



State of Nevada

Speech-Language Pathology, Audiology & Hearing Aid Dispensing Board

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## MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

Advisory Committee on Fitting and Dispensing Hearing Aids

January 16, 2024

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**Members Present:** Timothy Hunsaker; Lynee Anderson; Nanci Campbell; Jennifer Joy-Cornejo;

**Members Absent:** Melissa Maestas

**Staff Present:** Jennifer Pierce, Executive Director  
Stacey Whittaker, Licensing Coordinator  
Henna Rasul, Sr. Deputy Attorney General

**Public Present:** Obioma Officer, NV ADSD

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### Call to Order, Confirmation of Quorum

Timothy Hunsaker called the meeting to order at 4:35pm. A roll call confirmed a quorum was present. Melissa Maestas was noted as excused absent.

### Public Comment

Timothy Hunsaker introduced this agenda item and read the following statement pursuant to AB219 (2023): "I will now review the instructions for providing public comment during this meeting: Any person wishing to make public comment may attend this meeting and provide public comment in one of the following ways: 1. Attend the meeting and provide public comment in-person at the physical location; OR 2. Attend the meeting and provide public comment virtually through the Zoom teleconference video link listed on the agenda; OR 3. Attend the meeting and provide public comment telephonically through the Zoom telephone number listed at the end of the meeting agenda with additional public comment instructions. Public comment is welcomed by the Board. Public comment will be limited to five minutes per person and comments based on viewpoint will not be restricted. A public comment time will be available prior to action items on the agenda and on any matter not specifically included on the agenda as the last item on the agenda. At the discretion of the Board Chair, additional public comment may be heard when that item is reached. The Board Chair may allow additional time to be given a speaker as time allows and in their sole discretion. Prior to the commencement and conclusion of a contested case or a quasi-judicial proceeding that may affect the due process rights of an individual, the Board may refuse to consider public comment."

Dr. Hunsaker then called for public comment. Obioma Officer introduced herself from the Nevada Department of Health & Human Services, Aging and Disability Services Division, Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Ms. Officer stated that she was attending the meeting to see how things are going and learn more about what the Committee and Board are working on. She stated that she would consider further comment at the end of the meeting after watching and listening to the meeting.

### Approval of the Minutes

Timothy Hunsaker asked for corrections or a motion to approve the September 21, 2023 minutes as written. Jennifer Joy-Cornejo made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Nanci Campbell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Review and Recommendation to the Board on Possible NRS and/or NAC Revisions:**

**a. Education and Training Requirements for HAS and HAS Apprentices: NRS 637B.201, NAC 637B.0391, NAC 637B.0392, and/or NAC 637B.0394**

Ms. Pierce summarized the 2022 action by the Board to pursue future legislation to remove NBC-HIS certification as a requirement for a Standard HAS License. This decision highlights the requirement in NAC 637B.0391 for a HAS Apprentice with no formal education in hearing instrument sciences to complete a 2 year in-service training program, which mirrors the NBC-HIS clinical training requirement to sit for the certification exam. The 2 year requirement was reviewed and reaffirmed as appropriate by the Advisory Committee in June 2022.

Currently, the NBC-HIS requirement ensures that an applicant has completed a 2 year training program to obtain the Standard HAS license, however, once the NBC-HIS requirement is removed, passage of the dispensing exams will be the only other requirement. The Committee considered several options for revisions to NRS and NAC to clarify the requirements for a HAS license in the absence of the NBC-HIS requirement, as well as options to grant training credit to an applicant who has completed all or a portion of a training program in another state but not licensed there.

Data found for HAS training in 44 of 46 states indicated an average minimum training requirement of 10 months. Nevada is one of three states requiring a 2 year apprenticeship, with the majority (23 states) requiring one year, and at least 18 other states requiring between 2–8 months.

Potential NRS and NAC revisions were reviewed that would establish authority to require 2 years dispensing experience for HAS applicants in the absence of the NBC-HIS certification requirement. These revisions also include revising the current Provisional License to allow an out-of-state licensee to begin practicing while completing the experience requirement, as many states require less than 2 years of training for HAS licensure.

