



ASHA
American
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

Submitted via email: audbd@dhp.virginia.gov

September 11, 2019

Leslie Knachel, Executive Director
Board of Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology
Department of Health Professions
9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 300
Richmond, VA 23233

RE: ASHA Support for Telepractice Guidance

Dear Ms. Knachel:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write in support of the Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology's Guidance for Telepractice (Guidance Document 30-12).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for more than 204,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 4,400 ASHA members reside in Virginia.

As the leading national organization for the certification and advancement of audiologists and speech-language pathologists, ASHA supports the development and use of telemedicine or "telepractice." Research demonstrates the equivalence of telepractice to in-person service delivery for a wide range of diagnostic and treatment procedures for adults and children.¹ Studies have shown high levels of patient, clinician, and parent satisfaction supporting telepractice as an effective alternative to the in-person model for delivery of care.² Telepractice expands practitioners' availability to those in need—regardless of geographic location—saving time and resources for both the provider and the patient.

Despite the proven benefits of telepractice, it is still underutilized within audiology and speech-pathology in part because practitioners struggle to understand state laws and regulations governing its use. The proposed guidance developed by the Board is an important tool that will help ASHA's Virginia-based members better understand what constitutes telepractice and how to use telecommunications tools and information technology appropriately when providing services.

ASHA strongly encourages the Board to adopt the proposed guidance and will be pleased to share it with ASHA members in Virginia when it is approved. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Tim Boyd, ASHA's director of state health care and education affairs, at tboyd@asha.org.

Sincerely,

Shari B. Robertson, PhD, CCC-SLP
2019 ASHA President

¹ Grogan-Johnson, S., Alvares, R., Rowan, L., & Creaghead, N. (2010). A pilot study comparing the effectiveness of speech language therapy provided by telemedicine with conventional on-site therapy. *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare*, *16*, 134–139.

² Ibid.