

Hearing aids are costly

According to the Better Hearing Institute's (BHI) most recent survey of 56,000 households, 31.5 million Americans have hearing loss.

Hearing loss affects one in 10 Americans and one in four households. While 95 percent of individuals with hearing loss could be successfully treated with hearing aids, only 23 percent currently use them. One of the barriers to hearing aid adoption is affordability. Two of three people ages 55 and above with

hearing loss report that affordability of hearing aids is a key reason for their inability to treat their hearing loss.

Recent bills in the House (HR2329 — introduced by Reps. Carolyn McCarthy, N.Y., and Vern Ehlers, Mich.), and Senate (S1410 — introduced by Sen. Norm Coleman, Minn.), if passed, could assist up to 1.2 million children and 11.5 million Americans ages 55 and above in treating their hearing loss. These bills provide a tax credit of up to \$500 per hearing aid, available once every five years, towards the purchase of such hearing aid, available to: 1) individuals age 55 and over or 2) those purchasing a hearing aid for a dependent. If utilized, this equates to approximately a price reduction of 25 percent to 35 percent on the purchase of hearing aids. Hearing aids are not covered under Medicare or under the vast majority of state-mandated benefits. In fact, 73 percent of hearing aid purchases involve no third-party payments, placing the entire burden of the hearing aid purchase on the majority of consumers.

If you would like to benefit from a tax credit toward the purchase of hearing aids, the best thing you can do is write a personal letter to your congressman and senators urging support of HR2329 and S1410. Make your voice heard now in support of this legislation by visiting www.hearingaidtaxcredit.org.

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