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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

Dear Colleague:

For the past three years, the foremost service-connected disabilities for Veterans were hearing loss and tinnitus. Providing coordinated hearing health care can dramatically improve the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of Veterans. However, because of increasing demand for hearing health services, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is unable to meet the needs of these Veterans in a timely manner.

The demand for audiology services is growing at a rate of nearly 10% per year. Follow up services, minor repairs and adjustments are also subject to long wait times, resulting in many Veterans not fully utilizing the devices they receive. I've heard from Veterans in my district that are traveling 90 miles one way just to get a hearing aid adjusted by the VA.

Hearing Aid Specialists are trained to assess, dispense, fit, adjust and repair hearing instruments. Major insurance plans utilize these professionals in the dispensing of hearing aids, allowing Doctors of Audiology to focus on clinical cases they are uniquely qualified to treat. Hearing Aid Specialists are educated professionals who have undergone lengthy training and accreditation processes.

Our legislation, H.R. 3508, the Veterans Hearing Access Improvement Act, allows the VA to utilize Hearing Aid Specialists alongside Audiologists to help fill the need for services. With H.R. 3508, Veterans should experience shorter wait times for appointments, have access to more follow-up hearing health care, and enjoy shorter driving distances to see qualified hearing personnel.

H.R. 3508 is supported by the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the International Hearing Society, VetsFirst, Blinded Veterans Association, Business Coalition for Fair Competition, and American Veterans.

We urge you to cosponsor H.R. 3508 today. For more information, please contact Caroline Robinson in Rep. Duffy's office at caroline.robinson@mail.house.gov or 5-3365.

Sincerely,

Sean Duffy
Member of Congress

Tim Walz
Member of Congress

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