

September 3, 2020

Testimony for Older Vermonters Act, H611

Dear Senators,

By and large the Older Vermonters Act looks very good. However the omission of hearing loss as a serious health condition needs to be corrected. Hearing loss is easily overlooked because it is invisible. It affects one in ten people in the general population. But as people age the incident rate increases as 33% of 60+ year old Vermonters and 50% of those over 75 experience hearing loss. Unrecognized hearing loss results in a lack of accessible communication with family, social networks, caregivers and medical staff. Untreated hearing loss has been implicated in significant declines in health and quality of life for seniors due to isolation, depression, confusion, and stress.

It is important for this document to include the term hearing loss with the other health conditions so that we can be assured that this vital and impactful health issue is recognized and addressed for our seniors.

Thank you,

Deb Charlea Baker, Chair

Hearing Loss Association of America, Vermont Chapter