April 7, 2017

Cary Pigmen, Chairman
Health Quality Subcommittee
205 S Commerce Ave Ste B
Sebring, FL 33870-3626

RE: FL H.B. 7011

Dear Chairman Pigmen and Health Quality Subcommittee Members:

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 191,500 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 10,000 members reside in Florida.

On behalf of ASHA’s members, I am writing to commend you for your support of H.B. 7011 regarding telehealth services. As the leading national organization for the certification and advancement of audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs), we support the development and use of telehealth or “telepractice.” ASHA has a family of professional practice documents, approved by ASHA’s Board of Directors, including a position statement that defines telepractice 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, knowledge, and skills needed by SLPs who provide clinical services via telepractice, and service delivery guidelines that can be accessed on ASHA’s website at www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Telepractice/.

ASHA has received comments and concerns from its members in the state of Florida regarding the need for laws and regulations to guide practitioners for telehealth. The benefits of telehealth are well documented, including providing services in remote underserved areas and access to services for clients who are unable to leave their homes. In addition, telehealth allows practitioners to provide services to individuals where there is a provider shortage.

We sincerely appreciate your efforts to make telehealth services accessible to all.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments. Should you have any questions or need further information, please contact Cheris Frailey, ASHA’s director of state education and legislative advocacy, at cfrailey@asha.org or by phone at 301-296-5666, or Janet Deppe, ASHA’s director of state advocacy, at jdeppe@asha.org or by phone at 301-296-5668.

Sincerely,

Gail J. Richard, PhD, CCC-SLP
2017 ASHA President