

HOUSE No. 4594

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

By Mr. Sánchez of Boston, for the committee on Public Health, on House, No. 3598, a Bill to provide coverage for hearing aids (House, No. 4594). April 5, 2010.

FOR THE COMMITTEE:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Jeffrey Sánchez	15th Suffolk

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Ten

An Act to provide coverage for hearing aids.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 175 of the General Laws, as so appearing in the 2008 Official
2 Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 47Z the following section: -
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4 Section 47AA. Any individual policy of accident and sickness insurance issued pursuant to
5 section 108, and any group blanket policy of accident and sickness insurance issued pursuant to
6 section 110, shall provide coverage for the full cost of one hearing aid per hearing impaired ear,
7 every 36 months for insured individuals and all related services which shall be prescribed by an
8 audiologist or hearing impaired specialist as defined in section 196 of chapter 112, and dispensed
9 by an audiologist or hearing instrument specialist as defined in said section. A hearing aid shall
10 mean any wearable, non-disposable instrument or device designed to aid or compensate for
11 impaired or diminished human hearing, and any part, attachment, or accessories including ear
12 molds but excluding batteries. All related services shall mean those services necessary to assess,
13 select, and appropriately adjust or fit the hearing aid to ensure optimal performance. In the event
14 that any part of this definition of hearing aid conflicts with the definition of hearing aid in section
15 196 of chapter 112, this definition shall take precedent for the purposes of this section. This
16 coverage is subject to all applicable co-payments, coinsurance, deductibles, and out-of-pocket
17 limits.

18

19 SECTION 2. Chapter 176A of the General Laws, as so appearing in the 2008 Official Edition,
20 is hereby amended by inserting after section 8CC the following section: -

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22 Section 8DD. Any contract, except contracts providing supplemental coverage to medicare or
23 other governmental programs, between a subscriber and the corporation under an individual or
24 group hospital service plan that shall be delivered issued or renewed in the commonwealth shall
25 provide, a basic benefit to all individual subscribers and members within the commonwealth and
26 to all group members having a principal place of employment within the commonwealth,
27 coverage for the full cost of one hearing aid per hearing impaired ear, every 36 months for
28 insured individuals and all related services which shall be prescribed by an audiologist or hearing
29 impaired specialist as defined in section 196 of chapter 112, and dispensed by an audiologist or
30 hearing instrument specialist as defined in said section. A hearing aid shall mean any wearable,
31 non-disposable instrument or device designed to aid or compensate for impaired or diminished
32 human hearing, and any part, attachment, or accessories including ear molds but excluding
33 batteries. All related services shall mean those services necessary to assess, select, and
34 appropriately adjust or fit the hearing aid to ensure optimal performance. In the event that any
35 part of this definition of hearing aid conflicts with the definition of hearing aid in section 196 of
36 chapter 112, this definition shall take precedent for the purposes of this section. This coverage is
37 subject to all applicable co-payments, coinsurance, deductibles, and out-of-pocket limits.

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39 SECTION 3. Chapter 176B of the General Laws, as so appearing in the 2008 Official Edition,
40 is hereby amended by inserting after section 4CC the following section: -

41 Section 4DD. Any subscription certificate under an individual or group medical service
42 agreement, except certificates which provide supplemental coverage to medicare or other
43 governmental programs, delivered, issued or renewed within the commonwealth shall provide as
44 benefits to all individual subscribers and members within the commonwealth and to all group
45 members having a principal place of employment within the commonwealth coverage for the full
46 cost of one hearing aid per hearing impaired ear, every 36 months for insured individuals and all
47 related services which shall be prescribed by an audiologist or hearing impaired specialist as
48 defined in section 196 of chapter 112, and dispensed by an audiologist or hearing instrument
49 specialist as defined in said section. A hearing aid shall mean any wearable, non-disposable

50 instrument or device designed to aid or compensate for impaired or diminished human hearing,
51 and any part, attachment, or accessories including ear molds but excluding batteries. All related
52 services shall mean those services necessary to assess, select, and appropriately adjust or fit the
53 hearing aid to ensure optimal performance. In the event that any part of this definition of hearing
54 aid conflicts with the definition of hearing aid in section 196 of chapter 112, this definition shall
55 take precedent for the purposes of this section. This coverage is subject to all applicable co-
56 payments, coinsurance, deductibles, and out-of-pocket limits.

57

58 SECTION 4. Section 4 of Chapter 176G of the General Laws, as so appearing in the 2008
59 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 4U the following section: -

60 Section 4V. Any individual or group health maintenance contract shall provide coverage for the
61 full cost of one hearing aid per hearing impaired ear, every 36 months for insured individuals and
62 all related services which shall be prescribed by an audiologist or hearing impaired specialist as
63 defined in section 196 of chapter 112, and dispensed by an audiologist or hearing instrument
64 specialist as defined in said section. A hearing aid shall mean any wearable, non-disposable
65 instrument or device designed to aid or compensate for impaired or diminished human hearing,
66 and any part, attachment, or accessories including ear molds but excluding batteries. All related
67 services shall mean those services necessary to assess, select, and appropriately adjust or fit the
68 hearing aid to ensure optimal performance. In the event that any part of this definition of hearing
69 aid conflicts with the definition of hearing aid in section 196 of chapter 112, this definition shall
70 take precedent for the purposes of this section. This coverage is subject to all applicable co-
71 payments, coinsurance, deductibles, and out-of-pocket limits.