



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Mike Dunleavy  
PO Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Dunleavy:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 41 audiologists and 383 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Alaska.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

SLPs assess and treat speech, language, social communication, cognitive-communication, and swallowing disorders in individuals across the lifespan. SLPs provide essential communication services to individuals with a variety of disabilities. Many individuals with communication disabilities are unable to wear a mask for sensory, physical, or other reasons. Other clients may need to remove their mask to engage in assessment or therapy tasks. While the utilization of clear facial masks is advantageous for some clinicians, this type of personal protective equipment (PPE) is not always readily available nor appropriate for clients in all settings—particularly during speech therapy interventions.

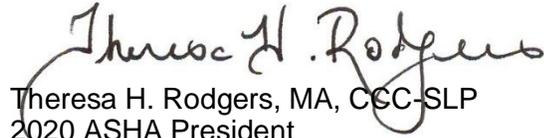
Audiologists and SLPs provide essential services to individuals with communication, swallowing, and cognitive disorders in a variety of settings including hospitals, long-term care facilities, schools, client homes, and private clinics. While some providers have been able to adapt their service delivery by conducting assessments and treatments remotely via telepractice, there are circumstances where this is not an option. Some audiologists and SLPs continue providing services for those with communication disorders in person despite a lack of adequate PPE. As noted above, individuals with hearing loss and other communication disorders face challenges when wearing a mask and adhering to social distancing, which places audiologists and SLPs at a greater risk for contracting COVID-19 as a direct result of their work.

Audiologists and SLPs recognize that effective communication is a human right—essential for human interaction—and are willing to put themselves in harm's way every day to ensure that individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA

members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA's director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,



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

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<sup>1</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). *State Quick Facts About the Professions*.  
<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Kay Ivey  
11 South Union Street  
Suite 725  
Montgomery, AL 36130

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Ivey:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 254 audiologists and 2,167 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Alabama.<sup>1</sup>

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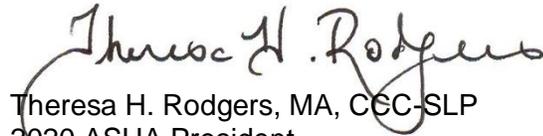
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Sincerely,

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

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Asa Hutchinson  
500 Woodlane Street  
Suite 250  
Little Rock, AR 72201

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Hutchinson:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

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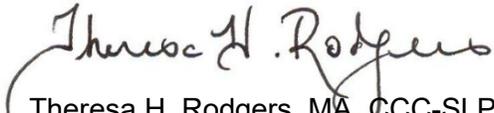
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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Lolo Matalasi Moliga  
Executive Office Building  
Third Floor  
Pago Pago, AS 96799

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Moliga:

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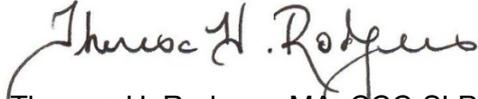
December 11, 2020

Page 2

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



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Doug Ducey  
1700 West Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Ducey:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

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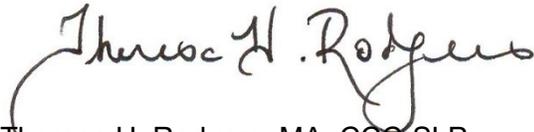
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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
State Capitol  
Room 1114  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 770 audiologists and 14,435 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of California.<sup>1</sup>

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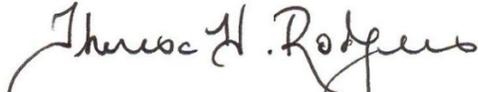
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2020 ASHA President

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Jared Polis  
136 State Capitol Bldg  
Denver, CO 80203

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Polis:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 418 audiologists and 3,658 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Colorado.<sup>1</sup>

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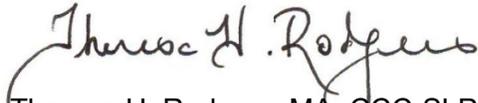
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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Ned Lamont  
State Capitol 210 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Lamont:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

