



ASHA
American
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

January 28, 2020

The Honorable Representative Amish Shah
Arizona House of Representatives
1700 West Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007

RE: ASHA Support for Telemedicine; HB 2536

Dear Representative Shah:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write in support of HB 2536, which expands the definition of “telemedicine” under state statute to include audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for more than 204,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; SLPs; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 3,000 ASHA members reside in Arizona.

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

These documents include a technical report and service delivery guidelines that may be accessed on ASHA’s website at <http://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Telepractice/>.

ASHA strongly supports the use of telemedicine. Research demonstrates the equivalence of telemedicine to in-person service delivery for a wide range of diagnostic and treatment procedures for adults and children.¹ Studies have shown high levels of patient, clinician, and parent satisfaction supporting telemedicine as an effective alternative to the in-person model for delivery of care.² Telemedicine expands practitioners’ availability to those in need—regardless of geographic location—saving time and resources for both the provider and the patient.

Despite proven benefits, telemedicine remains underutilized within audiology and speech-pathology due to a lack of clear state laws governing its use or mandating appropriate reimbursement for services delivered. HB 2536 addresses these barriers by clearly establishing what constitutes telemedicine and how both audiologists and speech-language pathologists can use telecommunications tools and information technology appropriately when providing services.

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Thank you for your consideration of ASHA's position to support HB 2536. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA's director, state association relations, at ecrowe@asha.org.

Sincerely,



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

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

² Ibid.