February 12, 2021

The Honorable Matt Cartwright

2102 Rayburn HOB

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Cartwright:

On behalf of the Hearing Loss Association of America, I write to express our support for the Help Extend Auditory Relief Act of 2021.

Founded in 1979, the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) is the nation’s leading organization representing consumers with hearing loss by providing information, education, support, and advocacy to people with hearing loss, their friends and family members.

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders at the National Institutes of Health, nearly 25 percent of those aged 65 to 74 and 50 percent of those who are 75 and older have disabling hearing loss. Hearing loss is not a benign condition: recent studies reveal a linkage between untreated hearing loss and dementia, a greater incidence of balance problems and falls, and greater incidence of stress-related diseases.

Currently, Medicare Part B only covers hearing rehabilitation services for cases caused by an illness or accident. Progressive, age-related hearing loss is not covered, leaving many seniors to pay for hearing exams and hearing aids out of pocket. Hearing aids are incredibly expensive, ranging from $1,000 on up to more than $6,000 for each device. These high price tags discourage many seniors from seeking a solution that could dramatically improve their lives.

The Help Extend Auditory Relief Act of 2021 would help American’s seniors by amending the Social Security Act to include Medicare coverage for hearing rehabilitation, including hearing tests and hearing aids.

Thank you for introducing the HEAR Act. The Hearing Loss Association of America welcomes the opportunity to support this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Barbara Kelley

Executive Director