

February 21, 2022

Chair Shane E. Pendergrass
House Health & Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB0830 State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists – Physician Members – Repeal
Position: **SUPPORT**

Madam Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk, and Committee Members,

I am a license audiologist in the State of Maryland and serve primarily children of our great state. Graduating audiologists today earn their clinical doctorate in Audiology in a post-collegiate four year doctorate program. The Au.D. program is comprise of typically academic, clinical, and research components. Upon graduation, audiologists then go on to be licensed in the state they wish to practice in. Majority of states have a board of fellow audiologists with experience to grant licensure or oversee the issues that arise on a state level relating to audiologists. Currently, Maryland's Board of Examiners includes not only audiologists and hearing aid dispensers, but two physicians as well. There are 23 other states with no physicians on their Boards, and 22 other states with only one. It is an outdated practice and insulting to the autonomy audiologists have fought for to have two physicians still overseeing the licensure and government of audiologists in the state of Maryland. I am requesting your support for a Board of Examiners in the state of Maryland that is comprised of only the professionals whom it governs, eliminating the need for physician oversight.

Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

Sincerely,



Allison G. McGrath, AuD, CCC-A
Maryland License #01392

February 21, 2022

Chair Shane E. Pendergrass
House Health & Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB0830 State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists – Physician Members – Repeal
Position: **SUPPORT**

Madam Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk, and Committee Members,

I am an audiologist in the state of Maryland, and I am writing to you to ask that you remove the two ear, nose, and throat (ENT) physicians/surgeons from the Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists (hereto referred as “the Board”). I have spent several years working alongside ENT physicians in a shared space, where we collaborated together on patient care. I have great respect for the work that ENT physicians do, and understand the many ways that our patient base overlaps. However, my 8 years of education and training, along with my licensure, allow me to work autonomously as a doctor.

I work closely with many physicians and healthcare providers regularly, with ENT physicians being one of them. Other providers that I collaborate with include neurologists, primary care physicians, physical therapists, etc. Although we may collaborate on shared patients and work side by side to provide care, these providers do not oversee my patient care or my licensure – and the same should go for ENT physicians. It should also be noted that no other Board has physicians on them. Audiologists will continue to work closely with ENT physicians and refer to appropriate specialists whenever medically necessary - they do not need to be on the Board for this relationship to continue, as evidenced by the 23 other states that do not have ENTs on their Board. I hope you will take this into consideration, and I appreciate your time.

Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Abrams", written in a cursive style.

Mikayla Abrams, Au.D., CCC-A
Doctor of Audiology
License #01459

Chair Shane E. Pendergrass
House Office Building, Room 241
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 20, 2022

Re: HB0830 State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists- Physician Members- Repeal
Position: **SUPPORT**

Madam Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and Committee Members:

This letter is written in support of removing ENT physicians from the above designated Board. Newly licensed Audiologists in Maryland must have doctorate degrees. They are clinically proficient in diagnosing and providing rehabilitative hearing services (including the fitting of hearing aids in treatment of hearing loss and/or tinnitus), and the diagnosing of balance disorders and providing subsequent therapy. Speech and Language Pathologists diagnose and provide rehabilitative therapies. Hearing Aid Dispensers fit hearing aids to improve hearing. Music Therapists interact and assist people with developmental and learning disabilities through music. These are all educated, and well qualified licensed professionals who can govern themselves. Many obtain additional certifications to specialize in much needed areas of their professions.

Ear Nose and Throat physicians deal with medical and surgical issues. The question then becomes, why are they on this Board? Other doctoring professions in the state of Maryland who do not have medical degrees (Nurses, Optometrists, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Podiatrists) do not have medical doctors sitting on their Boards.

I was a licensed Audiologist and worked independently in a private practice setting in Maryland for 26 years, providing diagnostic testing and rehabilitative services for referring physicians and clients. I worked independently with ENT physicians providing diagnostic services. I served as Convention Chair and twice as president of our state audiology organization: The Maryland Academy of Audiology.

Also, I served eight years on the Board of Examiners, missing only one or two meetings. Only one of the two ENT Board appointed physicians was ever present at a meeting, and sometimes none. While I respected Dr. David Eisenman as a physician (usually the only ENT to attend) contributions were no better than from any other Board member.

