

Lam_Presentation.pdf

Uploaded by: Lam, Clarence

Position: FAV

SB 379

**Health Occupations – Registration of
Audiology Assistants**

— Senator Clarence Lam —
District 12



Audiology Assistants Background

- Audiology Assistants are responsible for cleaning, operating, and assisting with hearing devices for patients.
 - They also prep exam rooms, complete screening protocols, and work in tandem with an audiologist.
-
- Under this bill, audiology assistants must have a high school diploma and meet the requirements of the Board of Examiners.
 - Audiology Assistants allow Audiologists to provide patient care at the top of their scope of practice

Audiology Assistant Duties



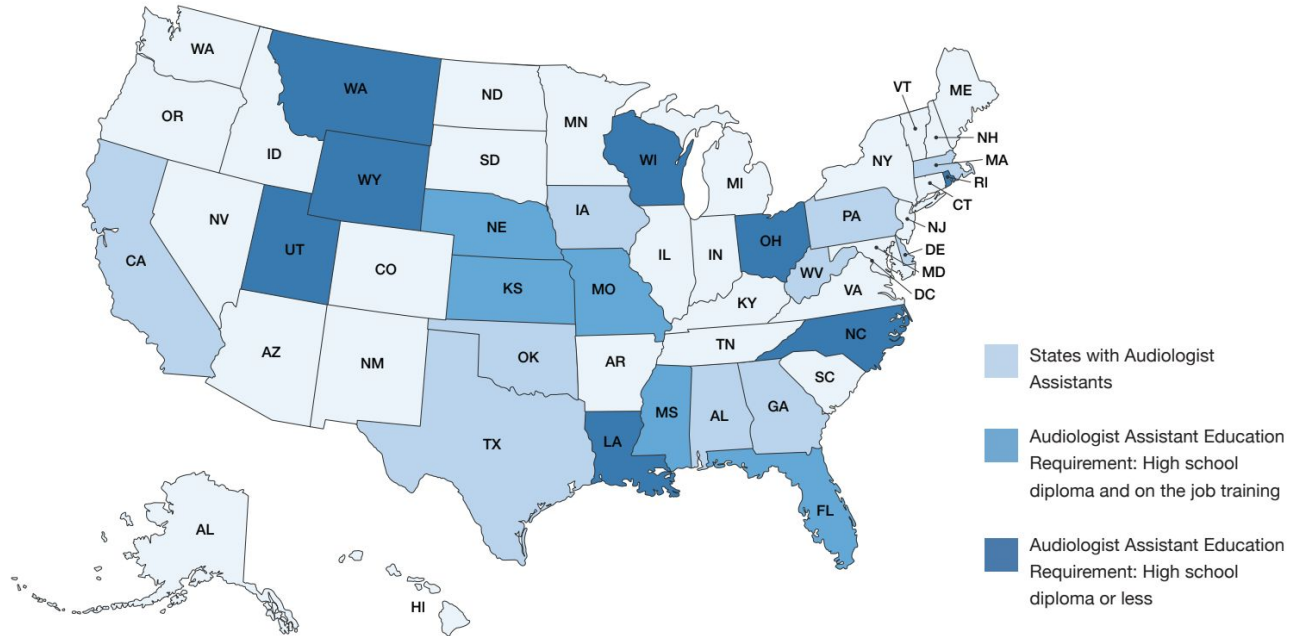
Duties of an Audiology Assistant include:

- Routine cleaning of hearing devices
- General instruction of device use
- Prepping exam rooms, equipment, patients
- Completing screening (pass/fail) protocols
- Other tasks delegated by the audiologist

Why transition to Audiology Assistant licensure?

- 22 states regulate AAs. several are pursuing legislation in 2021.
- Protect the public by introducing practice standards to those already serving as audiology assistants.
- Audiologists cannot see as many patients as they used to while complying with COVID-19 protocols.
- Audiologists are already using assistance and regulation can ensure patient safety.
- This bill will introduce up to 900 jobs in the State with an average starting pay of \$17 an hour.

