

**STATE OF NEVADA  
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY, AUDIOLOGY  
AND HEARING AID DISPENSING BOARD**

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING  
Advisory Committee on Fitting and Dispensing Hearing Aids**

**January 11, 2019**

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Members Present: Michael Hodes, Thomas Rainford, Melissa Maestas, Jennifer Joy-Cornejo, Nanci Campbell

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Loretta Ponton, Executive Director, Stacey Whittaker, Executive Assistant, Sarah Bradley, Sr. Deputy Attorney General

Public Present: None

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**Call to Order, Confirmation of Quorum** - Loretta Ponton called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. A roll call confirmed a quorum was present.

**Public Comment** - There were no public comments.

**Approval of the Minutes** - Mike Hodes called for a motion. Tom Rainford made the motion, seconded by Melissa Maestas to approve the minutes of October 19, 2018. The motion passed with Mike Hodes abstaining.

**Durable Medical Equipment Tax Exemption** – Loretta Ponton provided an update on the ballot question 4, on the exemption of sales and use tax on durable medical equipment. The measure requires the Legislature and the Governor to approve legislation to implement before the exemptions could become effective. There was question as to whether hearing aids would be covered as durable medical equipment under this measure. Loretta stated she would monitor legislation regarding this matter.

**Audiology Patient Choice Act** – Mike Hodes stated proposed legislation “Audiology Patient Choice Act” ensures seniors and people with disabilities on Medicare have access to a full range of hearing and balance health care services provided by audiologists. It would eliminate the requirement for a physician referral to obtain audiology services. The legislation has the support of AAA with an “opt out” option, ASHA and IHS as well as other organizations, and has support from numerous states. Mr. Hodes suggested the State Board officially support the “Audiology Patient Choice Act”.

Members discussed the applicability of the legislation to the state’s Medicaid programs and the practice of hearing aid specialists with clarification the bill is a federal legislative bill affecting only the Medicare program requirements.

Mike Hodes called for a motion. Jennifer Joy-Cornejo made the motion, seconded by Nanci Campbell to recommend the Board officially write a letter of support for passage of the “Audiology Patient Choice Act”. The motion passed.

**Audiology Assistants and Use of Assistants, Aids and Technicians** - Jennifer Joy-Cornejo stated she would like clarification on the use of audiology assistants; there are several states that license audiology assistants.

Loretta Ponton explained the current regulation on delegation of duties to unlicensed persons, and asked for clarification of the type of activities an audiology assistant would perform that is not covered by the current regulation. Adding a new license type would require legislative approval as it would be a revision to the Board’s law.

The members discussed the need for supervisory requirements, activities such as running new hearing aids on a test box and whether any delegated duties would include direct physical contact with a client. Also discussed were physicians delegating full hearing testing and evaluation to medical assistants and whether that would fall within the scope of practice of a medical assistant or the scope of practice of a hearing aid specialist.

There was consensus that more information is necessary and the members directed Loretta to continue research and bring back this item to the Committee for further consideration.

**FDA Approval of Bose Self-Fitting Hearing Aids** - The members discussed the new category of hearing aids approved by the FDA. It was determined it is too soon to make any determinations or decisions on the impact of this product category to current laws and/or regulations. Self-fitting hearing aids will be monitored for further discussion as more information becomes available.

**Masking as an Additional State Test Component** - Melissa Maestas requested the members consider adding Masking to the Practical Examination as the IHS exam does not cover this topic and she has found that applicants may be deficient in this area. After discussion, it was agreed that each member would submit 5-10 questions for consideration, the questions would be compiled and reviewed at a future meeting with a recommendation to the Board at that time for approval of adding a masking component to the practical exam.

**Duties of a Sponsor** - The question arose as to whether a sponsor should be responsible for ensuring an apprentice maintains current licensure with the Board. The members reviewed current law and regulations pertaining to unlicensed practice, duties of a sponsor and professional responsibilities with a consensus that the existing laws and regulations are sufficient.

**Report by Chair, Meeting Schedule, Training** – Mike Hodes stated he had nothing further; Loretta Ponton reported that Advisory Committee meetings would be scheduled one week prior to a Board meeting to ensure recommendations could be included on the Board meeting Agenda. Ms. Ponton also asked if members would be interested in a formal “practical exam on-site training” possibly at Mr. Hodes facility. There was consensus an on-site training would be beneficial to all and provide consistency in exam administration. Loretta stated she would coordinate the schedule.

*FINAL - Minutes approved at the January 8, 2020 meeting.*

**Public Comment** – There were no public comments.

**Adjournment** –The meeting adjourned at 4:39 p.m.