

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 406 (Delegate Guzzone, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech–
Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists – Appointment of Members and
Quorum

This bill alters the appointment process for members of the State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists. The bill requires the Governor to appoint audiologist, hearing aid dispenser, and music therapist members, with the advice of the Secretary of Health, from a list submitted to the Secretary and the Governor *by the board*, instead of by specified professional associations. Additionally, the bill requires the board to notify all licensed hearing aid dispensers and music therapists of relevant vacancies for the purpose of soliciting nominations. Finally, the bill clarifies that a quorum requires a majority of the *appointed* members of the board. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill is procedural in nature and does not materially affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

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

The board comprises 15 members: (1) 3 licensed audiologists; (2) 3 licensed speech-language pathologists; (3) 2 physicians; (4) 2 consumer members; (5) 3 licensed hearing aid dispensers; and (6) 2 licensed music therapists. Professional members are appointed by the Governor, with the advice of the Secretary; consumer members are appointed by the Governor with the advice of the Secretary and the advice and consent of the Senate. Members serve four-year terms until a successor is appointed and qualifies. Members may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

Several professional associations currently submit nominations for board members, including the Maryland Academy of Audiology; the Maryland Society of Otolaryngology; the Hearing Society of Maryland, Washington, DC, and Delaware; and the Maryland Association for Music Therapy. The board itself submits nominations for speech-language pathologist members of the board. No nominations are required for the consumer members, but an organization representing patients or family members of patients served by individuals licensed by the board *may* submit recommendations to the Governor.

Vacancies for the licensed audiologist and licensed speech-language pathologist members require the board to notify all relevant licensed professionals in the State to solicit nominations to fill the vacancy. There are no notification requirements for physician, licensed hearing aid dispenser, or licensed music therapist members. For the consumer members, the board and the Secretary of Health *may* notify organizations representing patients or family members of patients served by individuals licensed by the board of a vacancy for the consumer.

Under current law, a majority of the members currently serving on the board with at least one audiologist, hearing aid dispenser, speech-language pathologist, and music therapist member present constitutes a quorum.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

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

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