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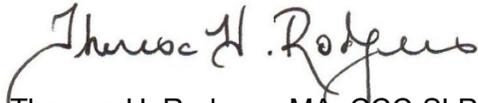
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**ASHA**  
American  
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December 11, 2020

The Honorable Muriel Bowser  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
# 406  
Washington, DC 20004

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

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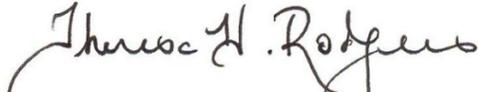
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I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA’s director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,



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

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<sup>1</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). *State Quick Facts About the Professions*. <https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable John Carney  
150 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. South  
2nd Floor  
Dover, DE 19901

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Carney:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 41 audiologists and 455 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Delaware.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

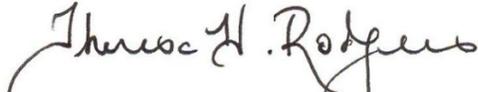
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Sincerely,



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

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Ron DeSantis  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor DeSantis:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 702 audiologists and 10,385 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Florida.<sup>1</sup>

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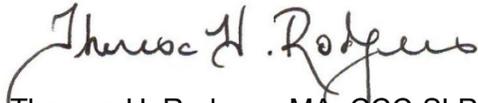
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theresa H. Rodgers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

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

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<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Brian Kemp  
111 State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Kemp:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 350 audiologists and 4,758 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Georgia.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

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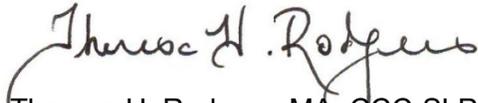
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Sincerely,

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

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<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Lou Leon Guerrero  
Executive Chamber  
P.O. Box 2950  
Agana, Guam 96932

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Leon Guerrero:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students.

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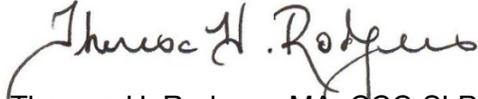
December 11, 2020

Page 2

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Sincerely,

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



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable David Ige  
Executive Chambers  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Ige:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 50 audiologists and 520 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Hawaii.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

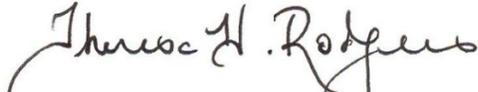
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Theresa H. Rodgers, MA, CCC-SLP  
2020 ASHA President

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Kim Reynolds  
1007 East Grand Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50319

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Reynolds:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 178 audiologists and 1,293 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Iowa.<sup>1</sup>

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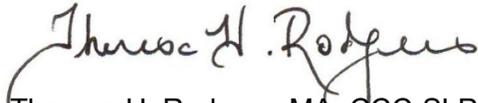
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Theresa H. Rodgers, MA, CCC-SLP  
2020 ASHA President

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<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



December 11, 2020

The Honorable Brad Little  
PO Box 83720  
Boise, ID 83720

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Little:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 55 audiologists and 912 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Idaho.<sup>1</sup>

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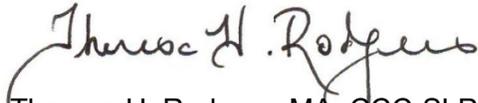
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theresa H. Rodgers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Theresa" and last name "Rodgers" clearly legible.

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

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<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable J.B. Pritzker  
207 State House  
Springfield, IL 62706

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Pritzker:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 505 audiologists and 8,657 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Illinois.<sup>1</sup>

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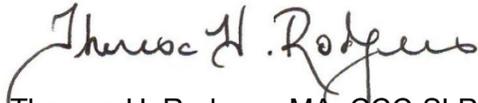
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Sincerely,

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

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<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Eric Holcomb  
200 West Washington Street  
Room 333  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Holcomb:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 289 audiologists and 3,215 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Indiana.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

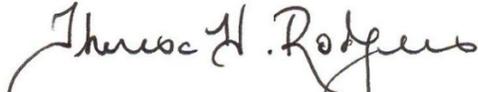
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Audiologists and SLPs provide essential services to individuals with communication, swallowing, and cognitive disorders in a variety of settings including hospitals, long-term care facilities, schools, client homes, and private clinics. While some providers have been able to adapt their service delivery by conducting assessments and treatments remotely via telepractice, there are circumstances where this is not an option. Some audiologists and SLPs continue providing services for those with communication disorders in person despite a lack of adequate PPE. As noted above, individuals with hearing loss and other communication disorders face challenges when wearing a mask and adhering to social distancing, which places audiologists and SLPs at a greater risk for contracting COVID-19 as a direct result of their work.

