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Steven Toms, M.D. 8/19/2013

Director,  
Department of Neurosurgery  
Surgical Co-Director,  
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Associate Chief Medical Officer  
Geisinger Health System

The Honorable Julie Harhart  
313 Main Capitol Building  
PO Box 202183  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2183

Dear Chairwoman Harhart:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 137, regarding the licensure of audiologists, and to urge your consideration of the bill.

Senate Bill 137 provides for the certification of audiologists utilizing intraoperative monitoring ("IOM"). As you may be aware, the provision of IOM is an important component that helps protect our patients during surgical procedures that place the nervous system at risk of injury.

Prior to my arrival at Geisinger, I was a neurosurgeon at the Brain Tumor Institute at The Cleveland Clinic. I also served as an assistant professor of neurological surgery at both Vanderbilt and Oregon Health & Sciences Universities. I can honestly say that my experiences have proven to me that well trained Audiologists provide exceptional IOM expertise and I believe can function independently from an IOM physician.

Audiologists with special training in IOM have served as vital members of the Geisinger Medical Center neurosurgery team for several years. Our IOM-audiologists have been a valuable addition to our service and have helped continue the high standard of care which we strive to practice. These audiologists, graduates of the Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania Au.D. program, received specific didactic and clinical training to prepare them for the unique role of IOM.

I believe that well trained IOM audiologists play an important role in patient care during complicated and delicate surgeries, and strongly support retaining the IOM scope of practice within the audiology licensure bill (Senate Bill 137).

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact me with any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,



Steven A. Toms, M.D., FACS, MPH

Cc: Representative Harry Readshaw, Democratic Chair, Professional Licensure Committee  
Senator John Gardner