



Protecting, maintaining and improving the health of all Minnesotans

**Speech-Language Pathologist and Audiologist Licensing
Advisory Council Meeting
July 22, 2014**

Attendance

Members

Mark DeRuiter, PhD, CCC-A/SLP
Jill Arvidson, MST, CCC-SLP
Sally Gorski, MA, CCC-SLP
Heidi Hueffmeier, CCC-SLP
Josephine Helmbrecht, AuD
Katherine Teece, AuD
Jenne Tunnell, AuD
Geoff Service, MD
Jerry Meinders, HID
Nyagatare Valens
George Pfaff

Staff

Gil Acevedo
Anne Kukowski
Gloria Rudolph
Barbara Miller

Absent

—

I. Introductions

Done by those in attendance.

II. Review and Approve Minutes from April 22, 2014

Approved, as written.

III. Review/Adoption of Agenda

Approved, as written.

IV. Oath of Office

Miller stated that new legislation requires that advisory council members sign an Oath of Office for each term they sit on a council.

- Signed by council members.

V. Staff Reports

A. Credentialing Report

Rudolph presented the Credentialing Activity Report as of June 30, 2014.

- Full Licenses: 1,902 = 1,473 SLPs, 427 Auds, and 2 Dual.
- CFY/DE Licenses: 121 = 113 SLPs and 8 Auds.
- Temporary Licenses: 11 = 7 SLPs and 4 Auds.
- Total Licenses: 2,034.
- Next renewal deadline is 1/31/15; notices will be mailed in November 2014.

B. Exam Report – June 27, 2014 Exam Results

Rudolph presented the 6/27/14 HID Exam Results.

- Results were mailed 7/17/14.
- 11 new examinees for the practical exam:

- 7 passed (5 audiologists*, 2 non-audiologists).
- 4 failed (4 non-audiologists).
- 9 retest examines for the practical exam:
 - 6 audiologist passed (2 audiologists*, 4 non-audiologists).
 - 3 failed (2 audiologists*, 1 non-audiologist).
 - Audiologist failures consisted of: 2 audiometry.

*For the purposes of this report only, the term “audiologist” mean person who stated, on their exam application, that he or she was in or had completed an audiology master’s or doctoral training program on their exam application.

C. Investigations and Enforcement Report

Kukowski presented the 07/01/13 to 06/30/14 SLP I&E Report:

- 17 Intakes (3 allegations and 14 applications).
- 2 Investigations Opened:
 - 1 disclosure of felony record.
 - 1 chemical abuse.
- 8 Investigations Closed:
 - 1 letter of advisement.
 - 5 referred to enforcement.
 - 2 closed due to insufficient evidence to show a violation.
- 3 Enforcement Actions Opened.
- 5 Enforcement Actions Closed:
 - 3 disciplinary (2 civil penalty and 1 suspension of credential/right to practice).
 - 2 non-disciplinary (1 penalty and 1 no discipline/technical violation resolved).
- 10 Total Pending Investigations, involving 10 practitioners.
- 12 Total Pending Enforcements.

Kukowski presented the 07/01/13 to 06/30/14 Audiology I&E Report:

- 23 Intakes (3 allegations and 20 applications).
- 2 Investigation Opened:
 - 2 incompetence or negligence.
- 11 Investigations Closed:
 - 1 placed in abeyance.
 - 5 closed due to insufficient evidence to show a violation.
 - 2 closed and dismissed with advisements.
 - 1 referred to another agency.
 - 1 referred to enforcement.
 - 1 closed due to uncooperative witness/client.
- 1 Enforcement Opened.
- 1 Enforcements Closed:
 - 1 disciplinary (licensee retired).
- 10 Total Pending Investigations, involving 10 practitioners.
- 9 Total Pending Enforcements.

D. Budget and Expenditure Reports

Kukowski presented the FY14 (07/01/13 to 06/30/14) SLP Budget Report.

- Total Receipts (rounded):
 - FY14 – Projected \$176,000 and Actual \$171,000.

- FY15 – Projection \$180,000.
- Projection amount is based on size of that year’s renewal cycle and the growth of the occupation, and SLPs are growing fairly rapidly.
- Total Expenditures (rounded):
 - FY14 – Projected \$161,000 and Actual \$155,000.
 - FY15 – Projection \$168,000.
 - The increased projection amount is mainly due to projected raises in salary, but the SLPs are still expecting a FY15 positive balance around \$11,000.
- Personnel Full-Time Equivalents (FTE):
 - FY13 FTE (1.29) was low due to losing the program manager and investigations and enforcement (I&E) staff.
 - FY14 FTE (1.59) is moving to a more normalized amount with the hiring of I&E staff as well as new program manager (Acevedo) during the fiscal year.
 - FT15 FTE (1.74 projection) is expected to increase more, but the actual amount may be lower since Acevedo will be managing two other sections.

Kukowski presented the FY14 (07/01/13 to 06/30/14) Audiologist Budget Report.

