



*Pennsylvania College of Optometry
College of Education and Rehabilitation*

*George S. Osborne College of Audiology
College of Health Sciences*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SALUS BECOMES FIRST U.S. UNIVERSITY TO ENDORSE PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO TREAT LICENSED AUDIOLOGISTS AS PHYSICIANS UNDER MEDICARE

H.R. 5304 would also enhance patient access to vital hearing and balance care

Washington, D.C. (29 September 2014) – Salus University of Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, which includes the nation’s largest College of Audiology, has become the first U.S. health sciences educational institution to endorse proposed federal legislation that would benefit patients by recognizing audiologists alongside numerous other doctoral healthcare professions - from optometrists to dentists and doctors of osteopathy - under Medicare’s regulations.

In a letter to Pennsylvania’s Congressional delegation, which includes H.R. 5304 (Audiology Patient Choice Act), co-sponsor Rep. Matt Cartwright (Pennsylvania – 17th District) Salus president, Dr. Michael H. Mittelman, retired Rear Admiral and former Deputy Surgeon General of the Navy, underscored the pressing need to enact the bill to “elevate at the federal level the stature of audiologists who already are recognized by licensing boards in all 50 states.” Dr. Mittelman stated, “This is an important, patient-focused bill that will significantly benefit countless Medicare-eligible citizens who deserve the ability to directly select a certified audiologist – the same way they do a physician and other doctors - for critically required services.”

As proposed, this long overdue bi-partisan legislation is intended to eliminate the current physician-referral requirement so Medicare patients could freely, directly, and without delay seek and receive treatment from a licensed audiologist for a host of conditions, including the broad spectrum of hearing and balance disorders. No such referral is necessary for federal workers, including those covered under the Congressional health plan.

Victor Bray, PhD, dean of the University’s Osborne College of Audiology, commended Salus leadership for endorsing the bill. “Salus originated as the Pennsylvania College of Optometry and has become synonymous with providing outstanding professional education in areas of dramatic need across America. As a national leader in professional audiology education we are proud to be at the forefront of an energized movement that regards Doctors of Audiology as a critical component of our nation’s evolving and challenging healthcare delivery system.”

Advocates of the H.R. 5304 consider it a fix to existing legislation that has failed to keep pace with audiology’s significant advancements in professional education and

development, and its indispensable role in American healthcare and public health. Members of the Academy of Doctors of Audiology, including Dr. Bray and numerous graduates of Salus University Osborne College of Audiology, will be among those meeting with Congressional staff on Tuesday, September 30, to underscore the potential positive impacts – particularly for patients - of the bill.

“Salus University’s endorsement of the Audiology Patient Choice Act underscores its insistence on best practices in the delivery of patient-centered care,” said Brian Urban, AuD, current president of the Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA). “It is reassuring to know that this legislation is supported by an institution whose leaders ‘walk the walk’ when it comes to driving innovation and improved patient outcomes.”

Salus University, founded as the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1919, today is a diversified, globally recognized, professional academic medical center of learning that offers a wide range of accredited post-graduate degree programs including: Optometry, Audiology, Physician Assistant, Public Health, Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, Biomedicine, and Occupational Therapy. The University’s more than 1,100 students include PhD and post-doctoral candidates, and there are more than 10,000 Salus alumni worldwide. For more information, please visit www.salus.edu.

Contact:

Liz Thomas

856.642.6226

#