

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR**

ACTION REFERRAL

TO Myers	DATE 6-2-08
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DIRECTOR'S USE ONLY	ACTION REQUESTED
1. LOG NUMBER 000623	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for the Director's signature DATE DUE _____
2. DATE SIGNED BY DIRECTOR C: EF, DEPS 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for appropriate signature DATE DUE 6-9-08 DATE DUE _____ <input type="checkbox"/> FOIA DATE DUE _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Necessary Action

APPROVALS (Only when prepared for director's signature)	APPROVE	* DISAPPROVE (Note reason for disapproval and return to preparer)	COMMENT
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3.			
4.			

SHA

Sunter Hearing Associates

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Audiologist

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Kimberly L. Kelly, M. Aud., CCC-A
Audiologist

Senator Joel Lourie

P O Box 6212
Columbia SC 29260

5/27/2008

Dear Senator Lourie,

Thank you for your continued interest in the issues of access to audiologic care for children with permanent hearing loss. In March, BabyNet revised their fees to bring them in line with the Medicaid reimbursement, which as previously discussed reflected up to a 50% decrease in hearing aid related service codes. As a result additional audiologists have had to discontinue their service to these children. This has made access in some areas of the state extremely difficult. Access is further limited if the audiologist does not participate with all the managed care Medicaid providers. Most do not participate in more than one or two if at all, and continue to have problems with collecting reimbursement.

There are eleven facilities that continue to fit hearing aids on children with BabyNet, and none are centrally located. This forces families to drive long distances for services and with the current crippling gas situation and time away from work, families are going to be increasingly unable to travel for care.

Time is of the essence when dealing with developing brains. Providing an infant properly programmed hearing aids during the first six months of life is critical to their later speech, language and cognitive development. I can give you examples from my own caseload of infants who are waiting for amplification while their parents try to find an audiologist to fit hearing aids. When I meet with colleagues from across the state, I hear the same story.

Last month I had the opportunity, along with Dr. Nikki Burrows, to participate in a conference call with Mr. Michael Madalena as well as some staff from DHHS. He is the actuary working on the various hearing aid codes. We appreciated the opportunity but, while his questions were pertinent, it became apparent that the extensive information that we had provided had not reached him. The answers to his questions were in documents given to DHHS from July 2005 to the present.

We have greatly appreciated your assistance and I wanted to give you an update. Thank you for reading this letter, and I sincerely hope a solution can be found soon.

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Sincerely,



Virginia Corley, Ph.D., CCC-A, FAAA
Audiologist

Senator Phil Leventis

Senator John Land

Representative Murrell Smith

DHEC Commissioner C. Earl Hunter

Dr. Felicity Myers, DHHS

Beverly Hamilton, DHHS

South Carolina Academy of Audiology

Tara Carroll, Director of First Sound

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