

February 27, 2024

Chair Pamela Beidle
Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SB 795** Health Occupations - Practice Audiology - Definition
Position: **SUPPORT**

Madam Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Committee Members,

I am the Practice Manager for a Audiology Group in MD, this has been the most rewarding job of my 30 plus year career in the medical field. In my role I oversee 11 locations and the support staff for all these locations, however I did start out as a support staff in one of our individual locations.

We see people of all ages and do all hearing testing needed, plus we do vestibular/balance assessments, tinnitus assessments, ABR testing, ECochG, CI evaluations and follow-ups and cerumen removal.

I am also the daughter of a significantly hearing-impaired parent and I personally know how much impaired hearing can affect not just the patient but everyone in their lives.

The above statute has not been updated since (at least) 2005. The current Practice definition does not reflect the rigorous didactic and clinical education of licensed audiologists.

SB 795 modernizes the practice definition of audiology to reflect the audiologist's didactic and clinical training.

The legislation ensures the Statute language is broad enough to encompass services provided now and allows the Board to create Regulations to provide specific rules.

Health screenings- which are pass/fail to help determine if management (triage) is necessary to another provider who specializes in that area (e.g., vision screening, hypertension, etc.).

The Board allows audiologists to complete health care screening, as they do not require a diagnosis.

Individuals obtain screenings in many places, including Walmart (blood pressure), retail pharmacies, etc.

Audiologists need to be able to order radiological testing and lab work for patients to not prolong obtaining a medical diagnosis. We currently must refer patients back to their PCP or ENT and send them our recommendations and hope that they read the report and follow through on our recommendations to help the patient.

Healthcare has modernized and Maryland needs to keep pace.

Thank you for your support of SB 795 legislation.

Sincerely,

Christina Fike