

From: [REDACTED]
To: [ETF SMB Board Feedback](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Hearing Benefit
Date: Sunday, May 12, 2024 9:08:06 PM

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Dear friends. I do hope you are not [REDACTED]. However, if there's someone on staff who is, you may want to refer this note to them.

[REDACTED] As a member of UHC Medicare Advantage, we are strictly limited to in-network providers. Over the last several years, many of the audiologists [REDACTED] who were part of that network have dropped out due to the restrictions on care that UHC adheres to, making it harder to get any continuity in care. In addition, the UHC hearing benefit has other restrictions including:

1. UHC has gone into the hearing aid sales business and restricts [REDACTED] reimbursement benefit to solely the hearing aids (HAs) they sell. Most of these are "second tier" products [REDACTED]
2. Once purchased, care is severely limited during the warranty period. Year 1 includes a hearing test and 3 visits to the audiologist, while years 2 and 3 include only the hearing test. As you know, HAs are extremely sophisticated devices, subject to regular software updates and requiring frequent maintenance. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] And typically, new software versions need to be installed by a trained audiologist.

3. Tinnitus treatment is not covered even though the symptoms of tinnitus can be mitigated by trained professionals.

[REDACTED] The ETF hearing loss community is now subject to ongoing out-of-pocket expenses in order to get the service necessary for these sophisticated devices. I wish to request that the following changes be negotiated with health care providers in order to address these issues:

- The purchase of hearing aids includes a 3 year warranty and full service agreement covering all necessary office visits, as well as tinnitus therapy;
- Our \$1000 per hearing aid every 3 years benefit be applied to any device recommended by a patient's audiologist including speciality HAs if determined necessary by the professional; and
- the full service benefit continues if the patient changes audiologists due to a move, retirement, sale of practice etc.

Friends, it's time to put the wood to UHC and negotiate a better hearing benefit. Medicare Advantage, in particular, it too lucrative a contract for them to lose. So please help. Thank

you.

Sincerely,
Steven Brachman

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]