



**New Mexico  
Association for  
the Deaf  
(NMAD)**

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December 3, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

As you may know, there are many Deaf people in our community who have some residual hearing and, with the help of hearing aids or cochlear implants plus assistive listening systems (ALS), they are able to hear and understand speech in settings where they otherwise could not. With background noise, reverberation and the limitations of the microphones in hearing aids and cochlear implants, it makes it impossible to hear, identify and understand sounds as speech without the ALS. Many individuals with hearing loss can benefit from an ALS.

For those who have T-coil equipped hearing aids or cochlear implants, all they need to do is touch a switch on their device to connect to an ALS through either a room or neck loop. But far too many individuals have never been told about nor are they equipped with this technology. They need to be counseled about the technology when they are shopping for hearing aids so that they can make an informed decision as to whether or not they would want this technology available to them.

As of 2012, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that all new or upgraded assistive listening systems must be hearing aid compatible. Right now, the only technology currently available to allow that compatibility is T-coils. Approximately 60% to 70% of individuals report that when first buying hearing aids, they were not told about the T-coil technology. This failure to inform them in turn deprived them of the ability to determine if they would benefit from having it. This occurs even, at times, when the devices are fitted with T-coils but the consumer was never told that they were there or how they worked.

It is for these reasons that I am writing you on behalf of the New Mexico Association for the Deaf in asking that you support House Bill 48 that would require hearing care providers to counsel their clients on this matter. Your support of these bills is support for New Mexico's 350,000 Deaf and Hard of Hearing Residents.

Respectfully,

Amy A. Gomme  
President