



U.S. CONGRESSMAN
TOM RICE

SERVING THE 7TH DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 3, 2021

Sadie Thorman
(202) 225-9895

Congressman Rice Reintroduces Bipartisan Medicare Audiologist Access and Services Act

WASHINGTON – Congressman Tom Rice (R-S.C.) along with 23 Members of the House of Representatives on World Hearing Day reintroduced the *Medicare Audiologist Access and Services Act of 2021*. This bipartisan legislation modernizes outdated Medicare policy to deliver better access for beneficiaries to hearing and balance services, while streamlining service delivery to create efficiencies within the system.

“Hearing loss affects approximately 20% of Americans, including two thirds of adults in their seventies. Unfortunately, Medicare policy has not kept pace with changes in health care delivery models for diagnosing and treating hearing and balance disorders. Current Medicare reimbursement policy still requires seniors to obtain a physician order before seeing their audiologist. Further, because audiologists are inappropriately classified as suppliers within the Medicare system, they are not able to provide treatment services that are covered by Medicare and that they are licensed to provide,” **said Congressman Rice**. “This legislation brings Medicare policy in line with evidence-based practices, allows seniors with Medicare Part B to have the same access to audiology care provided to many veterans, federal employees, and Medicare Advantage beneficiaries, and will not change audiologists’ current scope of practice, supersede state law, or add any new services into the Medicare system.”

The *Medicare Audiologist Access and Services Act of 2021* is endorsed by the Academy of Doctors of Audiology, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, the American Academy of Audiology, and the Hearing Loss Association of America.

Audiologists earn a clinical doctorate degree (Au.D.) and are licensed in all 50 states to provide hearing and vestibular evaluations, aural rehabilitation, counseling, cerumen management, and the management of audiologist conditions including hearing and balance disorders and tinnitus. With many areas of the country facing a shortage of primary and specialty care providers, and with 10,000 Americans becoming Medicare-eligible each day, we must ensure that audiologists

can practice to their full scope, as dictated by state licensure, to meet the audiologic needs of our aging population.



Washington, DC Office
460 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
P: (202) 225-9895
F: (202) 225-9690

Grand Strand Regional Office
2411 N. Oak St., Suite 405
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577
P: (843) 445-6459
F: (843) 445-6418

Pee Dee Regional Office
1831 West Evans St., Suite 300
Florence, SC 29501
P: (843) 679-9781
F: (843) 679-9783