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Date: February 12, 2026

Re: AAO-HNS Support for SB 173 – Health Care Matters

To: Members of the Indiana Senate:

On behalf of the American Academy of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS), which represents more than 12,000 ear, nose, and throat physicians and surgeons nationwide, I am writing to express our support for SB 173, legislation that advances fairness, transparency, and clinical oversight in health insurance claims processing.

AAO-HNS is particularly encouraged by the bill’s provisions addressing inappropriate downcoding practices and strengthening enforcement authority to ensure compliance. These measures help ensure that physicians are reimbursed accurately for medically necessary services, and that coverage decisions reflect sound clinical judgment.

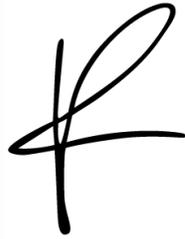
We also support SB 173’s safeguards related to the use of artificial intelligence and automated systems in utilization review. Prohibiting the use of artificial intelligence as the primary means for making adverse determinations and reinforcing the importance of clinical peer review are critical steps in protecting patients and preserving physician-led decision-making.

Inappropriate downcoding and automated claims denials can delay care and create unnecessary administrative burdens for physician practices. SB 173 establishes reasonable and balanced protections that promote accountability while maintaining patient access to timely, high-quality specialty care.

AAO-HNS appreciates your leadership on these important issues and looks forward to serving as a resource as the bill advances.

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Sincerely,



Rahul K. Shah, MD, MBA
Chief Executive Officer
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