**LEGAL NEWS—BILL INTRODUCTED FOR MEDICARE COVERAGE OF HEARING AIDS, HR 1653**

For the past few sessions of Congress, the HEAR Act has been introduced to remove the exclusion of Medicare coverage for hearing aids. It has never advanced out of Committee.

The text is remarkably simple as it removes a Medicare exclusion for coverage. It states: “the Social Security Act (42 USC 1395(a)(7) is amended by striking ‘hearing aids or examinations thereof’”

On March 27, Representative Debbie Dingell of Michigan introduced the Medicare Hearing Aid Coverage Act of 2015, HR 1653. Representative Dingell spoke of the need for change.

“I have learned in recent months how many seniors are burdened by this problem,” said Dingell. “When I learned of this, the ENT doctor who brought it to my attention told me more than half the patients she saw who needed a hearing aid were unable to afford or obtain one. No one should feel isolated, confused or shut out from the world around them because they cannot afford the treatment they need. This bill is just one piece of the puzzle to bring our fragmented and unnavigable health care system into the 21st Century to better serve seniors and families.”

Representative Dingell’s bill would improve access to hearing aids and related examinations by removing part of the Social Security Act that prevents Medicare from covering hearing aids. The bill also directs the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a study on insurance programs that provide services to help with hearing loss.

HLAA will be working to ensure that all members of Congress understand the importance of hearing health care for seniors.

The Bill has been assigned to the Ways and Means Committee, Health Subcommittee. Our Congressman for Sarasota and Manatee Counties, Vern Buchanan, is the only Florida legislator on the Committee and he sits on the Health Subcommittee.

It is important for the Chapter members to contact the Congressman to co-sponsor AND move this Bill to the House floor.

Rep. Buchanan can be contacted at <https://buchanan.house.gov/contact> or by mail (more effective) at:
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