



**Statement for the Record**  
**of**  
**the National Medical Association,**  
**Submitted by Lawrence Sanders, Jr., MD, MBA**  
**115th President**  
**for the**  
**Subcommittee on Health**  
**U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Veterans' Affairs**  
**Regarding**  
**H.R. 353, the Veterans' Access to Hearing Care Act of 2015**  
**July 14, 2015**

On behalf of the National Medical Association (NMA), I am pleased to express our support for H.R. 353, aimed at improving hearing healthcare services and outcomes for our nation's Veterans. We acknowledge that Veterans' hearing healthcare needs could be better served through increased access to services and improved quality of care, and believe that hearing aid specialists can help accomplish this goal. Specifically, we support the inclusion of hearing aid specialists as a provider class within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). NMA also supports the lifting of restrictions that currently limit the circumstances in which the VA can contract with hearing aid specialists to provide hearing aid services to VA-eligible Veterans, and in doing so create parity with audiologists for the provision of VA-hearing aid services.

Founded in 1895, the NMA is a national, professional and scientific organization representing over 30,000 African American physicians who are committed to improving the quality of health among minorities and disadvantaged people through its membership, professional development, community health education, advocacy, research and partnership with federal and private agencies. The NMA advocates for policies that would assure equitable and quality health care for all people.

Hearing aid specialists are a member of the hearing healthcare team, comprised of otolaryngologists, audiologists, and hearing aid specialists; and are credentialed by all 50 states through licensure to perform hearing tests and provide hearing aid dispensing and fitting services. By integrating this team member into the VA provider system and utilizing the team-based approach, NMA believes service delivery can become more efficient and effective for the Veterans who are currently enrolled and those who will be transitioning into the VA system in the years to come. Further, increasing the external network of VA hearing healthcare providers to include hearing aid specialists would improve Veterans' access to convenient, comprehensive, and timely care; and would provide them the standard of care that currently exists in the public marketplace.

It is for the aforementioned reasons, that the National Medical Association respectfully urges the Subcommittee and full Committee to pass H.R. 353 favorably. Thank you.