Audiologists and SLPs recognize that effective communication is a human right—essential for human interaction—and are willing to put themselves in harm’s way every day to ensure that individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA’s director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,



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

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<sup>1</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). *State Quick Facts About the Professions*. <https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Laura Kelly  
300 SW 10th Ave.  
Suite 241S  
Topeka, KS 66612

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Kelly:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 179 audiologists and 1,818 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Kansas.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

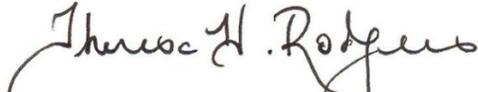
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Audiologists and SLPs recognize that effective communication is a human right—essential for human interaction—and are willing to put themselves in harm’s way every day to ensure that individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA’s director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,



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

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Andy Beshear  
700 Capitol Avenue  
Suite 100  
Frankfort, KY 40601

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Beshear:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 142 audiologists and 2,728 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Kentucky.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

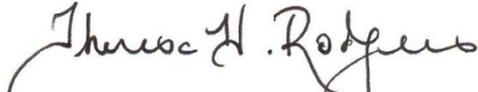
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Audiologists and SLPs recognize that effective communication is a human right—essential for human interaction—and are willing to put themselves in harm’s way every day to ensure that individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

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Sincerely,



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

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December 11, 2020

The Honorable John Bel Edwards  
PO Box 94004  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Edwards:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 238 audiologists and 2,854 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Louisiana.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

SLPs assess and treat speech, language, social communication, cognitive-communication, and swallowing disorders in individuals across the lifespan. SLPs provide essential communication services to individuals with a variety of disabilities. Many individuals with communication disabilities are unable to wear a mask for sensory, physical, or other reasons. Other clients may need to remove their mask to engage in assessment or therapy tasks. While the utilization of clear facial masks is advantageous for some clinicians, this type of personal protective equipment (PPE) is not always readily available nor appropriate for clients in all settings—particularly during speech therapy interventions.

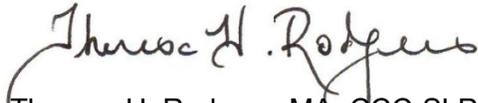
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Sincerely,

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

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<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Charlie Baker  
Massachusetts State House Office of the Governor  
Room 280  
Boston, MA 02133

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Baker:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 427 audiologists and 4,953 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

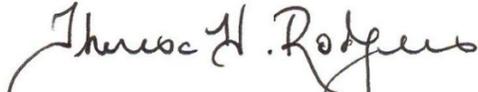
SLPs assess and treat speech, language, social communication, cognitive-communication, and swallowing disorders in individuals across the lifespan. SLPs provide essential communication services to individuals with a variety of disabilities. Many individuals with communication disabilities are unable to wear a mask for sensory, physical, or other reasons. Other clients may need to remove their mask to engage in assessment or therapy tasks. While the utilization of clear facial masks is advantageous for some clinicians, this type of personal protective equipment (PPE) is not always readily available nor appropriate for clients in all settings—particularly during speech therapy interventions.

Audiologists and SLPs provide essential services to individuals with communication, swallowing, and cognitive disorders in a variety of settings including hospitals, long-term care facilities, schools, client homes, and private clinics. While some providers have been able to adapt their service delivery by conducting assessments and treatments remotely via telepractice, there are circumstances where this is not an option. Some audiologists and SLPs continue providing services for those with communication disorders in person despite a lack of adequate PPE. As noted above, individuals with hearing loss and other communication disorders face challenges when wearing a mask and adhering to social distancing, which places audiologists and SLPs at a greater risk for contracting COVID-19 as a direct result of their work.

