

Make Hearing Aid Tax Credits Happen – The 500,000 letter challenge

April 10, 2009



Help pass legislation for
hearing aid tax credits
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With the reintroduction of the hearing aid tax credit bill in Congress (HR1646), and the

current focus on healthcare reform in Washington, this is perhaps the best time to make our voice heard in support of tax credits for hearing aids. Current legislation before the House of Representatives provides up to \$1000 for two hearing aids for dependents and adults 55+. One in four households in America has at least one person with a hearing loss and 2/3 cannot afford hearing health care. The Senate is considering a bill that covers all age groups.

The Better Hearing Institute (BHI) in collaboration with the Hearing Industries Association (HIA) makes it easy for all Americans to send letters to their Senators and Representative in support of tax credit legislation. Our goal this year is 500,000 letters (that is only 167,000 participants) to the Hill in support of this legislation. We want to bring this issue to the attention of every Senator and Representative on the Hill. Letters from all hearing industry stakeholders, their customers, their patients and their readers will do that.

So let's make it happen this year!

How does it work?

When someone visits www.hearingaidtaxcredit.org, a push of a button enables them to send letters to their respective Senators and Representative. Here are some features of the **Write Congress Now** section of the website:

1. By entering your name, address and zip code, your Senators and Representative are identified and targeted.
2. You can personalize the letter or use our form letter.
3. You're strongly encouraged to personalize the letter; a personal statement is much more powerful.
4. You can print your letters or email them.
5. A "thank you" letter is automatically sent to the letter writer's email address.
6. If your Senators or Representative is already a co-sponsor of the bill a

“thank you” letter will be sent to them.

7. You can email up to 10 friends about the bill with a push of a button.

How can you help?

WRITE A LETTER! This is priority #1. It takes less than 5 minutes to let Congress know how important this legislation is to you.

TELL PEOPLE! After you've written your letter, tell people to do the same. There's nearly countless ways to get the word out, but here are a few of the most effective methods. If you write a letter and use just one of the suggestions below, we'll be on our way to success!

Word of Mouth. Tell people directly! Hand out a flyer about the tax credit after every fitting or put up a poster in your office. The content can be as simple as "*Congress is considering a proposal to provide you with a tax credit for hearing aid treatment. They need to hear that you support this idea now! Visit www.hearingaidtaxcredit.org!* Here's a [sample card](#) you can hand out.

Post it on your website or your business card. This message says it all: *Help pass hearing aid tax credit legislation now, visit www.hearingaidtaxcredit.org!*

Send an eBlast. A quick email to your patient/friend/customer list can help spread the word. Don't have time to write? Copy and paste this: *Hearing loss affects 1 in 4 households in America. Congress is considering a proposal to provide Americans with a tax credit for hearing aid treatment. They need to hear that you support this idea now! While passage of the tax credit bill may not impact you it could help a friend or relative of yours. Visit www.hearingaidtaxcredit.org and make your voice heard either for yourself or on behalf of a relative or friend. Please forward this email to anyone else who may benefit from this legislation.*

Snail Mail. Do you regularly connect with consumers via the mail? Try sending a separate piece about the tax credit or mention it as part of your typical communication. We have also created a suggested [postcard design](#).

Write your local paper/issue a press release. The tax credit is big news – and a great way to promote your practice. We've written a suggested [OpEd piece](#) for placement in your local newspaper, adjust as you'd like. For further source material see our current [press release](#) on this topic.

Reach out to the community (online and real life!). Print some tax credit flyers and go around to physicians' offices, senior centers, and the local library to post them. Get creative! Belong to facebook? Send a message to all your U.S. contacts to support this legislation and encourage them to join the [Hearing Aid Tax Credit facebook group](#) started by Dr. Juliette Sterkens.

If you have further ideas for promoting the hearing aid tax credit website let us know and we will share it with readers of this newsletter at our tax credit legislation [activism page](#). skochkin@betterhearing.org