Honor the professionals on this Board, and remove the ENT physicians from it. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and positive action on this matter.

Respectfully,



Charlotte Godfrey, Au.D.
Retired Doctor of Audiology and past Board Member



938 National Highway
LaVale, MD 21502
301-729-1635

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House Health & Government Operations Committee
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RE: HB0830 State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists – Physician Members – Repeal
Position: **SUPPORT**

Madam Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk, and Committee Members,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to encourage your support of HB0830. As a practicing audiologist in the state, I can assure you that I do not need a physician to oversee my clinical practice. Why, then, does our professional board need physician members? Audiology is an autonomous, doctorate-level, profession. Licensing requires continuing education, and many of us also pursue board certification and other fellowships/memberships with our professional organizations. Though our professions complement each other, the clinical work performed by an ENT and an audiologist are most often vastly different. Inclusion on our board makes little sense and certainly does nothing to improve the care, according to my scope of practice, that my patients receive.

Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kari Harsh Au.D.'.

Kari Harsh, Au.D.
Maryland License #01443



938 National Hwy
LaVale, MD 21502
301-729-1635

February 22, 2022

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RE: HB0830 State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists – Physician Members – Repeal
Position: **SUPPORT**

Madam Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk, and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of HB0830 to remove Ear, Nose, and Throat physicians from the Board of Audiologists, SLPs, HADs, and Music Therapists.

I have received a clinical doctorate degree from an accredited program and university. I am an autonomous professional at a private practice that does not have a physician on staff. Providers should work to their top of their scope; ENTs should not attend meetings which discuss the protocols of areas outside their expertise (e.g., cochlear implant programming, otoacoustic emissions testing and vestibular evaluations). The professions, thus, should remain separate without the influence of physicians who, as evidenced by the past, restrict the practice and autonomy of Audiology. I would strongly suggest that we do not need a physician on our board due to our training and ongoing educational requirements. Audiologists, SLPs, etc. are independent healthcare providers, and should be represented as such. Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

Respectfully,

Haley Hixon, AuD
Board Certified in Audiology
MD #01552

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Position: **SUPPORT**

Madam Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk, and Committee Members,

I am writing as a Maryland licensed audiologist, a private practice owner, and the President-Elect of the Maryland Academy of Audiology. Physicians do not belong on our state board. These physicians are not affected by the actions on the board as they are not governed by the board. They are not practicing audiologists, hearing aid dispensers, speech-language pathologists, or music therapists and therefore should not be part of the body making rules for these professions.

Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

Sincerely,

Leigh McCarthy, Au.D.
Maryland license #01069

February 22, 2022

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House Office Building, Room 241
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Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB0830 State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists – Physician Members – Repeal
Position: **SUPPORT**

Madam Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk, and Committee Members,

As a former Board member and Audiologist practicing for over 27 years, I am in favor of this Bill. First and foremost, the Audiology profession has required a doctorate for entry level into the profession for many years. I myself went back to school to earn my doctorate while I had two babies on my lap and while serving the citizens of Maryland. I worked alongside ENT physicians for many years and we respected each other as colleagues and our individual expertise.

As a former Board member and previous Executive Director of our Board, I also enjoyed the collegiality and expertise of the various disciplines on our Board, including the ENT physicians. It is important, however, to note that other Boards do not have physicians on their Boards. Furthermore, it was difficult for the ENT physicians to attend Board meetings, as well as emergency sessions during legislative session, due to the critical needs of medical patients requiring their services. ENT physicians are not part of the disciplinary process and I also understand that the Board is currently proposing to remove them from the numbers that make a quorum, further demonstrating the difficulty for them to attend.

In closing, I believe our Board has the education and strength to protect the consumers of Maryland without the presence of physicians on the Board. I feel that the citizens of Maryland would be better served by having physicians members attend to the medical needs demanded of them, and our Board would be best served by reaching out to them for consultation on cases when medical expertise is needed.

Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

Respectfully ,

Candace G. Robinson, Au.D.
Maryland License #00744