Audiologists and SLPs recognize that effective communication is a human right—essential for human interaction—and are willing to put themselves in harm’s way every day to ensure that individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA’s director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,



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

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Larry Hogan  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Hogan:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 359 audiologists and 3,581 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Maryland.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

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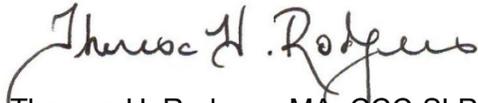
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Sincerely,

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

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Janet Mills  
#1 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Mills:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 61 audiologists and 842 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Maine.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

SLPs assess and treat speech, language, social communication, cognitive-communication, and swallowing disorders in individuals across the lifespan. SLPs provide essential communication services to individuals with a variety of disabilities. Many individuals with communication disabilities are unable to wear a mask for sensory, physical, or other reasons. Other clients may need to remove their mask to engage in assessment or therapy tasks. While the utilization of clear facial masks is advantageous for some clinicians, this type of personal protective equipment (PPE) is not always readily available nor appropriate for clients in all settings—particularly during speech therapy interventions.

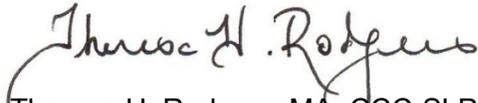
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I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA's director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,

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

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer  
P.O. Box 30013  
Lansing, MI 48909

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Whitmer:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 424 audiologists and 5,045 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Michigan.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

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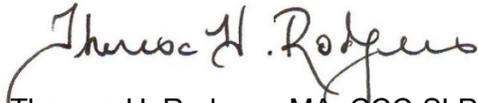
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Sincerely,

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

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<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Tim Walz  
130 State Capitol  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Walz:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 318 audiologists and 3,189 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Minnesota.<sup>1</sup>

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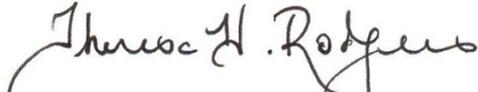
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Sincerely,



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

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<sup>1</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). *State Quick Facts About the Professions*. <https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Mike Parson  
201 W Capitol Ave.  
Room 216  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Parson:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 320 audiologists and 3,906 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Missouri.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

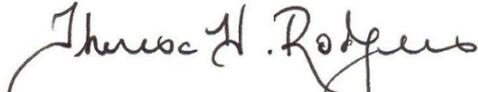
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Audiologists and SLPs provide essential services to individuals with communication, swallowing, and cognitive disorders in a variety of settings including hospitals, long-term care facilities, schools, client homes, and private clinics. While some providers have been able to adapt their service delivery by conducting assessments and treatments remotely via telepractice, there are circumstances where this is not an option. Some audiologists and SLPs continue providing services for those with communication disorders in person despite a lack of adequate PPE. As noted above, individuals with hearing loss and other communication disorders face challenges when wearing a mask and adhering to social distancing, which places audiologists and SLPs at a greater risk for contracting COVID-19 as a direct result of their work.

Audiologists and SLPs recognize that effective communication is a human right—essential for human interaction—and are willing to put themselves in harm’s way every day to ensure that individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA’s director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,



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

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Ralph Deleon Guerrero Torres  
Caller Box 10007  
Saipan, MP 96950

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Torres:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students.

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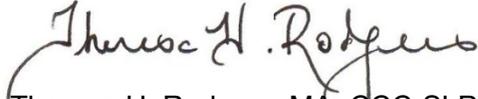
December 11, 2020

Page 2

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Sincerely,

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



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Tate Reeves  
P.O. Box 139  
Jackson, MS 39205

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Reeves:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 147 audiologists and 1,673 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Mississippi.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

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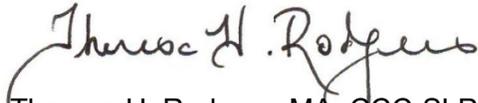
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individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA's director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,

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

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Steve Bullock  
PO Box 200801  
Helena, MT 59620

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Bullock:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 27 audiologists and 494 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Montana.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

SLPs assess and treat speech, language, social communication, cognitive-communication, and swallowing disorders in individuals across the lifespan. SLPs provide essential communication services to individuals with a variety of disabilities. Many individuals with communication disabilities are unable to wear a mask for sensory, physical, or other reasons. Other clients may need to remove their mask to engage in assessment or therapy tasks. While the utilization of clear facial masks is advantageous for some clinicians, this type of personal protective equipment (PPE) is not always readily available nor appropriate for clients in all settings—particularly during speech therapy interventions.

