

**From:** Credonna [<mailto:credonna@salineaudiology.com>]

**Sent:** Thursday, October 25, 2018 4:44 PM

**To:** Charles Lyford <[Charles.Lyford@arkansas.gov](mailto:Charles.Lyford@arkansas.gov)>

**Subject:** Arkansas Rehabilitation Funding Requirements

Dear Sir,

My name is Credonna Miller and I am a Doctor of Audiology. I have been practicing for over 30 years and have been in private practice with my partner, Lisa Richey for 20 years. Prior to that, we both worked in the ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) physician offices for approximately 10 years.

I am emailing you about the new proposed requirements for hearing aid funding through Arkansas Rehabilitative Services. My partner and I have worked with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services for the entirety of our careers and have referred many, many people for services; fitting them with hearing aids and taking care of all of their hearing and hearing aid needs.

The audiologist is the professional that people need to see when they have a hearing problem. Audiology is a Doctoral level profession with training in all aspects of hearing and hearing disorders. We readily recognize medical issues and instantly refer for medical treatment or consult to the Primary Care Physician or the ENT.

Although we do see a good deal of pathology in the clinical setting, the majority of people coming in with hearing problems do not have a medically treatable problem. Most just have standard sensorineural (nerve) type hearing loss that does not require medical intervention. Hearing aids are recommended for most of these patients. It is the audiologist that diagnosis hearing loss and makes recommendations as to amplification devices. If there is a need for medical intervention, patients are referred for this and hearing aid recommendations will be made after medical treatment has taken place.

The requirement that a patient get a report from and ENT physician before hearing aid funding can be approved creates extra time and effort for the patient and physician as well as extra unnecessary costs. If licensed audiologists could be included in the list of approved professionals that should submit reports, that would be great. Chances are likely that the ENT or PCP won't do a report anyway as audiologist are always the ones that do these reports.

It is understood that you might not trust a Hearing Aid Dispenser to make medical decisions and/or medical referrals as they have not been trained in these areas. Audiologists, however, are doctoral level professionals that know more about interpreting a hearing test and making appropriate recommendations, medical or not. We should be included in the writing of these new requirements. Neither ENT or PCP reports have been required in the past.

Please review this information and consider this change. Your time is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Credonna Miller, AuD  
Doctor of Audiology