



February 18, 2025, 2025

Chairwoman Jill Carter  
Chairwoman, Missouri Senate Families, Seniors and Health Committee  
Jefferson City, MO

Re: Support SB317

Dear Chairwoman Carter and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the membership of American Cochlear Implant Alliance (ACI Alliance)—a non-profit organization of parents of children with hearing loss, adults with hearing loss, cochlear implant clinicians, and educators of children who are deaf and hard of hearing. We ask that you support SB317 which restores coverage for cochlear implants and hearing aids for adults under Missouri Medicaid. With passage of the bill, Missouri would join the majority of States that offer this life-changing intervention for adults.

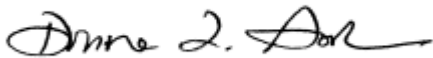
Cochlear implantation is a well-known and established procedure that has been approved by the FDA for use in adults since 1985 and in children since 1990. Cochlear implants play a critical role in restoring the ability to perceive speech and environmental sounds for appropriate individuals with moderate to profound hearing loss who do not benefit sufficiently from hearing aids because of the severity of their deafness. Cochlear implants allow recipients to communicate freely including participating in the workforce, caring for themselves and family members, and enjoying important quality of life improvements.

Without intervention with appropriate hearing assistive technology, adults with untreated or undertreated hearing loss may experience a downward trajectory in quality of life. Not only does it impact communication and socialization, hearing loss also has comorbidities which increase chance of falls and dementia. The financial impact of adult hearing loss is growing. In 2002, lost productivity attributed to hearing loss was \$1.4 billion; this is expected to grow to \$9 billion by 2030 (Stucky, Wolf & Kuo, 2010). By providing hearing intervention for adults, your state will be able to mitigate some of this loss.

This coverage will also benefit those who were implanted as children under Medicaid and transition at age 21. When a state Medicaid program does not cover cochlear implantation for adults, it can mean a person loses access to sound when their processor becomes obsolete or is damaged. Many of those young adults are still in school or getting started in their work life and do not yet have private insurance.

Please support these bills for continued support of access to cochlear implantation. I am happy to answer any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna Sorkin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Donna Sorkin  
Executive Director  
American Cochlear Implant Alliance