



MARYLAND Department of Health

Larry Hogan, Governor – Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor – Robert R. Neall, Secretary

Board of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers & Speech-Language Pathologists

February 4, 2020

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
House Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: HB 259 - Health Occupations - Diagnostic Evaluation and Treatment of Patients - Disciplinary Actions - Letter of Concern

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland Board of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers & Speech-Language Pathologists, in conjunction with the Maryland Board of Professional Counselors & Therapists, is submitting this Letter of Concern for HB 259 - Health Occupations - Diagnostic Evaluation and Treatment of Patients - Disciplinary Actions.

HB 259, as written, applies to all Health Occupations Boards and health care practitioners. Our Boards are concerned about the encroachment on its ability to enforce discipline in such cases. Further, we are concerned about how this could affect vulnerable patient populations and feel that it opens up the possibility of risky medical or counseling practice.

We urge the Committee to consider the applicability of this bill in relation to the Board of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers & Speech-Language Pathologists, as well as the Maryland Board of Professional Counselors & Therapists, or other health care professions.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact the Board of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers and Speech-Language Pathologists Executive Director, Candace Robinson, at (410) 764-4723 or candace.robinson@maryland.gov, or the Executive Director for the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists, Kim Link, at (410) 764-4732 or kimberly.link@maryland.gov.

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Audiology and Counselors Boards

Sincerely,

Jennifer L. Mertes, Au.D.
Board Chair

The opinion of the Boards expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.

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