



May 1, 2007

The Honorable Mike Ross
U.S. House of Representatives
314 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3225

Dear Representative Ross:

On behalf of the Minnesota Academy of Audiology, I commend you on your leadership on hearing health care issues and for leading the fight on promoting policies that benefit individuals with hearing loss.

Our Academy endorses the Medicare Hearing Health Care Enhancement Act of 2007 (HR 1665) to provide Medicare beneficiaries with the option of going to an audiologist or physician directly for hearing and balance diagnostic tests. This bill would improve Medicare beneficiaries' access to hearing care without diminishing the important role of medical doctors, or expanding the scope of practice for audiology.

As you know, the Department of Veterans Affairs has allowed veterans to see an audiologist directly since 1992 and has indicated that direct access to audiology services provides quality hearing health care and is "cost effective." The Federal Employee Health Benefits Program, administered by the Office of Personnel Management, and many private health plans now allow participants in their respective health care programs direct access to audiologists as well.

The Academy appreciates your work promoting this important initiative in the 110th Congress. Thank you for being the champion of hearing health and for your dedication to the needs of individuals with hearing loss and the health care professionals providing the services they need to fully function in society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Joscelyn R. K. Martin, Au.D.'.

Joscelyn R. K. Martin, Au.D.
Doctor of Audiology
President, Minnesota Academy of Audiology