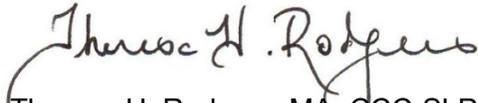
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individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA's director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,

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

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Roy Cooper  
20301 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Cooper:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 400 audiologists and 5,963 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of North Carolina.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

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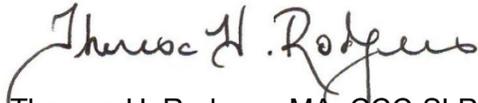
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Theresa H. Rodgers, MA, CCC-SLP  
2020 ASHA President

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Doug Burgum  
600 East Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58505

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Burgum:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 43 audiologists and 543 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of North Dakota.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

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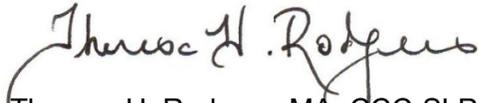
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Theresa H. Rodgers, MA, CCC-SLP  
2020 ASHA President

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Pete Ricketts  
P.O. Box 94848  
Lincoln, NE 68509

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Ricketts:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 129 audiologists and 1,329 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Nebraska.<sup>1</sup>

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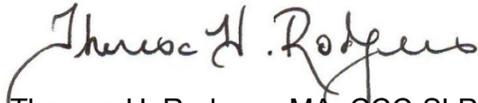
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2020 ASHA President

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Chris Sununu  
107 North Main Street  
Concord, NH 3301

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Sununu:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 50 audiologists and 904 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of New Hampshire.<sup>1</sup>

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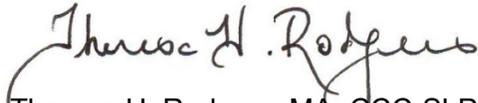
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Theresa H. Rodgers, MA, CCC-SLP  
2020 ASHA President

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<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Philip Murphy  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Murphy:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

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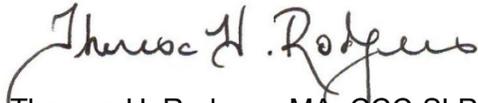
Audiologists and SLPs provide essential services to individuals with communication, swallowing, and cognitive disorders in a variety of settings including hospitals, long-term care facilities, schools, client homes, and private clinics. While some providers have been able to adapt their service delivery by conducting assessments and treatments remotely via telepractice, there are circumstances where this is not an option. Some audiologists and SLPs continue providing services for those with communication disorders in person despite a lack of adequate PPE. As noted above, individuals with hearing loss and other communication disorders face challenges when wearing a mask and adhering to social distancing, which places audiologists and SLPs at a greater risk for contracting COVID-19 as a direct result of their work.

Audiologists and SLPs recognize that effective communication is a human right—essential for human interaction—and are willing to put themselves in harm's way every day to ensure that

individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA's director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,

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

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<sup>1</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). *State Quick Facts About the Professions*.  
<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham  
490 Old Santa Fe Trail  
Room 400  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Lujan Grisham:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 75 audiologists and 1,328 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of New Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

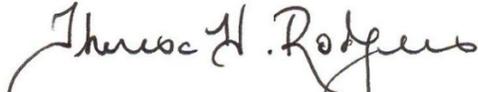
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Audiologists and SLPs recognize that effective communication is a human right—essential for human interaction—and are willing to put themselves in harm’s way every day to ensure that individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA’s director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

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

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Steve Sisolak  
101 N. Carson Street  
Carson City, NV 89701

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Sisolak:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 72 audiologists and 864 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Nevada.<sup>1</sup>

