



February 1, 2020

The Honorable Shane Pendergrass
Chairwoman
Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 209, Registration of Audiology Assistants

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write in support of HB 209 for the registration of audiology assistants with amendments.

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. Over 4,050 ASHA members reside in Maryland.¹

In Section 2-3A-02, ASHA recommends replacing (B)(2) with the following educational requirement:

(2) The individual must meet one of the following eligibility requirements.

- a. *Bachelor's degree in communication sciences and disorders from a regionally or nationally accredited program,*
- b. *College Degree (non-CSD) from a regionally or nationally accredited program, high school diploma, or GED*
- c. *A military job series awarding certificate (audiology/ENT)*

In Section 2-101 (B-1)(3), ASHA recommends amending the following:

(3) Works under the general supervision of an audiologist licensed under this title, and certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

In Section 2-101 (V)(3), ASHA recommends amending the following:

(3) Works under the general supervision of a speech-language pathologist licensed under this title, and certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Adding this language will more closely align with ASHA's assistant program and allow the audiology assistant or speech-language pathology assistant to become ASHA-certified.² ASHA certification for assistants establishes a nationwide standard for assistants, with guidelines for the scope of practice, allowing the team to better understand roles and qualifications. The certification process also establishes a systematic review and maintenance of high caliber

standards for assistants, including guidelines for ethical practice. Every three years the renewal of certification will require the completion of a Maintenance of Certification Assessment, to provide assurance that an assistant's knowledge and skills remain current.

Thank you for your consideration of ASHA's comments on HB 209, registration of audiology assistants. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Susan Adams, ASHA's director, state legislative and regulatory affairs, at sadams@asha.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. Lynn Williams".

A. Lynn Williams, PhD, CCC-SLP
2021 ASHA President

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2020). *Maryland [Quick Facts]*.
<https://www.asha.org/uploadedFiles/MarylandState-Flyer.pdf>.

² Additional information on ASHA's Assistants Certification Program may be accessed on ASHA's website at <https://www.asha.org/assistants-certification-program/>.