

From: [Zimmerman, Cindy](#)
To: [Wheeler, Bill](#); [Swant, Jason](#); [Cadwallader, Mark](#); [Cook-Shimaneck, Maggie](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Proposed Rule Change | Definition of Prosthesis
Date: Friday, January 31, 2020 7:02:30 AM

From: Arend Collen <arendcollen@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2020 12:13:10 PM
To: Zimmerman, Cindy
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Proposed Rule Change | Definition of Prosthesis

Hi Cindy,

I worked 12 years for the Montana Department of Revenue as an industrial appraiser. I suffered permanent hearing loss as a result of visiting the noisiest, large, and complex heavy industrial sites throughout Montana. I filed a work comp claim which was initially denied but has been accepted. My medical benefits are scheduled to close as of August 2023. I received hearing aids under my claim which need to be replaced every 4-5 years. Batteries must be replaced several times per week. When the hearing aids are scheduled to be replaced the medical benefits under your work comp claim will have closed. If you retire (or are retired) you cannot petition to re-open your medical benefits because replacement or repair of the hearing aids will not return you or keeping you at work (statutory language 39-71-717. However, I will still be suffering from permanent hearing loss. I am actively looking for employment and simultaneously starting up a consulting business. I need hearing aids for the duration of my life to communicate with my wife, friends, business prospects, and future employment.

I have always protected my hearing by avoiding loud music, concerts, and even wear hearing protectors when on an airplane or in a movie theatre. I was unable to avoid deafening noise exposure during my employment at Revenue. My hearing cannot be medically restored, however, hearing aids allow me to remain as a productive citizen. I urge you to not change the definition of a Prosthesis that would extinguish the benefit of hearing aids.

It is a know fact that a significantly greater number of people who are deaf commit suicide than those who are blind.

Please do not let my hearing lifeline sunset.

Respectfully,

Arend Collen
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