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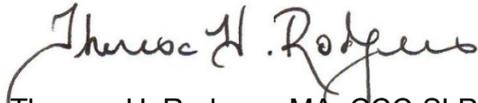
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Theresa H. Rodgers, MA, CCC-SLP  
2020 ASHA President

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Andrew Cuomo  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Cuomo:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 962 audiologists and 16,927 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of New York.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

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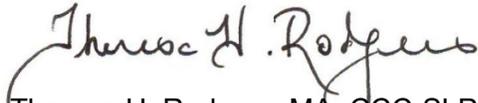
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Sincerely,

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

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<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine  
30th Floor  
77th South High Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor DeWine:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 614 audiologists and 6,759 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Ohio.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

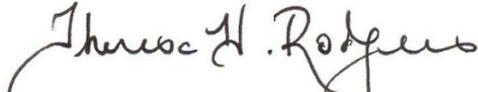
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Audiologists and SLPs recognize that effective communication is a human right—essential for human interaction—and are willing to put themselves in harm’s way every day to ensure that individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA’s director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,



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

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Kevin Stitt  
2300 N Lincoln Blvd.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Stitt:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 153 audiologists and 2,238 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Oklahoma.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

SLPs assess and treat speech, language, social communication, cognitive-communication, and swallowing disorders in individuals across the lifespan. SLPs provide essential communication services to individuals with a variety of disabilities. Many individuals with communication disabilities are unable to wear a mask for sensory, physical, or other reasons. Other clients may need to remove their mask to engage in assessment or therapy tasks. While the utilization of clear facial masks is advantageous for some clinicians, this type of personal protective equipment (PPE) is not always readily available nor appropriate for clients in all settings—particularly during speech therapy interventions.

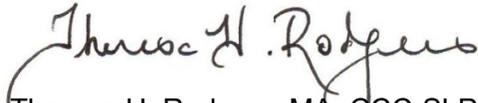
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I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA's director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

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

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Kate Brown  
160 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 153 audiologists and 2,097 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Oregon.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

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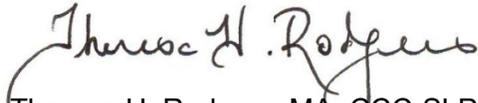
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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf  
225 Capitol Bldg, 501 North 3rd Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Wolf:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 548 audiologists and 8,022 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup>

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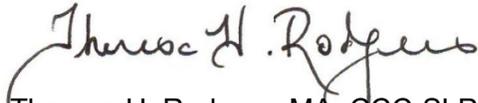
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Theresa H. Rodgers, MA, CCC-SLP  
2020 ASHA President

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Wanda Vazquez Garced  
La Fortaleza  
P.O. Box 9020082  
San Juan, PR 00902-0082

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Vazquez Garced:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

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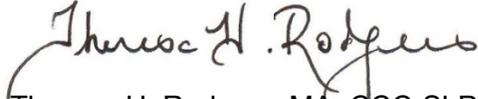
December 11, 2020

Page 2

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



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Gina Raimondo  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Raimondo:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 55 audiologists and 700 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Rhode Island.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

SLPs assess and treat speech, language, social communication, cognitive-communication, and swallowing disorders in individuals across the lifespan. SLPs provide essential communication services to individuals with a variety of disabilities. Many individuals with communication disabilities are unable to wear a mask for sensory, physical, or other reasons. Other clients may need to remove their mask to engage in assessment or therapy tasks. While the utilization of clear facial masks is advantageous for some clinicians, this type of personal protective equipment (PPE) is not always readily available nor appropriate for clients in all settings—particularly during speech therapy interventions.

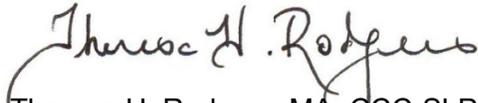
Audiologists and SLPs provide essential services to individuals with communication, swallowing, and cognitive disorders in a variety of settings including hospitals, long-term care facilities, schools, client homes, and private clinics. While some providers have been able to adapt their service delivery by conducting assessments and treatments remotely via telepractice, there are circumstances where this is not an option. Some audiologists and SLPs continue providing services for those with communication disorders in person despite a lack of adequate PPE. As noted above, individuals with hearing loss and other communication disorders face challenges when wearing a mask and adhering to social distancing, which places audiologists and SLPs at a greater risk for contracting COVID-19 as a direct result of their work.

