

---

# *MARYLAND SOCIETY OF OTOLARYNGOLOGISTS*

---

**SUBJECT:** House Bill 830 – State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists - Physician Members - Repeal

**COMMITTEES:** House Health and Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chair

**DATE:** Thursday, February 24, 2022

**POSITION:** Unfavorable

**The Maryland Society of Otolaryngologists (MSO)** represents more than 300 physicians who live and practice in Maryland. Otolaryngologists are physicians who treat the ear, nose, throat, and related structures of the head and neck; most commonly referred to as ear, nose, and throat specialists (ENTs). The medical disorders treated by our physicians are among the most common that afflict all Americans, young and old. They include chronic ear infection, sinusitis, snoring and sleep apnea, hearing loss, allergies and hay fever, swallowing disorders, nosebleeds, hoarseness, dizziness, and head and neck cancer. Otorhinolaryngologists diagnose and treat disorders of the ears, nose, throat, and related structures of the head and neck. Our foremost commitment is to deliver the best patient care.

**House Bill 830** as introduced *“Alters the membership of the State Board of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists by removing the physician members.”*

We are concerned by the proposed removal of the physician members of the Board for the following reasons:

- Maintaining Physician representation on the Board is prudent during this era of provider collaboration and inclusive health care delivery models. The physician members represent an important conduit to the ENT specialty and the broader physician community.
- ENT representation at the Board level can help provide direct access for ENTs and other physicians in the community to bring forward collaborative care delivery models that may need regulatory and policy action at the Board level.
- ENTs work collaboratively in the community with Audiologists-SLPs-Hearing Aid examiners, etc. , the Board should continue to reflect that collaborative landscape.
- At least 25 states (per data provided by the National association, the American Academy of Head and Neck Surgery (AAOHNS)) currently maintain physician representation on their Boards of Audiology and Speech language Pathologists.

- Physician participation on other Maryland health occupation Boards is not unique. Physician representatives are members of 11 Allied Health Professional Boards under the Board of Physicians. This includes
  1. Athletic Trainers
  2. Genetic Counselors
  3. Naturopathic Doctors
  4. Nuclear Medicine Technologists
  5. Perfusionists
  6. Physician Assistants
  7. Polysomnographic Technologists
  8. Radiation Therapists
  9. Radiographers
  10. Radiologist Assistants
  11. Respiratory Care Practitioners

The [mission statement of the State Board](#) is, "to enhance the quality of the hearing and speech health care provided to the citizens of Maryland" which necessitates the contribution of otolaryngologists who play an integral role in the diagnosis, management, and therapies of the pathologies that threaten these conditions.

The MSO and its leadership are working with the bill Sponsor to resolve the concerns that led to the introduction of the bill. We are hopeful that the physician membership on the Board can be preserved.

**For further information please contact:**

Kyle Hatten, M.D. – President

[KHatten@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:KHatten@som.umaryland.edu)