

February 19, 2021

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 - Repeal¹

Position: **SUPPORT**

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

The history behind HB0830 is extensive. In 2003, the Maryland Academy of Audiology (MAA) put forth legislation (SB 588- State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists – Membership) that would remove the two (2) ear, nose, and throat (ENT) physicians from the State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists (hereby referred to as the Board of Examiners). The House and Senate passed SB 588, but it was vetoed by Governor Ehrlich at the request of Senator Andy Harris. Governor Ehrlich's letter, dated May 21, 2003, outlined two main reasons for the veto:

1. Removing the 2 ENTs would reduce the multi-disciplinary perspective of the Board of Examiners.
2. The ENTs have supported an increased scope of practice for Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists.

A compromise was made, and the two ENT members became non-voting members for any scope of practice issues to expand or restrict the practice of Audiologists and/or to expand or restrict the scope of practice issues for Speech-Language Pathologists.²

In 2021, legislation was passed to add Music Therapists to the Board of Examiners (HB0233/SB0082). When completely enacted in 2022, two (2) licensed Music Therapist will be appointed to the Board of Examiners as full voting members. The addition of Music Therapists provides another multi-disciplinary perspective to the Board of Examiners related to expressive and receptive communication. Additionally, the Board of Examiners now has a continuum of educational backgrounds from clinical doctorates (Audiologists), master's degrees (Speech-Language Pathologists), bachelor's degrees (Music Therapists), and associates degrees (Hearing Aid

¹ <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0830>

² <https://health.maryland.gov/boardsahs/Pages/boardreq.aspx>

Dispensers). The support from ENTs related to an increased scope of practice for Audiologists (and Speech-Language Pathologists) is appreciated; however, the two (2) physician Board of Examiner members cannot vote on such matters currently, thereby rendering Governor Ehrlich's second concern moot. Furthermore, there have been no petitions from the ENT physicians through Statute or Regulations to restore full voting privileges.

The Board of Examiners does not seem to place value in the two (2) physician members either. This year, the Board of Examiners submitted legislation (HB0155/SB0103 – State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists – Revisions^{3,4}) to update the Board professionals required to be in attendance for a quorum. The legislation specifically lists an Audiologist, Hearing Aid Dispenser, Speech-language Pathologist, and Music Therapist be present. The Board of Examiners themselves did not feel the physicians, or consumers, were important enough to include them for a quorum. This fact alone demonstrates that while the physicians could have drafted the legislation to be included in a quorum, their actions show apathy towards the Board of Examiners. In addition, no amendments to add physicians to the quorum requirements were offered during the House and/or Senate hearings, and both chambers have passed a version of the legislation unanimously.

When passed, this legislation will align the Board of Examiners with the other 19 healthcare/medical Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Boards, including Acupuncture, Chiropractors, Dentists, Massage Therapists, Nursing, Optometry, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Psychology, Podiatric Medicine, Counselors and Therapists, and Social Work, none of which have any physician members (other than the Board of Physicians, of course).

According to the public Board of Examiners minutes from 2016-2021, there were no significant and/or educational contributions from the physicians at any time.⁵ At times, the physician attendance and certainly participation is sub-par to what is expected of Board of Examiner members, who genuinely want to be included. One former Audiology Board of Examiner member noted that during in-person meeting, the physicians would be present and constantly on their smartphones the entire time. This statement does not exhibit behavior of a Board of Examiner member seeking to educate or contribute. During the 2021 legislative session, five (5) emergency sessions were called by the Board of Examiners. The physicians missed a critical February meeting⁶ and attendance was only at 60% for the totality of emergency meetings, arguably some of the most important meetings of the year.

As noted during the 2021 Legislative Session, the Association of American Medical Colleges continues to project a shortage of tens of thousands of healthcare providers in the next 12 years.⁷ The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the need for each healthcare profession to work to their highest scope of practice to care for patients. The physician members of the Board of Examiners should be actively caring for patients and participating in the Board of Physicians.

³ <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0155>

⁴ <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0103>

⁵ <https://health.maryland.gov/boardsahs/Pages/minutes.aspx>

⁶ <https://health.maryland.gov/boardsahs/Pages/minutes.aspx>

⁷ <https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/us-physician-shortage-growing>

Maryland strives to be a leader in many areas, especially the profession of Audiology. However, the Board of Examiners is viewed in the bottom 10%, requiring not only one (1), but two (2) physicians on the Board of Examiners. Twenty-three (23) other states have no physicians on the licensing board, one (1) state has no licensing board, and of the 27 states with physicians, 22 of them have only one (1) physician. The extreme delay Maryland has experienced in updating their Board of Examiners members is embarrassing, when the state is advanced in so many other areas. The year 2003 was the appropriate occasion to make these changes, but now, 19 years later, is the time to correct this unnecessary anomaly.

While minimal, there is also a financial component to having two (2) physicians on the Board of Examiners. In 2003, the Fiscal Note showed a \$700 estimated savings. The estimated annual 2.26% inflation would now show a savings of slightly more than \$1,000. An additional \$1,000 of taxpayer dollars could be used for professional development, additional administrative staff, and/or outreach.

The MAA represents more than 520 licensed Audiologists who practice in the state of Maryland, and the patients they serve. The MAA's goal is to enhance the ability of members to achieve career and practice objectives by fostering professional autonomy, providing quality continuing education, and increasing public and consumer awareness of hearing and balance disorders and the value of audiologic services. By virtue of education and licensure, Audiologists are the most qualified professionals to manage hearing and balance disorders. An Audiologist is a state-licensed professional who specializes in evaluating, diagnosing, treating, and managing patients with hearing loss, tinnitus, and balance (vestibular) disorders. Audiologists work in a variety of settings: private practice offices, hospitals, medical centers, out-patient clinics, public and private schools, universities (teaching and research), regulatory agencies, large-scale research centers, rehabilitation centers, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, the Veterans Administration, and the U.S. Military. Audiologists work closely with federal, state, and private third-party payers to optimize coverage of services provided for the evaluation and treatment of the patients in their care.

HB0830 finally provides the updates to the Board of Examiner members, ensures a multi-disciplinary educational background and professional scope of Board members, and among other things, aligns the Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists with the other Maryland Boards. Thank you for your support of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deirdre Courtney, Au.D." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Deirdre Courtney, Au.D.
President, Maryland Academy of Audiology

February 21, 2021



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

RE: ***HB 830: State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists – Physician Members - Repeal***
Position: **SUPPORT**

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

The Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA) represents private practice audiologists in Maryland and across the United States. ADA members provide hearing and balance healthcare services to thousands of Maryland consumers each year, and also contribute to their local communities as business owners and employers.

ADA strongly supports HB 830 and its provisions repealing requirements for otolaryngologist appointments to the Maryland State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists and Music Therapists (Board). Enactment of HB 830 will foster the Board's mission to enhance the quality of the hearing and speech health care provided to the citizens of Maryland by ensuring qualified and competent audiologists, hearing aid dispensers, speech-language pathologists, and music therapists are licensed to practice in the State of Maryland.

The mandatory appointment of otolaryngologists to the Board provides no appreciable consumer protections and may actually serve to undermine effective oversight of licensees. Otolaryngologists do not have the professional expertise to assess the qualifications or competency of the occupations licensed by the Board. In contrast, otolaryngologist Board members are likely to have a conflict of interest that will impede their ability to objectively consider issues brought before the Board--and that may prevent qualified professional Board licensees from practicing to the full extent of their education and training. The likelihood of such a conflict of interest is so great, in fact, that the Maryland legislature imposed a statutory prohibition on physician members of the Board that explicitly prohibits them from voting on proposals to expand or restrict the practice of audiology or speech-language pathology in the State.

HB 830 will make overdue statutory improvements, consistent with nonpartisan policy initiatives undertaken by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the National Governors Association (NGA), and the Council for State Governments (CSG) to reform occupational licensure laws to remove archaic requirements and improve transparency, efficiency, and access to high quality healthcare. ADA and its members urge expedient passage of HB 830, and we thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Kristin Davis, Au.D.
President



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

February 20, 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 writing in support of HB0830 to remove Ear, Nose, and Throat physicians from the Board of Audiologists, SLPs, HADs, and Music Therapists.

I will be brief. Like Optometry, we are a doctorate level profession. Optometry does not have Ophthalmologists on their Board. Physical Therapy is also now a doctorate level profession. They do not have Orthopedic physicians on their Board. Chiropractic does not have a physician on their Board. Even massage therapy does not have a physician on their Board. Most allied health professional Boards in Maryland that I investigated do not have physicians on their Board. I would also suggest that having an ENT on a Music Therapy Board makes no sense. What training does an ENT have in Music Therapy? Why, then, does Audiology, SLP, etc. need a physician on our Board? I would strongly suggest that we do not need a physician on our Board due to our training and ongoing educational requirements. The only purpose of an ENT being on our Board is, as evidenced by the past, to restrict the practice and autonomy of Audiology.

I respectfully ask that this bill be strongly supported by this committee. Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jana Brown, AuD, FAAA'.

Jana Brown, AuD
Board Certified in Audiology
MD #00586



February 20, 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,

Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

My name is Kim Cavitt. I am an audiologist and a representative with the Illinois Academy of Audiology and member the State of Illinois Speech Pathology and Audiology licensure board. My comments represent my own opinions and not those of the State of Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

The licensure statute in Illinois sunsets and is re-legislated each decade. I have been actively involved in the 1998, 2008 and 2018 sunset legislative actions. The State of Illinois has never, to my knowledge, included an otolaryngologist or any physician in our licensure board composition. I can attest with 100% certainty that one has not been on the board since at least 1998. No consumer protections have been sacrificed over the past almost 25 years by their lack of participation or engagement.

As part of each of these sunset processes, we routinely confer and negotiate with the Illinois Medical Society, who represents the interests of otolaryngologists and physicians in the State of Illinois. The Illinois Medical Society, during these numerous interactions, has never expressed any interest in participating in the speech pathology and audiology board in any capacity and has never attempted to add language to include their membership in the board composition.

From my experience, otolaryngologist participation in the Maryland Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists is not warranted and I personally support the removal of the requirement for their existence within the board structure.

Sincerely,

Kim Cavitt

Kim Cavitt, AuD

Owner and Chief Solutionist, Audiology Resources, Inc.
Chair, State of Illinois Speech Pathology and Audiology Licensure Board
Vice-President of Government Affairs, Illinois Academy of Audiology

Melissa J. Segev, Au.D.
Briana Bruno Holtan, Au.D.
Mikayla Abrams, Au.D.
Lindsay Dennison, Au.D.
Leslie Gilbert, Au.D.
Jennifer Kincaid, Ph.D.



Jessica Kreidler, Au.D.
Angela Lowe, Au.D.
Niki Razeghi, Au.D.
Maeve Salanger, Au.D.
Corinne Waterman, Au.D.

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,

As a Member at Large of the Maryland Academy of Audiology, a Maryland Audiology license holder, and a practicing audiologist in the state of Maryland, **I would like to express my support of a Board of Examiners that is comprised of only the professionals whom it governs.** As the board does not govern physicians, I do not see a need for oversight from that profession, in particular otolaryngology physicians.

The licensure board issues licenses to audiologists, hearing aid dispensers, speech-language pathologists, and music therapists based on requirements set forth by the board, including specific training. Through the licensure process, these professionals are deemed to have completed all training to be considered experts in their fields. Physicians do not receive the same training in these disciplines and therefore are not in a position to understand the unique nature of these professions or the patients we serve.

In addition, with the recent addition of Music Therapists, our board is being diluted by numerous fields. By removing physicians from the Board of Examiners, the board will more accurately represent the interests of the four professional fields it governs and allow each of these professions to maintain a higher level of influence over the decisions affecting each field.

Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Kincaid', written over a white background.

Jennifer Kincaid, Ph.D., CCC-A
Maryland License #01084



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

02/21/2022

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 writing to acknowledge my support of HB0830 to remove Ear, Nose, and Throat physicians from The Board of Audiologists, SLPs, HADs, and Music Therapists.

As Audiologists, we have been trained to evaluate and treat hearing and vestibular disorders. We are considered clinical doctors that are trained to test hearing, remove cerumen, assess vestibular function, and more. We do this without physician oversight in our clinics. Why, then, should we have physicians on our board that governs Audiologists, SLPs, HADs, and Music Therapists? It has been shown from previous experiences that having these physicians on our board has done nothing but limit the autonomy of the Audiologist. The same holds true for the other professionals that are governed by this board. They are all able to practice without physician oversight, so why is it necessary for physicians to be on our board? We have several years of doctoral level training as well as continuing education requirements that ensure we are practicing to the best of our abilities under our scope of practice.

I sincerely request that this bill be supported by this committee. Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Lambie, AuD, FAAA

Chelsea Lambie, AuD, FAAA
Board Certified in Audiology
Maryland License # t01520



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 would like to take a moment to voice my support of HB0830 to remove Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) physicians from the Board of Audiologists, SLPs, HADs, and Music Therapists.

