politically motivated. In reality, the K.B.H.A.E. is a fee-funded agency. Moving K.B.H.A.E. under KDADS will generate additional expenses and ultimately threaten the livelihood of the non-Audiologist hearing instrument dispensers in Kansas.

Currently, the K.B.H.A.E. oversees licensure for all dispensing entities in the State of Kansas. A small group of Audiologists with KSHA are aggressively pursuing a move to KDADS to enact single licensure and potentially limit access to the market by traditional hearing instrument dispensers. In rural Kansas, the hearing impaired are primarily served by hearing instrument specialists. Limiting access to the field will reduce fair competition, limit services, and ultimately drive up costs for our older rural Kansans.

Working in rural Western Kansas, I encounter many older veterans who qualify for free hearing help through the V.A. clinic in Wichita. The audiologists on staff do a great job in serving our veterans but many of our vets are unable to travel to Wichita to receive the proper care they deserve. With the recent passage of the "Fit to Serve Bill", hearing instrument dispensers, as well as audiologists, will be able to care for our older vets in local offices, providing easier access and convenience. In rural Kansas, there are simply not enough audiologists to serve the rural customer base, including our Veterans. H.B. 2195 will ultimately threaten the services offered through traditional hearing instrument dispensers.

As a cost saving measure (the "reason" for moving K.B.H.A.E. under KDADS), there is no savings or financial benefit to the state, only for a small group of audiologists. In fact, many, if not most, of the audiologists in the state do not support this move.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Lang".

John Lang, B.C-H.I.S.