



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

Submitted via e-mail: dan.hawkins@house.ks.gov

February 9, 2017

Daniel Hawkins, Chair Health and Human Services Committee
Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th Street
Room 521-E
Topeka, KS 66612

RE: HB 2195

Dear Chairman Hawkins and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

On behalf of ASHA's members, I am writing to support House Bill (HB) 2195, which would transfer the duties and administration of the Kansas Board of Examiners in Fitting and Dispensing of Hearing Instruments to the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services (KDADS).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 186,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 1,750 of our members reside in Kansas.

Currently, hearing instrument specialists are issued a license from a freestanding board of their peers. Consumers with hearing loss who seek hearing aids from these individuals have little recourse if the service provided is unsatisfactory. The board has part-time administrative assistance and no website to determine how to file a complaint. Subsuming the board under KDADS would provide a level of transparency and reliability that is currently unavailable to consumers in the state. For most individuals with disabilities, including those with hearing loss, adding the level of oversight provided by KDADS would reassure consumers that these service providers would be held accountable to the same standards as other licensed professionals in the state.

Hearing instrument specialists are licensed in all states, but the license does not always specifically outline their scope of practice. In addition, there is no uniformity in licensure requirements, such as education and training expectations. In Kansas, hearing instrument specialists must be 21 years of age, have a high school diploma or equivalent, and have passed an examination to be licensed. Providing state oversight would allow KDADS to ensure that uniform standards are required and maintained for hearing instrument specialists in the state.

Most licensure boards, including the Kansas Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Board, have state oversight. In light of a decision by the United States Supreme Court in the North Carolina Dental Board case, which held that a state regulatory board cannot be controlled by market participants without active supervision, the state legislature should enact HB 2195 in

order to ensure that the requirements of the Supreme Court decision are upheld. See [North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners v. FTC](#))

We urge you to support HB 2195, which would provide state oversight, transparency, and consumer protection for the citizens with hearing loss in the state of Kansas.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments. Should you have any questions or need further information, please contact 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

cc: Susie Ternes, Executive Director, Kansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association
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