Audiology is an autonomous, doctorate-level, profession that works independently from Ear, Nose, and Throat physicians. While I hold the utmost respect for their profession, the job description of an ENT is vastly different from that of an Audiologist including the diagnostics testing we perform, MAPPING of cochlear implants, as well as the evaluation and rehabilitation of vestibular disorders. I feel it is the obligation of any professional to work at the highest level of their scope of practice which should not include holding a position on a Board that does not apply to their profession.

The training and continued educational requirements in my profession allow me to hold my Doctorate and see patients in a private practice setting without having a physician on staff. Why then is it necessary to have an ENT on our Board? I ask that you please consider these facts and support the HB0830 legislation.

Thank you for support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrissy Lemley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chrissy Lemley, Au.D., CCC-A, F-AAA
Maryland License #01315



February 21st, 2022

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

RE: HB830 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,

Please accept this letter as a position of support for HB830 on behalf of the Louisiana Academy of Audiology. I am writing this as an Audiologist whose state licensing board does not have a Physician seat on its state licensing board for Audiology and Speech Language Pathology. Audiology is a doctoral profession and as such can function autonomously without physician oversight. Audiologists are trained to identify impairments which require physician assessment and treatment and work closely with the medical community at large to provide the most current and efficient management of communication disorders that deal with hearing loss. The Physician role of oversight on a licensing board for other Doctors is an antiquated model and unnecessary measure. Please support HB830 and the professionals who provide care for those with communication disorders.

Thank you for support of HB830 legislation.

Sincerely,

Steven G. Madix, Ph.D., Audiologist
Associate Professor, Louisiana Tech University
Executive Director and Founding President, Louisiana Academy of Audiology

50 Greenbriar Ln
Gettysburg, PA 17325

February 22, 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,
This letter is to support HB0830 legislation to remove physician members from
the Maryland State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers,
Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists.

Having been licensed as an audiologist in the State of Maryland since the 1970's, I
have never thought it was in the best interest of our patients/consumers to have
physician oversight on the Board. It has always seemed a conflict of interest.

Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

Sincerely



Kathleen E. Mellott, AuD
Maryland License #00171

Alan E Oshinsky M.D. PA
Mercy Medical Center, Suite 612
301 Saint Paul Place
Baltimore, MD 21202
alan@entbaltimore.com
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Chair Shane E. Pendergrass
House Health & Government Operations (HGO) Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 22, 2022

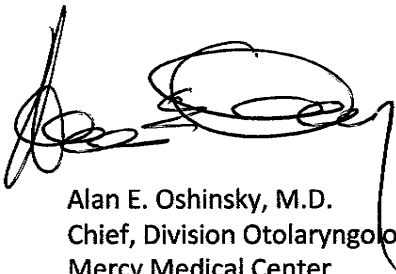
RE: HB 830 State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists – Physician Members – Repeal
Position: **SUPPORT**

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

Please accept this letter of support for HB 830, to remove the two (2) ear, nose, and throat (ENT) physician members of the Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists. The Governor's appointment of otolaryngologists to this Board is not consistent with the other 23 Maryland Boards, **none** of which have physician members. Professional Boards should be comprised of **only** those who it licenses and the 13 qualified members, spanning four professions, are capable to accomplish the Board of Examiner's mission without any physician oversight. Simply put, HB 830 legislation will eliminate the outdated membership requirements of this Board of Examiners' composition.

I urge you to join me in supporting HB 830.

Sincerely,



Alan E. Oshinsky, M.D.
Chief, Division Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery
Mercy Medical Center
Baltimore, Maryland



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

February 20, 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 writing in support of HB0830 to remove Ear, Nose, and Throat physicians from the Board of Audiologists, SLPs, HADs, and Music Therapists.

The only purpose of an ENT being on our Board is, as evidenced by the past, to restrict the practice and autonomy of Audiology. Audiology is a doctoral level position, similar to physical therapy, optometry, and pharmacy. Each field is able, and competent, to function on their own; however, audiology is the only field with a physician on their board. The addition of ear, nose, and throat physicians to the board, hinders us from practicing within our full scope of practice. Lifting the restrictions, by passing the bill, will enable us to adequately serve our patients.

I respectfully ask that this bill be strongly supported by this committee. Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Sarah F Phipps, Au.D., FAAA'.

Sarah F Phipps, Au.D.
Board Certified in Audiology
MD #01529

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 writing to you as a private practice audiologist who has also served on the board of Maryland Academy of Audiology for the past 10 years, two of those as President. I have been an audiologist for 15 years, and in all my time as an audiologist I have worked autonomously in a school/non-profit clinic setting as well as my current position as a private practice audiologist. I have never worked in a setting where I have had ENT “oversight” as it is not a prerequisite for me to practice at the full scope of my licensure as a doctor of audiology. Therefore, I am in favor of removing the two Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) physicians/surgeons from the Board of Examiners of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech Language Pathologists and Music Therapists (hereto referred to as “Board of Examiners”).

ENT physicians have their own board, of which we do not hold positions. We do not require oversight to function as autonomous practitioners and this oversight goes against what we as a profession have fought so hard for, autonomy as audiologists. No other board has physicians serving on them except the Board of Physicians. Currently, 23 other states do not have ENTs on the Licensure Board for Audiologists. I have practiced in Illinois prior to becoming an audiologist; therefore, have practiced in a state where the oversight is not required.

As a private practice audiologist, I function as a collaborator with ENTs in that I will refer when medically necessary. This is part of our training as audiologists. I also work in collaboration with many other professionals as well (neurologists, physical therapists, ophthalmologists, etc.) none of which are serving on our Board of Examiners. I also work very closely with ENT and neuro-otology surgeons when making recommendations and eventually fitting patients with cochlear implants. I am working with the ENT in this scenario, not under them with oversight.

The removal of ENTs from the Board of Examiners has passed before this in the House and Senate and their removal is long overdue. I am in writing to let you know I am in strong support of HB0830 and asking for your support as well.

Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

Sincerely,



Corinne Richards Au.D.
Maryland License #01241

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. I volunteer my time and provide services through many avenues including, but not limited to: serving as the President of the Maryland Academy of Audiology (MAA, 2020-2021), serving as the Past President of MAA (2022), serving as a Member-at-Large and convention chair for MAA (2017-2019), serving as Convention Chair on the Academy of Doctors of Audiology (2019), caring for patients in the Baltimore area as an audiologist and co-owner of The Hearing Wellness Center, LLC, and serving as a preceptor for audiology doctoral students from the local universities.

It is with earnestness that I write this letter to express my support for legislation HB0830 which would remove, from the Board of Examiners (BoE) of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists, the seats held by otolaryngologists. While audiologists and otolaryngologists cooperate in patient-centered care on a routine basis, there is simply no need or logical foundation for why the otolaryngology profession should hold any positions of oversight, authority, or decision-making on this board. Audiologists also commonly cooperate with primary care doctors, occupational therapists, physical therapists, nurses, neuro-otologists, and oncologists, (among other professions) in a multidisciplinary fashion, however, one would not question that these professions do not belong on (and are not on) the BoE. It should be acknowledged that the licensing boards of physical therapists, optometrists, nurses, massage therapists (and many other healthcare professions) do not appoint any of their seats to medical physicians. There is no legitimate argument to support the need for otolaryngologists on this board, and vice versa, for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, or Speech-Language Pathologists to sit on the board of otolaryngology.

In simple practicality and logic, the Maryland Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists should be comprised of just those and only those professions. Please prioritize the voices of the audiologists in Maryland and nationally who are sharing their voices regarding this matter. The autonomy of the audiology profession (and other professions on our board) continues to be at risk due to outdated rules such as the rule to appoint otolaryngologists on our board. Please join me in supporting legislation HB0830 to remove the otolaryngologists' seats.

Thank you for considering supporting HB0830 legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sofia Roller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sofia Roller, Au.D.
Maryland License #01411

2/21/2022

Chair Shane E. Pendergrass
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 Chari Peña-Melnyk, and Committee Members,

My name is Maeve Salanger and I am a practicing audiologist in the state of Maryland. I am writing to you in support of HB0830 to remove the ear, nose, and throat (ENT) physicians from the Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologist, and Music Therapists. My doctorate in clinical audiology should allow me to practice under the full scope of my license without oversight from ENT physicians. Although audiologists work in collaboration with ENT physicians to achieve best patient outcomes, the field of audiology is not reliant on the education nor intervention of ENT physicians in treating our patients with hearing and balance disorders. In fact, I work in collaboration with several other medical and healthcare professionals in addition to ENT physicians, including but not limited to, neurologists, primary care providers, pediatricians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and mental health professionals.

