

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009

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HOUSE BILL 589*

Short Title: Insurance/Cover Hearing Aids. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives England, M. Alexander, Wiley, Glazier (Primary Sponsors); Bell, Brisson, Carney, Crawford, Faison, Farmer-Butterfield, Harrison, Insko, Jackson, Jeffus, Jones, Lucas, Martin, McElraft, McLawhorn, Pierce, Randleman, Sutton, Tarleton, Wainwright, E. Warren, Whilden, and Williams.

Referred to: Health, if favorable, Insurance, if favorable, Appropriations.

March 16, 2009

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO REQUIRE HEALTH BENEFIT PLANS AND THE STATE HEALTH PLAN
3 TO COVER HEARING AIDS AND REPLACEMENT HEARING AIDS.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 **SECTION 1.** Article 3 of Chapter 58 of the General Statutes is amended by adding
6 the following new section to read:

7 "**§ 58-3-280. Coverage for hearings aids.**

8 (a) Every health benefit plan, including the State Health Plan for Teachers and State
9 Employees, shall provide coverage for the full cost of one hearing aid per hearing-impaired ear
10 up to two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) per hearing aid every 36 months for covered
11 individuals under the age of 22 years. The coverage shall include all related services that are
12 prescribed by an audiologist licensed in this State. The prescribed hearing aids shall be
13 medically appropriate to meet the needs of the individual according to accepted professional
14 standards. Coverage shall be as follows:

15 (1) Initial hearing aids and replacement hearing aids not more frequently than
16 every 36 months.

17 (2) A new hearing aid when alterations to the existing hearing aid cannot
18 adequately meet the needs of the child.

19 (3) Services and supplies including the initial hearing aid evaluation, fitting, and
20 adjustments that are provided according to accepted standards.

21 (b) The same deductibles, coinsurance, and other limitations as apply to similar services
22 covered under the health benefit plan apply to hearing aids and related services and supplies
23 required to be covered under this section."

24 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 135-45.8(13) reads as rewritten:

25 "**§ 135-45.8. General limitations and exclusions.**

26 The following shall in no event be considered covered expenses nor will benefits described
27 in G.S. 135-45.6 through G.S. 135-45.11 be payable for:

28 ...
29 (13) Charges for eyeglasses or other corrective lenses (except for cataract lenses
30 certified as medically necessary for aphakia ~~persons~~) ~~and hearing aids or~~
31 ~~examinations for the prescription or fitting thereof.~~ persons).

32"

33 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective January 1, 2010, and applies to health
34 benefit plans that are delivered, issued for delivery, or renewed on and after that date.

