

2025 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 442

BY REPRESENTATIVE HENRY

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

SPEECH/PATH/AUDIO: Provides relative to the practice of audiology and speech-language pathology

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 37:2651(1), (3), and (7)(a), (b), and (g), 2659(A)(introductory
3 paragraph) and (1), 2660(3), 2662(C)(introductory paragraph) and (3), to enact R.S.
4 37:2651(13) through (18), and to repeal R.S. 37:2651(7)(e) and (f), relative to
5 audiology and speech-language pathology; to provide for definitions; to provide for
6 the qualifications of an applicant for licensure; to waive certain requirements for
7 licensure; to provide for disciplinary actions; and to provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 37:2651(1), (3), and (7)(a), (b), and (g), 2659(A)(introductory
10 paragraph) and (1), 2660(3), 2662(C)(introductory paragraph) and (3) are hereby amended
11 and reenacted and R.S. 37:2651(13) through (18) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

12 §2651. Definitions

13 As used in this Chapter:

14 (1) "Audiologist" means any person who represents himself to the public by
15 title or description of services, methods, or procedures as one who offers to provide
16 or provides services involving the application of principles, methods, and procedures
17 of the science and profession of audiology. An audiologist, by definition of scope
18 of practice, may sell and dispense hearing aids, as defined by the United States Food
19 and Drug Administration, ~~under these provisions~~ in accordance with this Chapter.

20 * * *

1 (ii) ~~Comply with federal Food and Drug Administration guidelines required~~
2 ~~for fitting and dispensing hearing aids.~~

3 (iii)(vii) ~~Follow~~ Following guidelines adopted by the board for a thirty-day
4 trial period on hearing aids dispensed.

5 ~~(iv) Comply with pre-purchase evaluation guidelines adopted by the board.~~

6 ~~(v) Provide documentation of completion of at least thirty semester credit~~
7 ~~hours of professional coursework, twenty-one hours of which shall be in audiology.~~
8 ~~A minimum of six semester credit hours shall be in specific areas in amplification,~~
9 ~~including:~~

10 ~~(aa) Physical and electroacoustic characteristics of hearing aids and other~~
11 ~~assistive amplification devices.~~

12 ~~(bb) Earmold and in-the-ear hearing aid acoustics, materials, types, tubing,~~
13 ~~impressions techniques, and modifications.~~

14 ~~(cc) Room acoustics, including the effects of noise on speech intelligibility,~~
15 ~~environmental modifications, and interaction with amplification devices.~~

16 ~~(dd) Principles and methods of evaluation, including determination of need~~
17 ~~for and characteristics of appropriate amplification using case history, self-~~
18 ~~assessment inventories, and audiological assessment data.~~

19 ~~(ee) Selection procedures and protocols, such as traditional and~~
20 ~~contemporary evaluations, prescriptive fittings, real ear measurements, and~~
21 ~~programmable hearing aids.~~

22 ~~(ff) Rationale for selection of various hearing aid characteristics and types~~
23 ~~of fittings.~~

24 ~~(gg) Procedural modifications for special populations, such as pediatric,~~
25 ~~geriatric, developmentally disabled, and physically disabled.~~

26 ~~(hh) Rehabilitative procedures, such as hearing aid orientation, counseling~~
27 ~~of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families, speechreading, and~~
28 ~~auditory training.~~

29 ~~(ii) Business management and marketing strategies.~~

1 ~~(jj) Professional aspects of hearing aid services, such as recordkeeping and~~
2 ~~documentation, risk management, quality assurance, professional liability, equipment~~
3 ~~selection, and reimbursement systems.~~

4 ~~(vi) Provide documentation of a minimum of three hundred fifty supervised~~
5 ~~clock hours of clinical practicum obtained during graduate training with at least~~
6 ~~eighty of those hours obtained in the evaluation, selection, and use of appropriate~~
7 ~~amplification systems and their related components, including:~~

8 ~~(aa) Making, fitting, and acoustic modification of earmolds.~~

9 ~~(bb) Electroacoustic tests of amplification systems.~~

10 ~~(cc) Maintenance of amplification systems, earmolds, and assistive devices.~~

11 ~~(vii) Complete nine months of postgraduate professional experience, begun~~
12 ~~after completion of the academic and clinical experiences, under the supervision of~~
13 ~~a licensed dispensing audiologist.~~

14 * * *

15 (g) The practice of audiology may include speech and language screening,
16 limited to a ~~pass/fail~~ pass or fail determination for the purpose of identifying and
17 referring individuals suspected of having disorders of communication.

18 * * *

19 (13) "ABA" means the American Board of Audiology.