Following suit with other professional Boards, audiologists should be without physician oversight on our licensure board, as is the case with 23 other states in the US. Please consider removing the roles of ENT physicians from the Board of Examiners in the state of Maryland to allow audiologists to practice autonomously in accordance with other clinical doctoral professions.

Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maeve Salanger, Au.D." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Maeve Salanger, Au.D.
Maryland License #01466

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,

We are writing in full support of the Maryland Academy of Audiology's legislation to remove the ENT physician board positions from the licensing board. The purpose of the licensing board is to protect the public through the regulation of professionals who identify, assess, and provide treatment, including dispensing and fitting appropriate devices to promote communication, for individuals with communication disorders through the administration and enforcement of the rules and regulations. The licensing board in South Carolina has operated successfully to accomplish this purpose without physician involvement on the board. Our board consists of two audiologists, two speech-language pathologists, and one community member. The board is bound by our scope of practice under the practice act to refer for medical evaluation in cases of asymmetry, medical contraindications that need to be further evaluated prior to applications of audiological care or aural rehabilitation if anatomical or physiological concerns outside of our scope are needed. Our board is able to successfully govern the rules and regulations of our state license and scope of practice. The community member also provides a lay perspective to aid in understanding or considerations from a non-professional. We see no need for a physician to sit on this board as there would be no additional value to his/her purpose.

The South Carolina Academy of Audiology is a professional organization of audiologists and friends of the audiology community dedicated to providing quality hearing and balance services to the public. Our mission is to enhance the ability of our members to achieve career and practice objectives through professional development, education, research, advocacy and increased public awareness of hearing disorders and audiologic services. We have a mutual respect for our state licensure board and refer to them when appropriate.

Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Tarvin, Au.D.
Audiologist, Former SCAA President, Technology Chair and Advocacy Committee Member
South Carolina Academy of Audiology



Designer Audiology

13364A Clarksville Pike, Highland, MD 20777 • Phone: 301.854-1410 • Fax: 443.276-6546 • Web: www.DesignerAudiology.com

February 18, 2021

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,

As you know, HB0830 legislation will remove the two (2) physician members from the Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists (Board of Examiners). This legislation is not only common-sense, as it aligns the Board of Examiners with Maryland's other 23 Board of Examiners without physician oversight, it is also fiscally responsible for constituents of Maryland who need healthcare delivered by professionals working at the top of their scope of practice. If you need more details to make this rational decision, please continue.

As a Doctor of Audiology, licensed in Maryland since 2007, I have had the privilege of managing a single office for one of the largest private practice groups in the state and to be a small business owner and provide evidenced-based hearing and balance healthcare to my patients. Prior to relocating to Maryland, I earned my Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) degree from Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. and completed my clinical residency at the Mayo Clinic Arizona before joining their cochlear implant and hearing aid teams.

Everyday, I work with physician across all specialties (e.g., dermatology, radiology, otoneurology, etc.) to guarantee that my patients have highest quality of care necessary. My level of education, commensurate with Doctors of Optometry, affords me the educational knowledge to care evaluation, diagnose, manage, and treat hearing and balance disorders. Physicians are my colleagues, not "nannies" required to oversee and educate me on the profession of audiology. The Board of Examiners should be representative of the autonomy and independence exhibited by all Audiologists, many of whom are not in a workplace with physicians.



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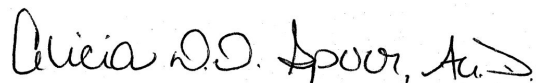
HB0830 has been a long-time coming! Unfortunately, due to one person's personal (and perhaps egotistical) views and the Governor's action, the House **and** Senate's purposeful and thoughtful actions were defeated in 2003. Now, almost two decades later, the House (and Senate) can make the Board of Examiners composition consistent with the other Maryland Boards and remove the two (2) physicians.

As a business and individual taxpayer, the savings of removing the two (2) physicians from the Board of Examiners is also of importance. In reviewing the Fiscal Note from 2003 and adjusting for inflation, the Maryland government could demonstrate fiscal responsibility and save individuals a few thousand dollars each year. These dollars would be better spent on professional development or providing hearing and balance healthcare via a not-for-profit practice.

I implore you to act now to update the Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists board composition to mimic how the professions are working in healthcare environments and remove any implied or actual oversight from physicians at the Board level.

Thank you for support of HB0830 legislation.