Detailed Breakdown of AAs in the United States



SB 379 - Primary Functions

- Creates a license for audiology assistants and sets minimum qualification
- Establishes supervision requirements
- Applies audiology disciplinary grounds to audiology assistants

Why Maryland Needs SB 379

- Keep Maryland constituents safe by regulating the industry.
- Introduce up to 900 jobs at \$17 an hour that do not require a college degree.
- Increase access to medical care for Maryland's elderly, disabled, and pediatric population.



Lam_SB0379_FAV.pdf

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Position: FAV

CLARENCE K. LAM, M.D., M.P.H.
Legislative District 12
Baltimore and Howard Counties

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Committee

Executive Nominations Committee

Joint Committee on Ending Homelessness

Chair

Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee

Joint Committee on Fair Practices and
State Personnel Oversight

Vice Chair

Baltimore County Senate Delegation

Chair

Howard County Senate Delegation



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Support SB 379: Health Occupations - Registration of Audiology Assistants

What an Audiology Assistants does:

- Supports work of licensed audiologist
- Cleans, operates, and assists patients with hearing devices
- Prep exam rooms and complete screening protocols
- Allows audiologist more time to care for patients

SB 379 Purpose and Function:

- Creates a license for audiology assistants (Board amendment replaces registration with licensure)
- Sets minimum license qualifications
- Establishes supervision requirements
- Applies audiology disciplinary grounds to audiology assistants

Why is SB 379 Needed:

- Unregulated assistants are already supporting audiologists, which may risk patient safety
- Standardizes qualifications and supervision of assistants
- Allows Board to discipline audiology assistants and ensure patient safety

HB161-SB379 FAQs 20210126- final.pdf

Uploaded by: Spoor , Dr. Alicia

Position: FAV

HB161/SB379: Licensure of Audiology Assistants

Sponsors: Delegate Ariana Kelly; Senator Clarence Lam

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an Audiology Assistant?

An Audiology Assistant is an “extender” of the Audiologist, offering support in hearing and balance healthcare. Audiology Assistants allow the Audiologist- a clinical doctor with 8 years of education- to provide patient care at the top of their scope of practice (e.g. cochlear implant MAPping, diagnostic hearing testing, vestibular rehabilitation) by completing tasks that do not require the professional education. Many other professionals have assistants, including medical/physicians, dental, optometry, and pharmacy.

Why are Audiology Assistants needed?

COVID-19 has changed medical and healthcare dramatically! Providing patient care now requires significant additional steps, including scheduling additional time in-between patients to allow for cleaning and disinfecting rooms and equipment, additional personal protective equipment (PPE), and limited access to certain populations- often those most in need of audiologic services (e.g. individuals over the age of 65). Audiologists cannot see as many patients during an 8-hour day while complying with COVID-19 protocols. Audiology Assistants will ease the access to audiologic care by provided routine services and troubleshooting/triage services, not only during the COVID-19 pandemic, but also in busy practices and rural areas where access to an audiologist is limited.

Can't an Audiologist have an Audiology Assistant now?

Today, hearing health settings employ a variety of unlicensed and non-standardized employees who may be providing audiology-related services. Maryland, like many other states, has set a precedence by having statute for assistants. The Board of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers & Speech-Language Pathologists already has Speech-Language Pathology Assistants, as well.

What are the duties of an Audiology Assistant?

As extenders, Audiology Assistants will perform any tasks delegated to them from the Audiologist. Routine tasks in an audiology practice/clinic would include preparing a room, equipment, and/or patient for evaluation by the Audiologist, routine cleaning of hearing devices, and general instruction of device use. Complete job descriptions will be detailed in the regulations. Audiology Assistants would NOT be testing patients.

What kind of education is needed to be an Audiology Assistant?

