

March 12, 2020
Kansas State Capitol
Attn: Senate Education Committee

Senator Baumgardner and members of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Dr. Josh Sevier, and I'm an audiologist practicing in your neighboring state's capital of Lincoln, Nebraska. I have worked alongside audiologists and speech-language pathologists in hospitals, school districts, and private practices to improve access for patients and remove barriers across the state. It is because of this, that I write to you testifying in support of SB490.

Passing this legislation would help:

- Provide a method of reciprocity to assist audiologists and speech-language pathologists who work in Kansas and neighboring states;
- Allow for members of these professions moving across state lines as a result of military service to do so without a lapse in licensure
- Ensure the ethical and legal provision of services and reduce regulatory barriers while still protecting the public; and
- Establish consistencies in the regulatory requirements around the provision of services.

This legislation would make it easier for audiologists and speech-language pathologists to practice not only in Kansas but neighboring border-states that may potentially become members of the interstate compact. In rural areas of Kansas, there is a shortage of providers. This shortage may negatively impact access to services.

These services provided by audiologists include:

- Assessing people with hearing loss for hearing aids and cochlear implants.
- Providing fitting, programming, and audiologic rehabilitation.
- Evaluating and managing children and adults with central auditory processing disorders.

Speech-language pathologists provide services including the evaluation, treatment and diagnosis of individuals from infant to elderly with:

- Speech, language, communication, and swallowing and feeding disorders;
- Autism spectrum disorders;
- Dementia related language disorders;
- Speech delays and disorders;
- Voice and fluency disorders;
- Stroke and Brain Injury;

- Parkinson's Disease;
- Literacy.

One of the unique opportunities that this compact offers is the ability to provide services with the use of telehealth technology. As our healthcare system continues to evolve, the ability to provide care with the use of telehealth will be paramount in ensuring adequate care for those living in areas without an ease of access to services. Practitioners of these professions working in Veteran Administration hospitals have used this technology provide this care in the service of hearing aids for a few years now. This legislation would open the possibility to expand that care to all patients in Kansas that require speech therapy and cochlear implant services.

This legislation has the potential to benefit all member states involved. It will increase access to care and remove red tape for those providing that care. I hope that you will support this legislation, and I greatly appreciate your consideration of our neighboring states working together to do more for our patients and providers.

Respectfully,

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