

November 15, 2023

Daniel Rosenthal, PE, Chair of Hearing Care Professionals Technical Review Committee
DHHS Licensure Unit
Attn: Ron Briel, Credentialing Review
PO Box 94986
Lincoln, NE 68509-4986

Subject: Nebraska Credentialing Review for the Nebraska Hearing Society Application

Dear Chairperson Rosenthal and Members of the Committee,

I write to you today, as a licensed hearing instrument specialist and resident who provides hearing healthcare services to an increasingly growing hearing-impaired population, to ask you to approve the proposed credentialing changes for Hearing Instrument Specialists (HIS).

The goal of these changes are to authorize Nebraska's licensed HIS the ability to provide our patients with comprehensive hearing healthcare services and reduce their burden. It is an unfair waste for hearing impaired individuals to pay for additional medical visits when a trained and licensed HIS can safely remove cerumen or activate and adjust the settings of the tinnitus masking feature(s). By removing inconveniences and additional unnecessary medical visits, we can increase access to quality hearing healthcare across the state.

Throughout the country, there are neither medical basis nor state disciplinary actions taken that would warrant preventing licensed HIS from providing their patients with cerumen and/or tinnitus management or conducting tympanometry testing.

Additionally, this proposal addresses training concerns by requiring a licensed HIS to obtain the training, knowledge, and skills necessary to perform tinnitus and cerumen management. There are several programs currently available. With proper training, these are skills that should be within the scope of practice for licensed HIS in Nebraska.

Patient safety is always our highest priority. Any time a licensed HIS encounters a "red flag" circumstance, they immediately stop what they are doing and refer their patient to an ENT physician (Otolaryngologist). This best practice will not change, and we will continue to provide care to our clients with their safety in mind.

This proposal increases convenience for patients **without** impairing patient safety.

I respectfully ask you to approve the credentialing review for Nebraska's HIS. This will help thousands of residents with hearing loss receive more efficient and less expensive access to hearing healthcare services. This is a good health care policy for Nebraska.

Thank you Chairman Rosenthal and Committee members for this opportunity to provide my thoughts on how I, and my colleagues, can better provide hearing healthcare services to our patients.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this issue further.

Respectfully,

Michael D. Grace, BC-HIS
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