Audiology Assistants are an entry-level position to hearing and balance healthcare, supervised by an Audiologist. The legislation requires Audiology Assistants have a high school diploma or equivalent and also meet the requirements from the Board of Examiners: be of good moral character, demonstrate oral competency, and submit to a criminal history records check. Additionally, the high school diploma or equivalent education requirement is consistent with the majority of other states who have already passed legislation for Audiology Assistants.

Who will supervise the Audiology Assistants?

The legislation allows each licensed Audiologist to provide general supervision two Audiology Assistants. Two Audiology Assistants per Audiologist was chosen to ensure the Audiologist can provide oversight and supervision, when needed.

What other states have Audiology Assistants?

Currently, there are 22 other states that have Audiology Assistants. Additionally, some states had legislation introduced in 2020 to add Audiology Assistants to their state, but the legislation was unable to be passed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that 5 or more states will pursue Audiology Assistant legislation in 2021.

What is the economic development impact of the legislation?

There are currently more than 450 licensed Audiologists in the state of Maryland. The legislation allows a licensed Audiologist to supervise two Audiology Assistants; therefore, the legislation provides 900 or more employment opportunities.

Is there a scope of practice component to the legislation?

No.

Who opposes the legislation?

There is currently no known opposition to HB161/SB379.

HB161-SB379, Licensure of Audiology Assistants v3.

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Position: FAV

HB161/SB379: Licensure of Audiology Assistants

Sponsors: Delegate Ariana Kelly; Senator Clarence Lam

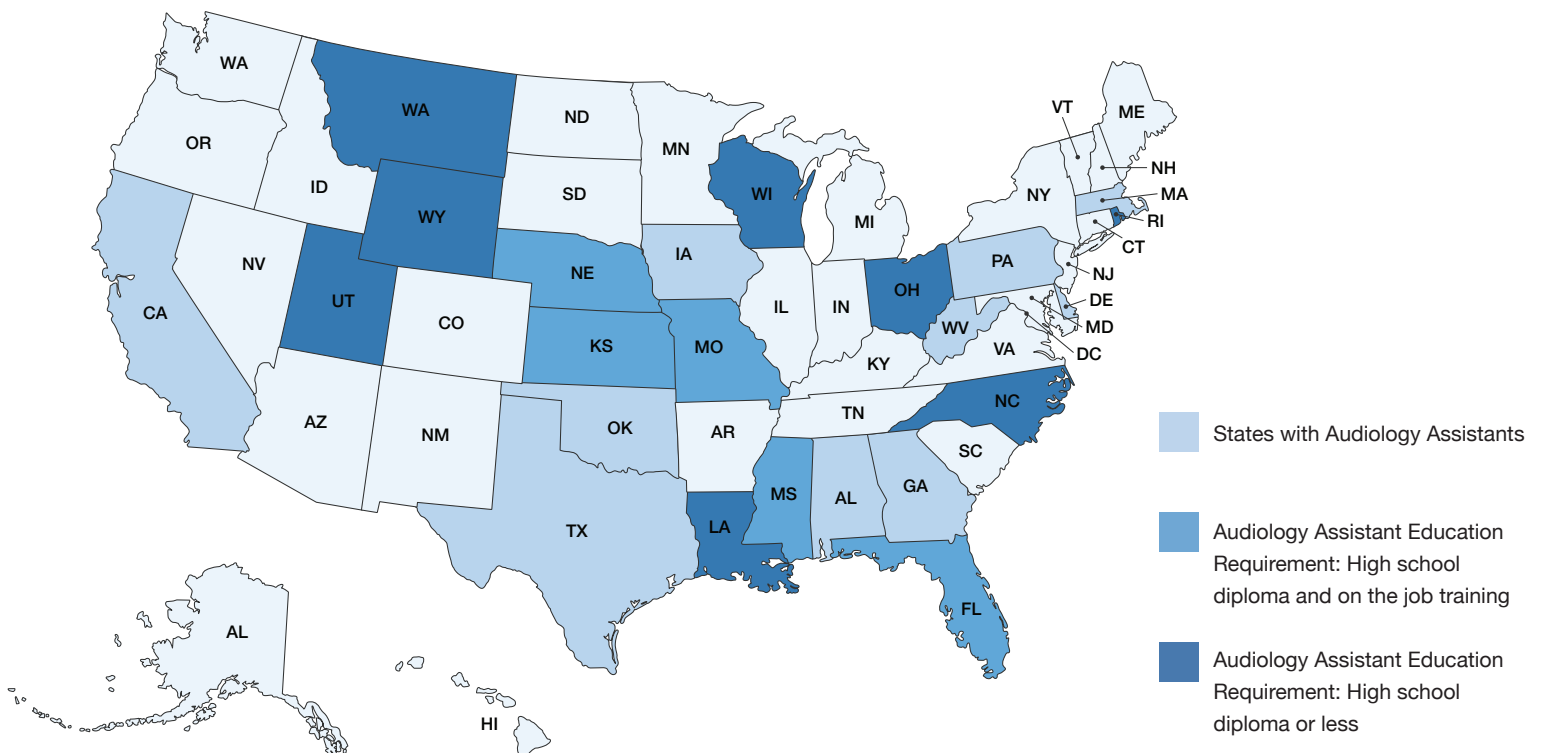
HB161/SB379 legislation, when enacted, will introduce Audiology Assistants to the healthcare system. Following the precedence set in the state of Maryland, the legislation was drafted using medical, dental, and podiatric assistants as an example of their ability to “extend” care. Audiology Assistants will help provide access to care in rural areas and in busy clinics, which have significantly higher demand with the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing and greater disinfecting demands.



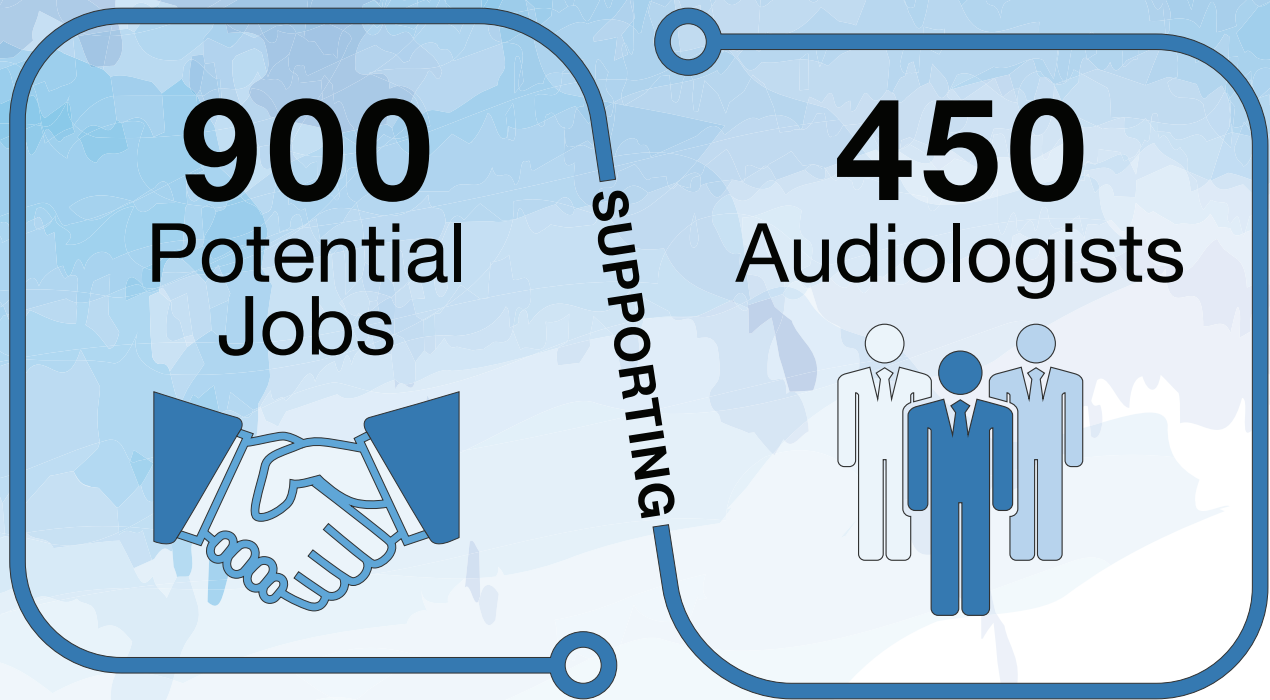
Duties of an Audiology Assistant include:

- Routine cleaning of hearing devices
- General instruction of device use
- Prepping exam rooms, equipment, patients
- Completing screening (pass/fail) protocols
- Other tasks delegated by the audiologist

To date, 22 other states have enacted Audiology Assistants. Many states require a high school diploma and some on-the-job training for this position.

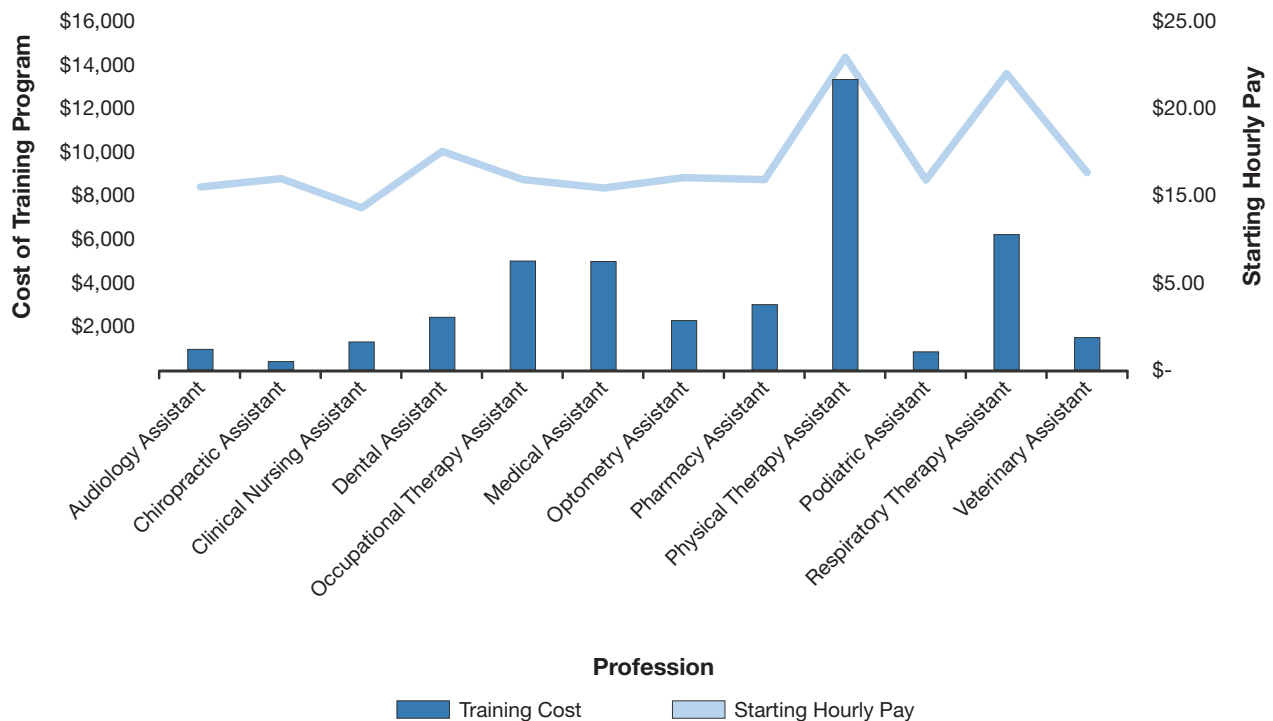


Economic Development



Audiology Assistants are **equally paid** with minimal education and have at least the same, if not **better return** on training cost compared to other medical/healthcare assistants.

Cost of Training versus Hourly Pay by Profession for Assistants



Thank you for your favorable support.

MAA Support Letter for SB 379 20210208.pdf

Uploaded by: Spoor , Dr. Alicia

Position: FAV



Maryland Academy of Audiology

P.O. Box 710

Parkville, MD 21234

<http://maaudiology.org/>

February 16, 2021

Chair Paul Pinsky
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB379 Health Occupations—Licensure of Audiology Assistants

Position: **SUPPORT**

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members,

The Association of American Medical Colleges continues to project a shortage of tens of thousands of healthcare providers in the next 12 years.¹ The main factors that contribute to this shortage include aging patients, population growth, and a greater number of insured patients. Audiologists, by virtue of their specialty, often work with patients over the age of 65 years; this is the fastest group of population growth, according to the US Census.² Without “extenders,” audiologists will not be able to accommodate the growing demands in the hearing and balance healthcare system.

SB379/HB161- Licensure of Audiology Assistants will introduce Audiology Assistants to the Maryland healthcare system. Twenty-two other states have already passed Audiology Assistant legislation and at least five states, including Maryland, have legislation introduced during the 2021 Session. The legislation requires Audiology Assistants to have a high school diploma or equivalent, be of good moral character, demonstrate oral competency, and submit to a criminal history check. The Maryland Academy of Audiology (MAA) concurs with the amendments put forth by the Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers and Speech-Language Pathologist and **requests your favorable support.**

As extenders, Audiology Assistants will be tasked with completing routine care that does not require an 8-year clinical doctorate education, such as prepping an exam room and patient, completing screening protocols, and reviewing educational counseling of devices and accessories. With Audiology Assistants, Audiologists can focus on tasks that require their skills and knowledge: pediatric care, osseointegrated (e.g. cochlear implant) services, vestibular (balance) diagnosis and rehabilitation, and more. On-the-job

¹ <https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/us-physician-shortage-growing>

² <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2018/10/snapshot-fast-growing-us-older-population.html>



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<http://maaudiology.org/>

training will be outlined in the regulations and guarantee that Audiology Assistants can be employed without significant barriers to educational/training costs.

With Audiology Assistants, patients will have more access to hearing and balance healthcare. Rural areas of Maryland have few providers, and busy practices everywhere have waiting lists that can be three weeks or longer to obtain hearing and balance healthcare. With this new legislation, each licensed Audiologist can supervise up to two Audiology Assistants, ensuring support can be provided, as needed. Maryland presently has more than 450 licensed Audiologists and when HB161/SB379 is passed, a potential 900 jobs can be added to the state's economic development. This position would be ideal for those who are interested in pursuing healthcare or medical education, retired individuals who want to continue working part-time with patients, and those who do not want to work full-time (e.g. stay-home parent).

The MAA represents the 450+ licensed audiologists who practice in the state of Maryland, and the patients they serve. The MAA's goal is to enhance the ability of members to achieve career and practice objectives by fostering professional autonomy, providing quality continuing education, and increasing public and consumer awareness of hearing and balance disorders and the value of audiologic services. By virtue of education and licensure, Audiologists are the most qualified professionals to manage hearing and balance disorders. An Audiologist is a state-licensed professional who specializes in evaluating, diagnosing, treating, and managing patients with hearing loss, tinnitus, and balance (vestibular) disorders. Audiologists work in a variety of settings: private practice offices, hospitals, medical centers, out-patient clinics, public and private schools, universities (teaching and research), regulatory agencies, large-scale research centers, rehabilitation centers, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, the Veterans Administration, and the U.S. Military. Audiologists work closely with federal, state, and private third-party payers to optimize coverage of services provided for the evaluation and treatment of the patients in their care.

