



ASHA
American
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

Submitted via email: kevin.cavanaugh@leg.state.nh.us

February 3, 2020

The Honorable Kevin Cavanaugh
Chair
Commerce Committee
New Hampshire State Senate
State House, Room 106
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

RE: SB 555

Dear Senator Cavanaugh:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write in support of SB 555, which would require insurers to reimburse for telehealth services.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 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 940 ASHA members reside in New Hampshire.

As the leading national organization for the certification and advancement of audiologists and speech-language pathologists, ASHA supports the development and use of telehealth or “telepractice.” ASHA has a collection of professional practice documents, including a position statement that defines telepractice as “the application of telecommunications technology to deliver professional services at a distance by linking clinician to client or clinician to clinician for assessment, intervention, and/or consultation.”¹

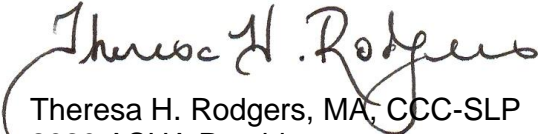
ASHA strongly supports the use of telepractice because research demonstrates the equivalence of telepractice to in-person service delivery for a wide range of diagnostic and treatment procedures for adults and children.² Studies have shown high levels of patient, clinician, and parent satisfaction supporting telepractice as an effective alternative to the in-person model for delivery of care.³ Telepractice expands practitioners’ availability to those in need—regardless of geographic location—saving time and resources for both the provider and the patient.

Despite proven benefits, telepractice remains underutilized within audiology and speech-pathology due to a lack of clear state laws governing its use or mandating appropriate reimbursement for services delivered via telepractice. SB 555 addresses these barriers by firmly establishing that services delivered via telepractice should be reimbursed by insurers on the same basis as in-person services.

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Thank you for considering ASHA's position to support SB 555. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Susan Adams, ASHA's director of state legislative and regulatory affairs, at sadams@asha.org.

Sincerely,



Theresa H. Rodgers, MA, CCC-SLP
2020 ASHA President

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). Telepractice. Retrieved from <https://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Telepractice/>.

² Grogan-Johnson, S., Alvares, R., Rowan, L., & Craghead, 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.

³ Ibid.