

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

Senate Bill 523

(Senator Lam)(By Request - State Board of Examiners
for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-
Language Pathologists)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Health and Government Operations

**State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-
Language Pathologists – Duties, Appointment of Members, and Requirements
for Licensees**

This bill (1) alters provisions regarding the nomination of members of the State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists; (2) specifies how a licensee of the board must represent themselves to the public and notify the board of a change in contact information; (3) requires the board to maintain an electronic list of licensees; (4) includes the board in provisions relating to information about courses in cultural and linguistic competency; and (5) makes other technical and clarifying changes. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Nomination of Board Members

The bill removes provisions requiring the Maryland Academy of Audiology and the Maryland Speech-Language and Hearing Association to submit a list of potential board

members to the Secretary of Health and the Governor and conduct a balloting process by which every licensed audiologist in the State is eligible to vote on the names of licensed audiologists submitted to the Secretary and the Governor. Instead, a list of potential nominees for both licensed speech-language pathologists and audiologists must be submitted to the Secretary and the Governor *by the board*. For each speech-language pathologist board vacancy, the board must notify all licensed speech-language pathologists in the State to solicit nominations. For each audiologist vacancy, the board must notify all licensed audiologists in the State to solicit nominations.

The bill also removes provisions requiring the Maryland Department of Disabilities to solicit nominees for consumer members. Instead, the board and the Secretary may solicit applications for such vacancies from the general public. The board and the Secretary may notify organizations representing patients or family members of patients served by individuals licensed by the board of a vacancy for a consumer member and the organizations may submit recommendations for a consumer member.

Licensee Requirements

A licensee must identify and represent themselves to the public by (1) the profession for which the licensee holds a license; (2) the degree earned to obtain the license; and (3) the name on the license. A licensee must include their license number on work-related documentation, including written client reports and, if applicable, audiograms. A licensee must notify the board in writing of a change of mailing address, e-mail address, or phone number within 30 days after the change.

Electronic List of Licensees

The board must maintain an electronic list of each individual licensed by the board. An individual may contact the board to verify an individual's license.

Cultural and Linguistic Competency Courses

The bill adds the board to the list of health occupations boards to which the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities must provide a list of recommended courses in cultural and linguistic competency, health disparities, and health literacy. The board must provide its licensees with information about the recommended courses at the time of license renewal and advertise the availability of recommended courses in any media published by the board.

Current Law: Generally, an individual must be licensed by board to provide hearing aid services, practice audiology, or practice speech-language pathology in Maryland.

The board comprises 13 members: (1) 3 licensed audiologists; (2) 3 licensed speech-language pathologists; (3) 2 physicians; (4) 2 consumer members; and (5) 3 licensed hearing aid dispensers. Professional members are appointed by the Governor, with the advice of the Secretary; consumer members are appointed with the advice of the Secretary and the advice and consent of the Senate. The Maryland Department of Disabilities must solicit nominees for consumer members of the board from associations representing hearing or communication impaired individuals in the State and submit a list to the Governor. Several professional associations currently submit nominations for board members, including the Maryland Society of Otolaryngology, the Maryland Speech-Language and Hearing Association, the Maryland Academy of Audiology, and the Hearing Society of Maryland, Washington, DC, and Delaware.

A licensee must identify and represent themselves by profession and degree earned, and display their license conspicuously in their office or place of employment. If a licensee has more than one place of business, they must notify the board of which address to send notices and other correspondence. Within 30 days after a change of address, a licensee must notify the board of the change of address.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: HB 600 (Delegate Belcastro) - Health and Government Operations.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 15, 2021
an/jc Third Reader - March 23, 2021
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 23, 2021
Enrolled - May 5, 2021
Revised - Amendment(s) - May 5, 2021

Analysis by: Amberly Holcomb

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510