

Hearing, Speech, RLD

From: Richard P Atwell <richard.atwell@wmich.edu>
Sent: Sunday, October 20, 2019 5:26 AM
To: Hearing, Speech, RLD
Subject: [EXT] CCAnm

Dear Board Members,

As a twenty-plus year frequent visitor to New Mexico, I feel like it's almost a second home. I speak warmly and proudly of the many wonders and advantages offered by "The Land of Enchantment" as I travel elsewhere this country.

However, I am concerned as I learn that you are considering a shortcut in the purchase of hearing aids that will allow a dispenser or audiologist to automatically secure an agreement that a hard of hearing patient has had the option and advantages of a telecoil explained to him/her by the act of simply obtaining the purchaser's signature or acknowledgment on the sales agreement.

As a hard of hearing citizen, I know from my own experience that the purchase of hearing aids is an expensive and sometimes confusing transaction. There are so many options and decisions to make. We trust and rely on our hearing healthcare professionals to guide us and inform our decisions. Unless they are required to walk and talk us through the advantages of options INCLUDING TELECOILS, we will not know how this simple and low cost option benefits our hearing experience in places that present hearing challenges. Don't allow them to bypass their responsibility through the entire process. A checkbox indicating that that purchaser has been informed, late in the purchasing process, does a disservice to the oftentimes vulnerable hard of hearing client. From personal experience I can tell you that a client is just anxious to finish the whole fitting/purchase process and that I will likely indicate that I "agree" on a form that I've been informed of "x, y, and z", whether I really understand it or not. Sad...., but true.

Keep the responsibility on the hearing healthcare providers, whom we — the often under-informed — trust to counsel and help us.

Please retain the spirit of the hard work done by the NM hearing advocates and the Licensing Board and require the audiologists and dispensers to actually describe and explain the value of hearing aid telecoils during the purchasing process, not as an afterthought acknowledgment.

Thank you.

Richard P. Atwell