

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1298 (Delegate Martinez)
Health and Government Operations

Health Occupations - Practice of Audiology - Definition

This bill alters the definition of “practice audiology” by specifying that it includes the conducting, ordering, or performance of certain screenings or imaging related to the auditory or vestibular conditions in the human ear or as required by federal, State, or third-party payers. The bill also clarifies that “practice audiology” means to use any means known in the science of audiology, as specified. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists can update regulations as necessary with existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law: Generally, an individual must be licensed by the State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists to practice audiology, provide hearing aid services, practice speech-language pathology, or practice music therapy in Maryland.

Under current law, “practice audiology” means to (1) evaluate, diagnose, manage, and treat auditory or vestibular conditions in the human ear; (2) prescribe, order, sell, dispense, or fit hearing aids; (3) prescribe, order, sell, dispense, or externally fit a sound processor to an

osseo-integrated device; and (4) prescribe, order, sell, dispense, or externally fit a “sound processor” (a nonsurgical, external unit that attaches to an internal osseo-integrated device or cochlear implant) to a cochlear implant.

Under the bill, “practice audiology” means to *use any means known in the science of audiology* to perform the actions listed above.

Under current law, “practice audiology” includes the (1) conducting of health screenings; (2) removal of a foreign body from the external auditory canal that is not impacted to the point it requires anesthesia; (3) removal of cerumen from the external auditory canal that is not impacted to the point it requires anesthesia; (4) ordering of cultures and bloodwork testing as it relates to the auditory or vestibular conditions in the human ear; (5) ordering and performing of in-office nonradiographic scanning or imaging of the external auditory canal; and (6) ordering of radiographic imaging as it relates to the auditory or vestibular conditions in the human ear.

The bill specifies that the practice of audiology includes conducting health screenings *related to auditory or vestibular conditions or required by federal, State, or third-party payers* and the ordering and performing of in-office nonradiographic scanning or imaging of the external auditory canal *as it relates to the auditory or vestibular conditions in the human ear*.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 919 (Senator Gile) - Finance.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

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js/jc

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