



601 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Suite 900, South Building
Washington, D.C. 20004-2601
Tel: 202-220-3172 Toll-Free: 1-866-360-7197
Email: contact@nrln.org Website: www.nrln.org
www.facebook.com/nrln1 www.twitter.com/nrln3

Board of Directors

Bill Kadereit, President / **Janet Seefried**, VP – Secretary /
Treasurer / **Ed Beltram**, VP – Communications / **Vern Larson**, VP –
Membership Development / **Bob Martina**, VP – Grassroots
Network / **Dana Oliver**, VP - Regulatory / **Joe Sciulli**, VP – Social
Media / **Judy Stenberg**, VP – Legislative Affairs / **Jane Banfield** /
Martha Deahl / **Cynthia Hadsell** / **Jay Kuhnle**

Washington & Support Staff

Alyson Parker, Executive Director
Michael Calabrese, Legislative Adviser

The NRLN advocates the rights of more than 2 million American retirees from...

Aetna / Agere / Agilent / Albertson / American Airlines /
Ameritech/SBC / AMF / American Mutual / Amica Mutual /
Archdiocese of Boston / ARXE, Inc. / AT&T / Avaya / Avin Meritor /
Avon / Ball Aerospace / Baltimore Public Schools / Bell Atlantic /
Bell Helicopter / Bendix / BOC Group / Boeing / California State
Employees / Caterpillar / C & P Telephone / CenturyLink / Chrysler
/ City of San Diego / College of New Rochelle / CO DOT / CO PERA
/ Commonwealth Edison / Commscope / Connectivity Solutions /
Consolidated Edison / Continental Airlines / Continental General
Tire / CORBE, Inc. / Cox Media / CSX Transportation / CWA /
Datatronics / Del Monte / Delphi / Delta Air Lines / Dept. of
Justice / Detroit Edison / Detroit Diesel / DHS-FEMA / Diamond
State / Digital Equipment / DTE Energy / DuPont / Eastman
Chemical Co. / Embarq / Enco Alloys / Entergy Operations, Inc. /
Exelon / FedEx / Fidelity / Fisher Scientific Co. / Ford / General
Electric / General Motors / General Telephone / Gulf Oil / Hartford
/ Hoechst Celanese / Holophane / Honeywell Vorr / Hughes
Aircraft / HWB / IBEW / IBM / Illinois Bell / Illinois Teachers Assn. /
Indiana Bell / J. I. Case Corp. / John Deere / JNJ / Johns Manville /
Johnson & Johnson / Kaman Corp. / Kansas City Schools / Kodak /
Lockheed Martin / Lucent / Marlboro / McDonnell Douglas / MCI /
MetLife / Mich Con / MI Public Schools / Mobil Oil /
Monsanto/Solutia / MST&T Co. / NARFE / NASD / NEA / Net Co. /
Nevada Bell / Niagara Mohawk Power / NJEA / NJ Public Employee
/ Nokia / North Memorial Medical Center / NSTAR / Northwest
Airlines / Northwestern Bell / NYNEX / NY Teachers / Ohio Bell /
OK Teachers / Oregon PERS / OSRAM Sylvania / PacBell / PBGC /
PECO Energy / Pension Actuary / Pfizer / Phila Electric Co. /
Polaroid / Port Authority of NY & NJ / Portland GE-Enron /
Prudential / PSERS of PA / Public Service of Colorado / Raytheon /
Rock-Tenn Co. / Rocky Mount Mills / Rohm & Haas Co. / Rouse
Co. / Salis / Sears / SEIU/CSEA / Sempra Energy / Southern New
England Tel / Southwestern Bell / Spherion Corp. / Springs Mills /
Sprint / State of MI / Supermedia LLC / Teamsters / Telesector
Resources Group / Telcordia / Tennessee Valley Authority / Texas
Instruments / TIAA-CREF / Transamerica / UCLA / Ullico / Union
Pacific / UnitedHealthCare / United Airlines / University of
California / UPS / U.S. Air Force / U.S. Airways / U.S. Bureau of
Reclamation / U.S. Marine Corp. / U.S. Air Force / U.S. Army / U.S.
Navy / USAF Trucking / US West-Qwest / USPS / Verizon / Visteon
/ WA PERS / Wells Fargo / Western Union / Weyerhaeuser / Xerox /

May 6, 2020

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3006

Dear Chairman Pallone:

On behalf of the more than 2 million retirees and future retirees represented by the National Retiree Legislative Network (NRLN), I am requesting that you urge the Committee on Energy and Commerce's Subcommittee on Health to support **H.R.4056, Medicare Audiologist Access and Services Act of 2019**. The bill has been pending in the Subcommittee on Health since July 26, 2019.

Passage of **H.R. 4056** is important because it would significantly enhance benefits for hearing health by providing the 42 million original Medicare beneficiaries with critical direct access to both diagnostic and therapeutic services of audiologists.

Many of the 22 million seniors in Medicare Advantage plans that receive taxpayer subsidies already have hearing benefits and many other special benefits not available in original Medicare. For example, UnitedHealthcare, the largest provider of Medicare Advantage plans, is partnering with Ear Professionals International Corporation (EPIC) to give beneficiaries access to 5,000 audiologists and hearing specialists across the country, as well as hearing aids discounted up to 80 percent. Humana, the second largest provider of Medicare Advantage plans, has teamed up with TruHearing, a hearing health care services and hearing aids company to provide hearing benefits.

Medicare Part B requires a physician's order for patients to see an audiologist and only covers diagnostic services without allowing for follow-up treatment or helping with the cost of a hearing aid. **H.R. 4056** would remove the barriers to hearing health under original Medicare, allowing patients to receive appropriate and cost-effective audiologic services.

Individuals with mild hearing loss are three times more likely to experience a fall, and falls are the leading cause of fatal injury for Americans over 65. Seniors with hearing loss are more likely to develop cognitive problems and experience cognitive decline up to 40 percent faster than those without hearing loss. Untreated hearing loss in seniors can lead to depression, anxiety and social isolation.

The NRLN believes it is unfair and discriminates against original Medicare beneficiaries to not have access to the audiology services that are provided by a number of Medicare Advantage plans.

If you would like to know more about why NRLN supports passage of **H.R. 4056**, please ask a member of your staff to contact me or Alyson Parker, the NRLN's Executive Director in Washington, DC at 813-545-6792 or executivedirector@nrln.org.

Sincerely,



Bill Kadereit, President,
National Retiree Legislative Network
Phone: 972-722-5928
Email: president@nrln.org