



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

September 22, 2015

Senator Jason Lewis, Chair
Joint Committee on Public Health
General Court of the Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Kate Hogan, Chair
Joint Committee on Public Health
General Court of the Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
Boston, MA 02133

RE: H. 1944

Dear Chairman Lewis, Chairwoman Hogan and members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) regarding H. 1944 which would mandate insurance coverage for telemedicine services. We would like to ensure that audiologists and speech-language pathologists are included as covered service providers.

ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 182,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 4,900 of our members reside in the commonwealth of Massachusetts.

As the leading national organization for the certification and advancement of audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs), we support the development and use of telemedicine or “telepractice.” ASHA has a family of professional practice documents, approved by ASHA’s Board of Directors in 2004, 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, a listing of the knowledge and skills needed by SLPs providing 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/.

The benefits of telemedicine are well documented, including providing services in remote underserved areas and providing access to services for clients unable to leave their homes. In addition, telemedicine allows practitioners to provide services to individuals where there is a provider shortage.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. Should you have any questions, please contact Susan Adams, ASHA’s director of state legislative and regulatory advocacy, at sadams@asha.org; or Janet Deppe, ASHA’s director of state advocacy, at jdeppe@asha.org.

Sincerely,

Judith L. Page, PhD, CCC-SLP
2015 ASHA President