



## Ensuring Patient Safety for Hearing Healthcare

The AAO-HNS believes that a physician-led hearing healthcare team, with coordination of services, is the best approach for providing the highest quality care to patients. Unfortunately, the audiology community continues to pursue legislation that would undermine the overall hearing healthcare team by granting audiologists “direct access” to Medicare beneficiaries.

**Fundamentally, hearing and balance disorders are medical conditions that require a full patient history and physical examination by a physician.** While audiologists are valued health professionals who work for and with physicians, they do not possess the medical training necessary to perform the same functions as physicians, nor are they able to provide patients with the medical diagnosis and treatment options they deserve. Audiologists are not physicians and should not be treated as such under the Medicare program.

With eight years of formal education, a minimum five-year residency and at least 15,000 hours of clinical training, otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons are the most qualified providers to diagnose and treat ear, nose, and throat conditions - and are trained to lead a care team. A physician-led hearing care team, with coordination of services, is the best approach for providing the highest quality care to patients.