



February 13, 2024

The Honorable Brett Guthrie, Chair
The Honorable Anna Eshoo, Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Health
United States House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Energy & Commerce Health Subcommittee Legislative Hearing, "Legislative Proposals to Support Patients and Caregivers."

Dear Chairman Guthrie and Ranking Member Eshoo:

I am writing to share the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's strong support for H.R. 7153, the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Reauthorization Act, which would reauthorize grants to establish, enhance, or expand evidence-informed programs or protocols to promote the mental health of health care providers.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 228,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists (SLPs); speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology assistants; and students.

Audiologists and SLPs work tirelessly to meet the needs of their patients, while navigating the numerous personal and professional stressors health care providers experience—which were further worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many ASHA members feel overwhelmed and burned out from excessive caseloads, mountains of paperwork, inadequate reimbursement, and unrealistic productivity standards. Due to these challenges, maintaining a healthy work-life balance is difficult, and many health care providers don't know where to turn for help, or can't find it when they try.

ASHA believes H.R. 7153 will help address the profound impact of these challenges on providers' mental health by reauthorizing grant funding—distributed by the Health Resources and Services Administration to hospitals, clinics, and medical professional associations—to improve awareness of risk factors for mental health crises, establish evidence-based programs for preventing suicide, and enhance peer-support programs.

Every health care provider, including audiologists and SLPs, should have access to the mental health care services they need and deserve, without fear of losing their license, potential loss of income, or other adverse repercussions. We appreciate your continued commitment to improving the mental health of the health care workforce and ensuring that patients have the highest quality care and support.

Thank you for considering ASHA's support of H.R. 7153. If you or your staff have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Josh Krantz, ASHA's director of federal affairs, health care, at jkrantz@asha.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tena L. McNamara". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tena" being more prominent and the last name "McNamara" following in a similar style.

Tena L. McNamara, AuD, CCC-A/SLP
2024 ASHA President