

June 30, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi:

On June 3, 2011, U.S. Representative Mike Ross (D-AR) introduced, at the request of the American Academy of Audiology (AAA), H.R. 2140. As written, H.R. 2140 inappropriately provides audiologists with unlimited direct access to Medicare patients without a physician referral. This legislation represents a recycled legislative effort that is opposed by the undersigned organizations.

We strongly believe that a physician-led hearing healthcare team with coordination of services is the best approach for providing the highest quality care to patients. While audiologists play a critical role in providing quality hearing healthcare, their desire to independently diagnose hearing disorders transcends their level of training and expertise.

In its 2007 report on the audiology direct access issue, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) declared that referrals from physicians are the “key means by which the Medicare program assures that beneficiaries are receiving medically necessary services, and avoids potential payment for asymptomatic screening tests that are not covered by Medicare” Bypassing a physician evaluation and referral can lead to a misdiagnosis and inappropriate treatment that could cause lasting, and expensive, harm to patients.

As a legislator, we know that you share a physician’s commitment to promoting patient safety and the highest quality healthcare. While audiologists are valued health professionals who work for and with physicians, they do not possess the medical training necessary to perform the same duties as physicians, nor are they able to provide patients with the medical diagnosis and treatment options they require.

For the health and well-being of America’s seniors, we respectfully urge you to oppose any efforts to advance this problematic legislation. Thank you for your consideration, and please contact the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at legfederal@entnet.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

American Academy of Dermatology
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy
American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American Broncho-Esophagological Association
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons

American College of Surgeons
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Medical Association
American Neurotology Society
American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics
American Osteopathic Association
American Osteopathic Colleges of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
American Otological Society
American Psychiatric Association
American Society of Anesthesiologists
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons
American Society of Pediatric Otolaryngology
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Urological Association
Association of Academic Departments of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Association of Otolaryngology Administrators
Harry Barnes Medical Society
International Hearing Society
Otolaryngology Section of the National Medical Society

State and Local Medical Associations

Alaska State Medical Association
Arizona Medical Society
Arkansas Medical Society
Atlanta Medical Association
Colorado Medical Society
Connecticut State Medical Society
Georgia Physicians' Association
Idaho Medical Association
Illinois State Medical Society
Kentucky Medical Association
Louisiana State Medical Society
Maine Medical Association
Massachusetts Medical Society
MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society
Medical Association of Georgia
Medical Association of the State of Alabama
Medical Society of Delaware
Medical Society of Montgomery County; Montgomery, Alabama
Medical Society of the District of Columbia
Medical Society of the State of New York
Medical Society of Virginia
Mississippi State Medical Association
Missouri State Medical Association
Nebraska Medical Association
Nevada State Medical Association
New Hampshire Medical Society
North Carolina Medical Society
North Dakota Medical Association
Ohio State Medical Association

Oklahoma State Medical Association
Pennsylvania Medical Society
South Dakota State Medical Association
Tennessee Medical Association
Texas Medical Association
Utah Medical Association
Washington State Medical Association
West Virginia State Medical Association
Wisconsin Medical Society
Wyoming Medical Society

State and Local Specialty Societies

Alabama Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Arizona Society of Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery
Arkansas Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
California Otolaryngology Society
Central Indiana Otolaryngology Society
Central Pennsylvania Society of Otolaryngologists
Connecticut Ear, Nose & Throat Society
Delaware Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Eastern New York Ear, Nose & Throat Society
Eastern Tennessee Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Society
Florida Society of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
Florida Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Georgia Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Houston Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Illinois Society of Ophthalmology & Otolaryngology
Indiana Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Iowa Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Kentucky Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Long Island Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Los Angeles Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Louisiana Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Maryland Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Massachusetts Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Michigan Otolaryngological Society
Minnesota Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Mississippi Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Association
Mississippi Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Montana Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Nashville Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
New Hampshire Otolaryngology Society
New York Laryngological Society
New York State Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
North Carolina Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Northwest Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
NY Otologic Society
Oklahoma Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Orange County Society of Head and Neck Surgery
Oregon Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
San Francisco Bay Area ENT Society

Santa Barbara Otolaryngological Society
South Carolina Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Vermont Otolaryngology Society
Virginia Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Washington Metro Area Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery Society
West Virginia Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Wisconsin Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery