



February 26, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
The Honorable Katherine Klausmeier, Vice-Chair
Finance Committee
Room 3
East Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: ASHA Support for SB 795

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), I write in support of SB 795, which makes vital updates to the scope of practice for audiologists in Maryland that will improve access to skilled services desperately needed in the state.

ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 228,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology assistants; and students. Over 4,200 ASHA members reside in Maryland, including 365 audiologists.¹

Working with osseointegrated devices, performing cochlear implant fittings, and conducting screenings of mental health and cognitive impairment are firmly established within the practice of audiology. We appreciate that this legislation also recognizes that audiologists possess the education, training, and skills to evaluate the need for and treatment of conditions associated with cerumen management and removing foreign bodies from the ear canal.

In supporting this legislation, ASHA affirms that ordering cultures, bloodwork testing, and radiologic imaging are modern components of audiology practice. We recognize that the Board of Examiners for Audiologists may need to enact regulations to implement provisions in SB 795 affecting these areas, which it is authorized to do under §2-205. ASHA supports such regulation and will work with audiologists in the state to ensure the Board issues appropriate guidance on cultures, bloodwork, and imaging as they directly relate to diagnosing, managing, and treating auditory or vestibular conditions.

Thank you for your continued support of audiologists and the audiology profession. We appreciate your consideration of ASHA's position on SB 795. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Tim Boyd, ASHA's director of state health care and education affairs, at tboyd@asha.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tena L. McNamara", written in a cursive style.

Tena L. McNamara, AuD, CCC-A/SLP
2024 ASHA President

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2023). *Maryland* [Quick Facts]. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/advocacy/state-fliers/maryland-state-flyer.pdf>.