



Alliance for the Betterment of
Citizens with Disabilities

Empowering People: Providers Shaping Policies

Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Services Committee

Testimony of Cathy Chin on S1067

Respectfully Submitted, March 14, 2024

Good day, Chairperson Vitale and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Services Committee. On behalf of ABCD, thank you for the opportunity to publicly express our appreciation to the primary sponsors Senator Greenstein and Senator Ruiz and to voice our support of S1067, the “Right to Mental Health for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing Act.”

A few facts.

- For adults with IDD not only is the prevalence of hearing loss much higher but occurs at an earlier age than in the public¹
- As with any human being, hearing loss in people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) can negatively impact multiple spheres of life, including the occurrence of depression.²
- Individuals with IDD and a mental health condition are often referred to as, “the last and least served,” – historically misdiagnosed, understudied, and undertreated.³

We need to do a better job identifying and treating mental health conditions in people with IDD and improving access to mental health services for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing is an important step forward in that direction.

Thank you.

¹ Herrer, G. Intellectual Disabilities and Hearing Loss. July 2023. www.asha.org

² Danyluk, A, Rafik, J. Hearing Loss Diagnosis and Management in Adults with IDD. March 21, 2023. National Library of Medicine. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc

³ Beasley, Joan B. *An Overview of START with Dr. Joan B. Beasley*, (Institute on Disability/UCED, University of New Hampshire, 2016.) Webinar at www.centerforstartservices.org