- Total Receipts (rounded):
 - FY14 – Projected \$109,000 and Actual \$105,000.
 - FY15 – Projection \$108,000.
- Total Expenditures (rounded):
 - FY14 – Projected \$132,000 and Actual \$141,000.
 - FY15 – Projection \$130,000.
 - The actual salary expenditure in FY14 was around \$10,000 more than projected primarily due to increased staff time by I&E, management, and IT programming.
- The program is running a deficit, which may result in fee increases.
 - One contributing factor is that Audiologists pay part of the cost to administer the Hearing Instrument Dispensing (HID) Examination.
 - Another factor is that all state employees received a cost of living salary increase in addition to a possible step increase.
 - Another factor is the smaller number of licensees and the slower rate of growth of those entering the profession.
 - To help cover the cost of administering the HID exam, MDH will likely seek an increase in the fee for audiology applicants.

VI. Old Business

A. Draft Consumer Brochure

Kukowski presented the draft hearing aid consumer brochure, which was created from the existing brochure in response to the Governor’s plain language initiative.

- The updates are to take existing content and make it easier to understand, but it was noticed that some content was out of date.
- Council members provided additional feedback. Those suggestions will be incorporated into the draft brochure and emailed to these Council members, and then the brochure will be presented at the HID advisory council meeting next month.

B. HID Exam Requirement for Audiologist

- Collecting Data when Audiologist Students take HID Exam

Rudolph discussed the responses from the questions handed out at the June exam. The questions were only handed out to the seven initial audiologist examinees, not those retaking the exam.

- First question: Do you hold a master's degree?
 - 7 responded yes.
- Second and third questions: Are you currently a student enrolled in a doctoral of audiology graduate degree program? If yes, how many years of the doctoral of audiology program have you completed? Circle best match: year one, year two, year three, or year four.
 - 2 responded yes, and both circled that they were in the fourth year of the program. Both of those respondents passed the exam.
 - 1 responded no, but circled that they were in the fourth year of the program. That respondent passed the exam.
- Fourth question: Are you currently licensed as an audiologist in another state?
 - 4 responded yes. 3 of those passed, and 1 failed the exam.

- Testing Software and Centers

Kukowski stated that offering the exam for so few applicants (about 60 per year) is expensive. Are there any other options?

- Helmbrecht stated that there are several virtual or simulated audiometry software programs available, and most of them meet the criteria in MN statutes.
- Helmbrecht did a comparison between two programs currently available:
 - innoForce OTIS – Arizona recently started using this as their model for administering their practical exam. Helmbrecht has emailed the audiologists on their advisory committee, but has not heard back from them yet.
 - Virtual System – Previously looked reviewed by the exam workgroup.
- In terms of audiometry, it was unclear how OTIS tested that. For the Virtual System program, it appears to leave out most comfortable listening level (MCL) and uncomfortable listening level (UCL) information.
- Both tests did air conduction, bone conduction, and masking which are the elements outlined in MN Statute 153A.
- Helmbrecht noted that there are several testing centers throughout the state, and some appear to be contracted with state agencies.

C. Telemedicine

Rudolph presented the telepractice statement that the Department put on their website since the last council meeting.

- Rudolph asked the council if they wanted to pursue legislative language to make the stance on telepractice more clear?
- Arvidson suggested that the statement's language could be updated to make it clearer that the practitioner needs to be licensed in the state where the patient is physically receiving services.
- Helmbrecht suggested waiting on making any legislative changes until there is a better understanding of what the needs are.
- Gorski noted that she will bring this up with the MSHA lobbyist.
 - Kukowski stated that she does not believe telepractice legislation is imminent, but she is requesting that council members communicate to the Department if they become aware of issues that the Department should

address with legislation.

- Gorski suggested that the council members go to the website and then provide any feedback directly to the Department about the telepractice statement.

D. SLP Assistants

Gorski does not have an update at this time, but will probably have an update at the next meeting.

VII. New Business

A. Records Retention

Miller stated that MDH is drafting a department-wide retention policy, and she noted that the SLP and audiologist credentialing files are currently retained for 50 years after lapse in licensure.

- The draft MDH-wide retention schedule proposes a much shorter retention period, most likely 10 years after lapse in licensure.
- The program currently renews lapsed licenses, no matter how long the lapse in licensure has been.
- MDH's legal office has reviewed the licensing statutes, and their conclusion was that keeping the records for renewal of licensure is not a statutory requirement.
- In conclusion, if the Department approves a shorter retention period the licensure renewal process would change old credential record has lapsed practitioners whose been destroyed.
- Council members felt that that change in records retention practice is reasonable.
- Arvidson stated that since her Department of Education licensure lapsed, she has to apply as a new licensee and would have to meet the new licensing standards.
- Tunnell stated that when she decided to no longer practice in Washington State, she paid an inactive fee for her records to be maintained and to make renewal of licensure an easier process. The inactive fee was charged annually, but it was a fraction of the cost of maintaining active licensure.
- Helmbrecht thought creating an inactive status could be a good option.
- Kukowski noted that creating an inactive status would be a statutory change.
- Inactive license status will be added to the next council meeting agenda to be discussed further.

B. Proposed 2015 Legislation

Kukowski stated the Department is going to ask for authority to engage in corrective actions instead of discipline for certain behaviors that do not run the risk of harming somebody, and there will probably be some fee changes.

Next Meeting

October 25, 2014, 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm

TIES Event Center

Larpenteur Room

1644 Larpenteur Ave W

Saint Paul, MN 55108