

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 514 (Senator Gladden)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Speech-Language Pathologists - License Renewal Requirements - National Certification

This bill alters license renewal requirements for a speech-language pathologist by requiring the State Board of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists to waive continuing education requirements if a licensee maintains a national certification in speech-language pathology in good standing.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill makes a procedural change that does not directly affect special fund expenditures or revenues for the board.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal, although some small speech-language pathologists benefit from the decreased continuing education requirements under the bill.

Analysis

Current Law/Bill Summary: Continuing education requirements associated with licensure renewal for speech-language pathologists are established in the Code of Maryland Regulations 10.41.03.05-.06. Speech-language pathology licenses must be renewed every two years and licensees must earn 30 continuing education units (CEUs) within the two-year renewal period immediately before submitting their application for renewal. Specifically, licensees must earn at least 20 CEUs in speech-language pathology and at most 10 CEUs in areas related to speech-language pathology or audiology or both, including practice management.

Individuals with dual audiology and speech-language licenses must earn 40 CEUs with at least 15 CEUs in each area of licensure and at most 10 CEUs in areas related to speech-language pathology and audiology, including practice management. Applicants must complete these CEUs in the two-year renewal period immediately preceding the licensee's application for renewal.

Licensees who receive licenses within six months of the renewal date are waived from CEU requirements. Similarly, CEU requirements are prorated for individuals who receive licenses more than six months, and less than two years, before the renewal date. Regulations establish procedures for receiving approval and documenting continuing education programs and units. Additionally, licensees may earn CEUs for pro bono work, attending board meetings, and independent studies.

The bill alters these continuing education requirements for those with national certification. Licensees who wish to renew their speech-language pathology license must still follow any additional qualifications and requirements established by the board. However, the board must waive the continuing education requirements for those qualified licensees who hold a license to practice speech-language pathology and have a national certification in speech-language pathology. It is unclear if, and how, the bill affects the six dual speech-language pathologists/audiologists in the State.

Nationally, the primary credential for speech-language pathologists is certification by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA), which offers a Clinical Certification in Speech-Language Pathology. In order to maintain ASHA certification, individuals must (1) pay annual certification fees; (2) accumulate 30 contact hours of professional development every three years; and (3) submit a compliance form. Annual fees to maintain certification are \$199. **Exhibit 1** lists the different continuing education requirements for the board and ASHA.

Exhibit 1
Comparison of Continuing Education Requirements

<u>Current Law</u>	<u>Number/Hours</u>	<u>Time Period</u>
Board-licensed Speech-Language Pathologists	30 CEUs (20 in area of licensure and 10 in dual areas)	Within two-year renewal period
Board-licensed Dual Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists	40 CEUs (15 in each area and no more than 10 in dual areas)	Within two-year renewal period
<u>Under the Bill</u>		
ASHA Certified Individuals	30 contact hours of professional development	Every three years

Source: Code of Maryland Regulations, American Speech-Language Hearing Association

Background: Maryland began regulating hearing aid dealers in 1969, followed by audiologists and speech pathologists in 1972. Initially governed by three separate boards, the boards merged in 1992, and the resulting board was named the State Board of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists in 1993. The board protects the public by licensing and disciplining audiologists, hearing aid dispensers, speech-language pathologists, and speech-language pathology assistants.

The board currently licenses 3,682 speech-language pathologists and 6 dual-licensed speech-language pathologists/audiologists. However, it is unknown how many of them hold ASHA certification and would be allowed, under the bill, to have the equivalent of five fewer CEUs each year than other licensees.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 12, 2014
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