20 (14) "ASHA" means the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

21 (15) "Over-the-counter hearing aid" means a hearing instrument or hearing
22 aid that meets the current United States Food and Drug Administration's
23 requirements for this class of device and which may be dispensed or sold without a
24 hearing assessment, licensed hearing instrument professional fitting and dispensing
25 engagement, or return for credit privileges as provided by federal law.

26 (16) "Personal sound amplification product" means an amplification device,
27 as defined by the United States Food and Drug Administration or the Federal Trade
28 Commission that is not labeled as a hearing aid and is not intended to treat hearing
29 loss.

1 (17) "Prescription hearing aid" means a hearing instrument or hearing aid
2 that meets the United States Food and Drug Administration's requirements for this
3 class of device and which requires both of the following:

4 (a) A hearing assessment and prescription for medically necessary hearing
5 aids prior to purchase.

6 (b) A prescribed fitting and dispensing by a licensed audiologist or hearing
7 instrument professional.

8 (18) "Telehealth" or "telepractice" means the use of telehealth in the delivery
9 of speech-language pathology or audiology services, regardless of where the services
10 are rendered or delivered, constitutes the practice of speech-language pathology or
11 audiology and shall require Louisiana licensure for in-state practitioners and
12 telehealth registration for out-of-state practitioners.

13 * * *

14 §2659. Qualifications for license

15 A. No individual shall be eligible for licensure or provisional licensure by
16 the board as an audiologist, speech-language pathologist, speech-language pathology
17 assistant, or any manner of dual licensure thereof, as applicable, unless the
18 individual:

19 (1) ~~Is of Displays~~ good moral character. For purposes of this Section, "good
20 moral character" includes but is not limited to the qualities of honesty, fairness,
21 candor, trustworthiness, observance of fiduciary or other legal obligations, and a
22 respect for the rights of other persons and the laws of this state, such as if the
23 applicant has been convicted of a felony. Any determination and review of criminal
24 history records information shall be conducted in accordance with applicable state
25 laws.

26 * * *

27 §2660. ~~Waiver of requirements~~ Reciprocity; waivers

28 The board may issue licenses under the following special conditions:

29 * * *

Proposed law adds "ABA", "ASHA", "over-the-counter hearing aid", "personal sound amplification product", "prescription hearing aid", and "telehealth or telepractice" to the list of definitions and amends the definition of "practice of audiology". Proposed law otherwise retains present law.

Present law provides that no individual shall be eligible for licensure by the board as an audiologist, unless the individual is of good moral character.

Proposed law clarifies the definition of "good moral character".

Present law requires the board to issue licenses under certain special conditions. One of those conditions provided for in present law is that the board shall waive, upon request, the examination requirements for any applicant who is currently certified by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education as a specialist of speech-language pathology and currently employed in a school setting.

Proposed law instead allows the board to waive clinical practicum requirements for applicants who hold certification from the American Board of Audiology and have completed the national examination requirement.

Present law provides that when the board is authorized to discipline an individual, the board may impose, separately or in combination, any of the following disciplinary actions:

- (1) Refuse to issue or renew a license or registration.
- (2) Issue a public letter of reprimand or concern.
- (3) Require restitution of costs and expenses, not to include attorney fees, in connection with the enforcement of this present law.
- (4) Impose probationary conditions.
- (5) Impose a fine for each violation not to exceed \$1,000.
- (6) Suspend or revoke a license or registration.
- (7) Restrict the license by limiting or reducing the scope of practice.
- (8) Otherwise discipline a licensee or registrant upon proof of violations of any provisions of present law.
- (9) Issue a consent agreement and order.

Proposed law instead provides that the board is authorized to impose any of the aforementioned disciplinary actions if the individual violates the provisions of present law. Proposed law also allows for the collection of attorney fees if the board decides to require restitution of costs and expenses in connection with the enforcement of present law.

Proposed law otherwise retains present law.

Directs the La. State Law Institute to alphabetize and renumber the definitions contained in R.S. 37:2651 and to correct any cross-references that may need to be changed as a result of this renumbering.

(Amends R.S. 37:2651(1), (3), and (7)(a), (b), and (g), 2659(A)(intro. para.) and (1), 2660(3), 2662(C)(intro. para.) and (3); Adds R.S. 37:2651(13)-(18); Repeals R.S. 37:2651(7)(e) and (f))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Health and Welfare to the original bill:

1. Define "telehealth" or "telepractice".
2. Remove the authorization for an audiologist to engage in any task, procedure, act, or practice that is necessary for any basic health screening, for which one has been trained, with referral to an appropriate healthcare professional.
3. Restore present law requirement of a physician referral for certain audiology services.