**5210.E AMH HCW H2611.1 - NOT FOR FLOOR USE**

**ESB 5210** - H COMM AMD

By Committee on Health Care & Wellness

**ADOPTED 04/10/2019**

Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the following:

"NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that approximately twenty percent of the population have hearing loss, including more than six hundred fifty thousand Washington state residents who have been diagnosed with hearing loss. The number is rising; the aging baby boomer generation is increasing age-related hearing loss exponentially, and hearing loss has increased among children and youth in the last decade. As these trends continue, telecoil technology has the potential to benefit more people, but only if consumers are made aware of the technology and its benefits.

The legislature finds that the federal Americans with disabilities act of 1990 was amended in 2010 to require assistive listening systems in places of public assembly, served by a public address system, to be hearing aid compatible. Currently, the telecoil is the only component within a consumer hearing instrument that enables this mandated compatibility. Without a telecoil-enabled hearing instrument a person cannot effectively access mandated assistive listening systems.

The legislature finds that bluetooth technology is evolving, but it is still generally not suited for long range transmission in a large venue like an auditorium. To date, hearing aid bluetooth technology does not meet compliance standards for assistive listening system requirements.

Therefore, the legislature intends to increase consumer awareness of benefits and uses of the different types of hearing instruments and technologies.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 18.35 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Any person who engages in fitting and dispensing of hearing instruments shall:

(a) Prior to initial fitting and purchase, notify a person seeking to purchase a hearing instrument, both orally and in writing, about the uses, benefits, and limitations of current hearing assistive technologies, as defined by the department of health in rule.

(b) Provide to each person who enters into an agreement to purchase a hearing instrument a receipt, which must be signed by the purchaser at the time of the purchase, containing language that verifies that prior to initial fitting and purchase the consumer was informed, both orally and in writing, about the uses, benefits, and limitations of current hearing assistive technologies, as defined by the department of health in rule.

(2) The department may adopt rules to create a standard receipt form that persons required to provide notice under this section may provide to purchasers, as required in subsection (1)(a) of this section.

(3) A person required to provide written notice in subsection (1) of this section may produce written materials, use materials produced by hearing instrument manufacturers or others, or use the materials created by the office of the deaf and hard of hearing, as required in section 3 of this act.

(4) This section may not be construed to create a private right of action or claim against any person engaging in the fitting and dispensing of hearing instruments.

(5) The department must adopt rules necessary to implement this section. The department may consider a number of factors in defining current hearing assistive technologies, but must consider whether hearing assistive technologies are compatible with assistive listening systems that are compliant with the Americans with disabilities act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.20A RCW to read as follows:

The office of the deaf and hard of hearing shall develop educational materials to be distributed by hearing aid dispensers, including audiologists, to persons with hearing loss that explains the uses, benefits, and limitations of current hearing assistive technologies as defined by the department of health in rule."

Correct the title.

EFFECT: Removes references to specific types of hearing assistive technologies, and instead requires the Department of Health to define in rule the hearing assistive technologies about which a person purchasing a hearing instrument must be notified. Corrects references to the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.