SB379/HB161 stimulates economic development, provides more access to hearing and balance healthcare, and allows Audiologist to most efficiently use their education and knowledge. Thank you for support of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sofia Roller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sofia Roller, Au.D.

President, Maryland Academy of Audiology

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Uploaded by: Bennardi, Maryland Department of Health /Office of Governmen

Position: FWA



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

Maryland Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers & Speech-Language Pathologists
4201 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215
Phone: 410-764-4723

February 16, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky and committee members
Chair, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 379 – Health Occupations – Registration of Audiology Assistants – Letter of Support with Amendments

Dear Chair Pinsky:

The State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists (the “Board”) is submitting this letter of support with amendments for SB 379 - Health Occupations – Registration of Audiology Assistants.

This bill’s purpose serves to require an individual with the educational qualifications to be employed as an Audiology Assistant and be registered with the Board. The Board will adopt regulations, a code of ethics, continuing education requirements, and fees for Audiology Assistants.

The Board supports SB 379 with the following Board-approved amendments:

(1) Strike the terms “register”, “registrant”, “registration” and “registered” throughout the bill. Replace, where appropriate, with “license”, “licensed”, “licensing” and “licensure”.

The Board currently licenses all disciplines that are regulated by the Board. By definition, the word “registration” is the process of registering or being registered. Other types of registration can be births, marriages, deaths, etc. The definition of licensing is granting or regulating licenses for professionals. From the standpoint of solely the definition of the two words, licensure would be more appropriate. Most importantly, the Board believes it is imperative that Audiology Assistants be "licensed," in order for them to be held to all of the same requirements and standards as current disciplines the Board regulates under the Health Occupations Article, Title 2, Annotated Code of Maryland. Audiology Assistants will not technically be autonomous in

practice for they will be supervised 100% by a fully licensed audiologist. This will enable the supervising audiologist to complete diagnostic and treatment practices, while the Audiology Assistant provides technical assistance to patients. The Audiology Assistant will not have the presence of their supervisor 100% of the time and will have patient contact in some cases. For these reasons, the Board believes that in order to best protect the consumer, Audiology Assistants should be “licensed” and not “registered.”

(2) On page 6, lines 16-17, strike and add new language:

§§ ~~2-213 THROUGH 2-314.1, 2-314.2, 2-314.5, 2-314.7 THROUGH 2-314.9, 2-314.8, AND 2-315 THROUGH 2-317.~~


(3) On page 7, lines 12-16 add new language:

- (4) “AUDIOMETRIST ASSISTANT”;**
- (5) “AUDIOLOGICAL ASSISTANT”;**
- (6) “HEARING AID TECHNICIAN”;** OR
- (7) “COCHLEAR IMPLANT TECHNICIAN”.**

The Board believes there are additional current uses of unlicensed employees that are being placed in various practice and research settings in which facilities are issuing them inappropriate titles. These individuals are also very possibly carrying out inappropriate duties by virtue of not being licensed professionals. For these reasons, the Board would like to add the terms “Hearing Aid Technician” and “Cochlear Implant Technician” to the list of titles that may not be used to represent these individuals. Further, anyone attempting to utilize or practice in the capacity of an Audiology Assistant, must be licensed by the Board in order to do so, and may not be hired under or titled by any of these seven terms.

The Board respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 379 with the requested amendments. Thank you for your consideration of the Board’s position. If you have any additional questions, please contact the Board’s Executive Director, Dr. Candace G. Robinson, Au.D., at Candace.Robinson@maryland.gov or 443-915-7981.

Sincerely,


Candace G. Robinson, Au.D.
Board Executive Director

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.