The Committee discussed the matter at length and agreed that an applicant holding a license in another state or who has received prior HAS education & training should not need to restart a full 2-year training apprenticeship. But all members agreed that the current 2 year requirement is still appropriate for a person beginning training with no relevant experience or education.

Timothy Hunsaker called for a motion. Nanci Campbell made a motion to recommend that the Board retain the requirement for an Apprentice to complete a 2 year training program as currently required in NRS 637B and NAC 637B, and in conjunction with the removal of the NBC-HIS requirement in NRS 637B.193(2), revise NRS 637B and NAC 637B to require 1 year of licensed independent dispensing experience for a Standard HAS applicant who is licensed or has prior training/experience in another state, with credit granted for prior training/work. Jennifer Joy-Cornejo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**b. Required Dispensing Examinations and Endorsement for Fitting and Dispensing Hearing Aids for Dispensing Audiologists: NRS 637B.203, NRS 637B.204, NRS 637B.205, NAC 637B.0373, & NAC 637B.0374**

Ms. Pierce summarized that this matter was previously before the Committee in 2022, with no recommended revisions as the Committee cited the exam's protective function to ensure the licensing of qualified and skilled practitioners. A request was made in 2023 to revisit the requirement and the Committee subsequently reheard the matter in October 2023 but tabled it for future discussion.

The Committee reviewed a number of state and national trends related to the written and

practical hearing aid dispensing exams and the required endorsement that a Nevada Audiologist must obtain to fit and dispense hearing aids, including the following:

- Nevada is 1 of 13 states requiring a separate license/endorsement for an Audiologist to dispense hearing aids.
- Of those 13 states, 10 require the written exam, and only 4 require the practical exam.
- The written ILE is facilitated and administered by the International Hearing Society (IHS). Practical exams are administered by Nevada Board proctors at the candidate's convenience in Las Vegas, Reno, or Carson City, and require an applicant to travel to Nevada with a portable audiometer and a second person to serve as their test subject.
- Most states (33), including Nevada, require a Doctoral degree for an Audiology license.
- Between FY20-23, the Board administered 88 practical exams, of which 48 were completed by AuD-D applicants. Of those 48, only 3 exams (6%) resulted in failure on the first attempt, compared to 22% of HAS applicants and 29% of Apprentices seeking conversion to a HAS license.
- The newly established ASLP Interstate Compact does not require either a dispensing written or practical exam for Audiology licensure. While the Board has not elected to pursue efforts to join the ASLP-IC, the Nevada Speech-Hearing Association plans to pursue legislation in 2025 to join Nevada to the Compact.

The Committee discussed the matter at length and came to the consensus that a person who has completed a Doctoral program in Audiology should be considered fully qualified to practice, including fitting and dispensing hearing aids, without an additional exam or endorsement to their license.

Timothy Hunsaker made a motion to recommend the Board pursue revisions to NRS 637B and NAC 637B to remove both the dispensing examination and endorsement requirements for all Audiologist applicants.

Nanci Campbell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Reports from Committee Chair and Members**

Timothy Hunsaker reported that he would be visiting Reno in March and was invited to visit the Board office.

Nanci Campbell reported that she would be out of the office for a few weeks in March due to a medical procedure. The next meeting was confirmed for Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 4:30pm.

### **Public Comment**

Timothy Hunsaker called for public comment. Obioma Officer introduced herself again from the Nevada Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Ms. Officer thanked the Committee and stated that she thought the meeting was fantastic and very productive. Ms. Officer shared that one of the biggest issues her Commission hears from the deaf and hard of hearing community during town halls and open discussions is people concerned about the availability of hearing aid dispensers and audiologists. It's an ongoing conversation within the signing community and the hearing loss community that services are needed for new babies all the way up to senior citizens. She stated that it's great to know that we have people that are monitoring this and making sure that we have the best out there for that support. One of the biggest concerns that she wanted to put on the Committee's radar is the need for a larger pool of providers for early intervention for babies. Many parents have to travel several hours just for a fitting and as children grow their ears change so often that they have to go back frequently. Many people are traveling to California for services because it's more readily available for them.

Following the public comment several Committee members stated they knew of resources they could share, and Ms. Officer was encouraged to follow up with Board staff.

### **Adjournment**

Timothy Hunsaker adjourned the meeting at 6:17pm.