

## UNIVERSAL LICENSURE ISSUES IN THE STATES

### ACTION REQUESTED

*Universal licensure* (also referred to as *comprehensive licensure*) ensures the protection of individuals of all ages who need the services of audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) by allowing one licensing body in each state to maintain jurisdiction over the practice of the professions. ASHA is asking legislators and regulatory bodies in the state to support legislation that would (a) enable state licensure boards to maintain jurisdiction over all practicing audiologists and SLPs in the state and (b) allow a pathway for those in school settings to obtain and maintain teacher certification by presenting evidence of a current unrestricted state license.

### ISSUE: SLPs Are Required to Obtain Two Separate Licenses to Practice in Health Care and Schools

- SLPs are educated and trained to diagnose, assess, and treat speech, language, swallowing, and cognitive communication disorders in children and adults; therefore, they may choose to practice in various work settings—including both health care and schools.
- Current regulation and licensing practice requires an SLP to apply for and maintain a license with the state Department of Health and also to apply for and maintain a separate license with the state Department of Education for teacher certification to practice in a school.
- This process is timely, is costly, and limits portability of practitioners who can fill vacancies in both settings.

### SOLUTION: Support Universal Licensure

Universal licensure would

- deter the hiring or substitution of other workers who do not have the necessary, accurate, and/or appropriate education, qualifications, and training;
- provide job portability, which would allow those who are qualified for full licensure to work in all settings;
- enhance recruitment of Clinical Fellows and other professionals;
- deter unethical behavior from professionals and employers, such as under- and overutilization, fraud, and misrepresentation;
- provide a venue for consumers to seek censure for individuals who have committed malpractice or other unethical behavior; and
- provide the necessary authority to intervene in cases of provider misconduct.

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