



ASHA
American
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

February 4, 2020

The Honorable Eileen Cody
Chair, House Health Care and Wellness Committee
303 John L. O'Brien Building
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

RE:ASHA Support for Telemedicine Reimbursement; HB 2770

Dear Representative Cody:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write in support of HB 2770, which reimburses health care providers for services provided through telemedicine at the same rate as if the health care service was provided in person.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 204,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 3,600 ASHA members reside in Washington.

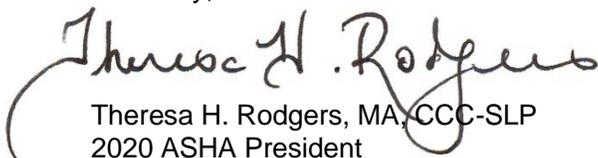
As the leading national organization for the certification and advancement of audiologists and speech-language pathologists, ASHA supports the development and use of telemedicine or "telepractice." ASHA maintains a collection of professional practice documents, including a position statement that defines 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."¹

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.² 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.³ 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-language pathology due to a lack of clear state laws governing its use or mandating appropriate reimbursement for services delivered. HB 2770 addresses these barriers by supporting equitable reimbursement rates for health care providers and their services.

Thank you for your consideration of ASHA's position to support HB 2770. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA's director of state association relations, at ecrowe@asha.org.

Sincerely,



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

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

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

³ Ibid.