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Senator DeSteph's Statement on Passage of Senate Bill 1003 Mandating Hearing Aid Coverage for Minors

(Richmond, VA): Senator Bill DeSteph (R-Virginia Beach) and Senator Lionell Spruill (D-Chesapeake) are proud to announce the successful passage of legislation mandating health insurance coverage in the Commonwealth for hearing aids and related services for children aged 18 years and younger.

The bill requires health insurers, health maintenance organizations, and corporations providing health care subscription contracts to provide pediatric coverage for hearing aids and related services. This means that families of hearing-challenged children will no longer have to worry about the high costs of hearing aids and can focus on the well-being and development of their youngsters.

"I am honored to have worked alongside my co-sponsor, Senator Spruill, to introduce this bill," said Senator Bill DeSteph. "Hearing loss can have a significant impact on a child's development, and we believe that every child in Virginia deserves access to affordable hearing aids. With this new law, we are taking a significant step towards ensuring that all children in Virginia can receive the healthcare they need. I especially want to express my appreciation to Crystal Dupilka and her son Clay, for their unwavering dedication to this legislation."

The coverage includes one hearing aid per hearing-impaired ear, up to a cost of \$1,500, every 24 months. The measure applies to policies, contracts, and plans delivered, issued for delivery, or renewed on and after January 1, 2024.

"We are thrilled that this bill has been passed, and we are grateful for the support we received from our fellow legislators," said Senator Lionell Spruill. "This new law will improve the quality of life for children in Virginia who are hearing-impaired, and we are proud to have been a part of this process."

This bill marks a significant achievement for the healthcare industry in Virginia and highlights the importance of prioritizing the needs of children. Senator DeSteph and Senator Spruill were honored to work with citizen stakeholders, including parents, pediatricians, audiologists, and advocacy groups, on this groundbreaking legislation and look forward to continuing their work to improve the lives of all Virginians.

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