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TO: All Licensees of the Board of Registration for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology

DATE: March 31, 2020

RE: License Renewal, Continuing Education, and Telepractice During the State of Emergency for Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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In response to the state of emergency declared by Governor Baker on March 10, 2020, and pursuant to Executive Orders issued by the Governor, the Board of Registration for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (“Board”) has prepared the following information for all holders of Board-issued licenses:

- 1) License Renewal: Pursuant to the Governor’s Executive Order Extending the Registrations of Certain Licensed Professionals issued March 18, 2020, any license or certificate issued by the Board which, during the state of emergency, has expired or will expire but is otherwise in good standing, is hereby extended and shall remain valid until 90 days following the termination of the state of emergency.
- 2) Continuing Education: Licensees whose licenses are extended and remain valid until 90 days following the termination of the state of emergency are likewise granted an extension until 90 days following the termination of the state of emergency to complete continuing education required for the renewal.
- 3) Telepractice: The Board’s Policy on Providing Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Services by Electronic Means (“Telepractice Policy”) is **temporarily** amended as set forth below. When the state of emergency ends, this temporary amendment will no longer be in effect, and the Board’s Telepractice Policy will again become effective.
  - a. All licensing requirements of the Telepractice Policy remain in effect; thus all persons who provide telepractice services to clients who reside or are located in Massachusetts must be licensed by the Board; and Board licensees must comply with statutes, regulations and policies of the jurisdiction where the client is located.



- b. During the state of emergency, the Board hereby waives the requirement of the Telepractice Policy that before providing telepractice services, a speech-language pathologist or audiologist must obtain ten (10) hours of training in telepractice. However, within four (4) months of beginning to provide telepractice services, a speech-language pathologist and audiologist must obtain the required ten (10) hours of training in telepractice, via in-classroom courses or via distance learning. Training must be provided by a practitioner experienced in providing telepractice services, and must include equipment and technology, clinical practice via telepractice, security of patient services and records, including, to the extent feasible during the state of emergency, compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Telepractitioners must maintain documentation of their training topics and hours in telepractice for inspection by the Board upon request.
- c. During the state of emergency, the Board hereby waives the requirement for an in-person evaluation to occur prior to the start of telepractice services. A Board licensed speech-language pathologist or audiologist may begin to provide services via telepractice to a client who is clinically appropriate and has a medical need. After the state of emergency has ended, a licensed speech-language pathologist or audiologist must perform an in-person assessment of the client's need for services and candidacy for telepractice, including behavioral, physical and cognitive abilities to participate in telepractice services.
- d. All telepractice services provided during the state of emergency must be medically necessary and clinically appropriate.
- e. Licensees must properly identify the patient using, at a minimum, the patient's name and date of birth and, where possible, a photo ID.
- f. To the extent feasible during the state of emergency, licensees must ensure the same rights to confidentiality and security as provided during in-person services, including compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Licensees must inform patients of any relevant privacy considerations.