Sincerely,



Alicia D.D. Spoor, Au.D.
Doctor of Audiology
Maryland License #01145

2331 York Road, Suite 102
Lutherville-Timonium, MD 21093



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www.thehearingwellnesscenter.com

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,

This letter is being submitted with urgency to express the support of legislation HB0830 on behalf of The Hearing Wellness Center, LLC, which is a private practice in the Baltimore, MD area. The mission of our clinic and our audiologists is to provide the highest quality of patient-centered care using best practices. We serve patients in our brick-and-mortar clinic as well as improve access to hearing healthcare for the geriatric population by delivering our services remotely to the residents at various retirement communities via our mobile unit.

Please consider the importance and practicality of supporting the HB0830 legislation which would remove the otolaryngologist seats from the Board of Examiners (BoE) of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists. It is common for audiologists to cooperate with other medical professions in a multidisciplinary approach (such as, but not limited to, otolaryngologists, primary care doctors, occupational therapists, physical therapists, nurses, neuro-otologists, and oncologists) when caring for patients. However, it should be recognized that none of these professions are represented with an appointed seat on the board, except for otolaryngologists. It is simply inappropriate and illogical for the otolaryngology profession to hold any positions of oversight, authority, or decision-making on the Board of Examiners when their profession is not being represented or licensed through this board.

The licensing boards of physical therapists, optometrists, nurses, massage therapists (and many other healthcare professions) do not appoint any of their seats to medical physicians, so why is it that there continues to be representation for medical physicians on this board? There is no question as to why Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists do not sit on the Board of Physicians, so what justifies their necessity on this board?

It should be plain and simple to see, that the Maryland Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists, should be comprised of just those and only those professions. Please join us and the other Audiology private practices of Maryland in supporting legislation HB0830 to remove the otolaryngologists' seats. Please support us in restoring this portion of autonomy of the Audiology profession and the HAD, SLP, and music therapy professions as well.

Thank you for considering supporting HB0830 legislation.

Sincerely,

The co-owners and staff of The Hearing Wellness Center, LLC

Professional Services on a Personal Level
www.thehearingwellnesscenter.com • info@thehearingwellnesscenter.com



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

February 20, 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,

This letter is to announce support of HB0830 to remove Ear, Nose, and Throat physicians from the Board of Audiologists, SLPs, HADs, and Music Therapists.

As a doctor of audiology, I find it unnecessary to have a physician on the Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists. After spending eight years in higher education working towards a doctoral degree, I find it extremely frustrating to have an ENT physician sitting on a board that only limits me performing at the top of my scope. I work in a private practice with seven Doctors of Audiology that everyday use best practices and continues to practice at the top of our scope. I genuinely believe that for years, having ENTs on the Board have done nothing but limit that.

As a young Doctor of Audiology, I have limited experience in the field but have already seen the limitations placed on our profession. The amount of continuing education and training that we participate in reassures me in the fact that having an ENT on the Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists will only continue to restrict my practice as a doctor of Audiology.

Please consider that this bill be supported by this committee. Thank you for supporting the HB0830 legislation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Alex Zorbach AuD'.

Alex Zorbach, AuD
Board Certified in Audiology
MD #01553

2331 York Road, Suite 102
Lutherville-Timonium, MD 21093

THE Hearing WELLNESS CENTER

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

February 22, 2022

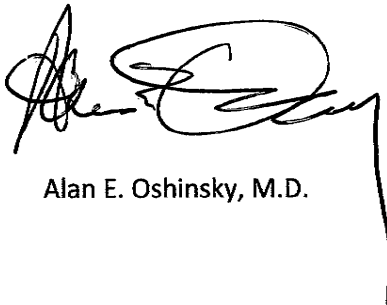
RE: HB 830 State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists – Physician Members – Repeal
Position: **SUPPORT**

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

Please accept this letter of support for HB 830, to remove the two (2) ear, nose, and throat (ENT) physician members of the Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists. The Governor's appointment of otolaryngologists to this Board is not consistent with the other 23 Maryland Boards, **none** of which have physician members. Professional Boards should be comprised of **only** those who it licenses and the 13 qualified members, spanning four professions, are capable to accomplish the Board of Examiner's mission without any physician oversight. Simply put, HB 830 legislation will eliminate the outdated membership requirements of this Board of Examiners' composition.

I urge you to join me in supporting HB 830.

Sincerely,



Alan E. Oshinsky, M.D.