Audiologists and SLPs recognize that effective communication is a human right—essential for human interaction—and are willing to put themselves in harm's way every day to ensure that

individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA's director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theresa H. Rodgers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T".

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

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<sup>1</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). *State Quick Facts About the Professions*.  
<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Henry McMaster  
1100 Gervais Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor McMaster:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 154 audiologists and 2,732 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of South Carolina.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

SLPs assess and treat speech, language, social communication, cognitive-communication, and swallowing disorders in individuals across the lifespan. SLPs provide essential communication services to individuals with a variety of disabilities. Many individuals with communication disabilities are unable to wear a mask for sensory, physical, or other reasons. Other clients may need to remove their mask to engage in assessment or therapy tasks. While the utilization of clear facial masks is advantageous for some clinicians, this type of personal protective equipment (PPE) is not always readily available nor appropriate for clients in all settings—particularly during speech therapy interventions.

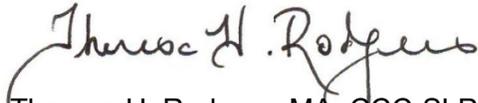
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Audiologists and SLPs recognize that effective communication is a human right—essential for human interaction—and are willing to put themselves in harm's way every day to ensure that

individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA's director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,

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

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<sup>1</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). *State Quick Facts About the Professions*.  
<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Kristi Noem  
500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Noem:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 48 audiologists and 460 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of South Dakota.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

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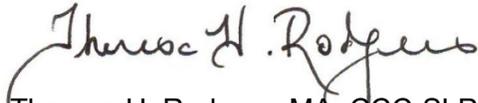
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individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

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

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Bill Lee  
600 Charlotte Ave., 1st Floor  
Nashville, TN 37243

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Lee:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 403 audiologists and 3,260 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Tennessee.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

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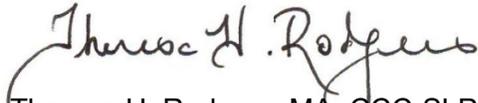
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I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA's director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,

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

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
P.O. Box 12428  
Austin, TX 78711

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Abbott:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 855 audiologists and 14,054 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Texas.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

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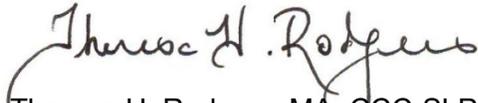
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Theresa H. Rodgers, MA, CCC-SLP  
2020 ASHA President

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Gary Herbert  
PO Box 142220  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Herbert:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 175 audiologists and 1,426 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Utah.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

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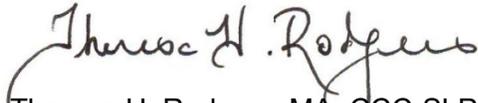
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Theresa H. Rodgers, MA, CCC-SLP  
2020 ASHA President

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Ralph Northam  
P.O. Box 1475  
Richmond, VA 23218

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Northam:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 371 audiologists and 4,115 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Virginia.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

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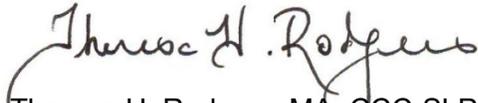
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2020 ASHA President

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Albert Bryan  
Government House, 21-22 Kongens Gade  
Charlotte Amalie  
St. Thomas, VI 00802

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Bryan:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students.

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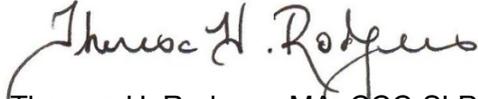
December 11, 2020

Page 2

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Sincerely,

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



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Phil Scott  
109 State Street, Pavilion  
Montpelier, VT 5609

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Scott:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

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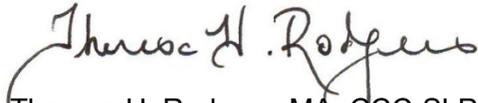
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individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA's director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theresa H. Rodgers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T".

