Background

Telepractice discussions in states focus on how to regulate the practice and manage reimbursement. Each state approaches telepractice rules and regulations differently. Many states are silent on the issue, meaning they have no current rules and regulations in place. A major benefit of telepractice is the increased access for consumers, especially in rural and underserved areas.

The regulation of telepractice services by audiologists and speech-language pathologists has been addressed by over half of the states. The guidance issued by states varies from providing a definition of telepractice to laws and regulations on the practice and who may be providers.

Reimbursement of telepractice also varies greatly from state to state. Some states have enacted parity laws, providing that telepractice should be reimbursed the same rates as in-person services, however it rarely applies to all providers. All health plans, including Medicaid, differ on their policies on reimbursement for telepractice services.

ASHA’s Perspective

ASHA views telepractice as an appropriate service delivery model for hearing and speech-language services. Practitioners follow the same ASHA service delivery guidelines, scope of practice, and Code of Ethics requirements that apply to face-to-face services, as well as any applicable state and federal laws.

Regulation: ASHA supports the states defining and recognizing the provision of telepractice services. The implementation of a licensure compact for speech-language pathologists and audiologists will advance telepractice to enable transferability, enhanced service delivery, and increased access for consumers.

Reimbursement: ASHA supports reimbursement to practitioners for services provided via telepractice and supports legislation that provides equitable reimbursement, as well as increased access to services for consumers.

Decision Makers

ASHA is asking for decision makers to be open to defining and regulating telepractice at the state and/or federal level by supporting and/or introducing laws that would support telepractice through reimbursement or increased provider coverage through a licensure compact.