



February 22, 2022

The Honorable Clark Bishop  
Chair, Senate Committee on Finance  
120 4th Street Room 532  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: Support for Telehealth; SB 56

Dear Senator Bishop:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write in support of the telehealth provisions in SB 56.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 218,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 400 ASHA members reside in Alaska.<sup>1</sup>

ASHA supports the legislation's allowance of telehealth without first conducting an in-person physical examination if:

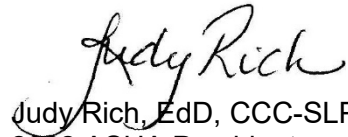
- the health care provider is licensed, permitted, or certified to provide health care services in another jurisdiction and is in good standing in the jurisdiction that issued the license, permit, or certification; or
- the health care services provided without an in-person physical examination are within the provider's authorized scope of practice in the jurisdiction that issued the provider's license, permit, or certification.

As the leading national organization for the certification and advancement of audiologists and speech-language pathologists, ASHA supports the development and use of telehealth. ASHA maintains a collection of professional practice documents, including a position statement that defines telehealth 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."<sup>2</sup>

ASHA strongly supports the use of telehealth. Research demonstrates the equivalence of telehealth to in-person service delivery for a wide range of diagnostic and treatment procedures for adults and children.<sup>3</sup> Studies have shown high levels of patient, clinician, and parent satisfaction supporting telehealth as an effective alternative to the in-person model for delivery of care.<sup>4</sup> Telehealth 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, telehealth 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

Thank you for your consideration of ASHA's position to support SB 56. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA's director of state association relations, at [ecrowe@asha.org](mailto:ecrowe@asha.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy Rich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judy Rich, EdD, CCC-SLP, BCS-CL  
2022 ASHA President

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<sup>1</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2021). *Alaska* [Quick Facts].  
<https://www.asha.org/siteassets/uploadedfiles/alaska-state-flyer.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). Telepractice. Retrieved from  
<https://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Telepractice/>.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.