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

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<sup>1</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). *State Quick Facts About the Professions*.  
<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor, PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Inslee:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 347 audiologists and 3,406 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Washington.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

SLPs assess and treat speech, language, social communication, cognitive-communication, and swallowing disorders in individuals across the lifespan. SLPs provide essential communication services to individuals with a variety of disabilities. Many individuals with communication disabilities are unable to wear a mask for sensory, physical, or other reasons. Other clients may need to remove their mask to engage in assessment or therapy tasks. While the utilization of clear facial masks is advantageous for some clinicians, this type of personal protective equipment (PPE) is not always readily available nor appropriate for clients in all settings—particularly during speech therapy interventions.

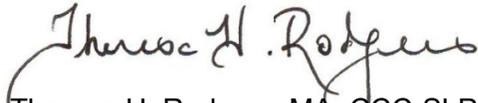
Audiologists and SLPs provide essential services to individuals with communication, swallowing, and cognitive disorders in a variety of settings including hospitals, long-term care facilities, schools, client homes, and private clinics. While some providers have been able to adapt their service delivery by conducting assessments and treatments remotely via telepractice, there are circumstances where this is not an option. Some audiologists and SLPs continue providing services for those with communication disorders in person despite a lack of adequate PPE. As noted above, individuals with hearing loss and other communication disorders face challenges when wearing a mask and adhering to social distancing, which places audiologists and SLPs at a greater risk for contracting COVID-19 as a direct result of their work.

Audiologists and SLPs recognize that effective communication is a human right—essential for human interaction—and are willing to put themselves in harm's way every day to ensure that

individuals with communication disorders receive the treatment they need and deserve. ASHA members know that hearing loss, speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing disorders can have lasting impacts on the health, welfare, and safety of individuals throughout their lives.

I urge you to grant audiologists and SLPs prioritized access to the initial distribution of FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA's director of state affairs, at [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org).

Sincerely,

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

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<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/quick-facts/>.



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Tony Evers  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Evers:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 304 audiologists and 3,461 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Wisconsin.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

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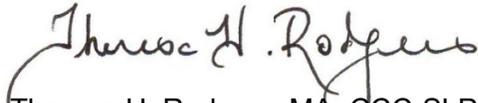
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Theresa H. Rodgers, MA, CCC-SLP  
2020 ASHA President

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Jim Justice  
1900 Kanawha Blvd. E  
Charleston, WV 25305

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Justice:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 95 audiologists and 931 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of West Virginia.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists identify and treat hearing, balance, and other auditory disorders. Audiologists must come in close contact with clients in order to effectively examine and treat their client's condition; thereby, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals who use lipreading to communicate, as well as audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who treat them, need clear masks that are not always available.

SLPs assess and treat speech, language, social communication, cognitive-communication, and swallowing disorders in individuals across the lifespan. SLPs provide essential communication services to individuals with a variety of disabilities. Many individuals with communication disabilities are unable to wear a mask for sensory, physical, or other reasons. Other clients may need to remove their mask to engage in assessment or therapy tasks. While the utilization of clear facial masks is advantageous for some clinicians, this type of personal protective equipment (PPE) is not always readily available nor appropriate for clients in all settings—particularly during speech therapy interventions.

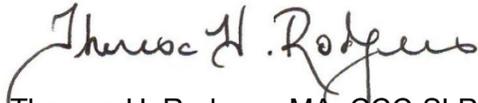
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2020 ASHA President

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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Mark Gordon  
2323 Carey Ave.  
Cheyenne, WY 82002

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Protocol

Dear Governor Gordon:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that audiologists and speech-language pathologists be given priority access to the initial distribution of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. As of January 2020, there were 20 audiologists and 364 speech-language pathologists who are ASHA members in the state of Wyoming.<sup>1</sup>

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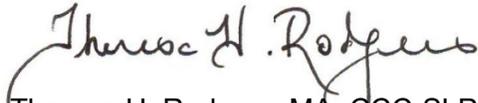
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