



State of Nevada

Speech-Language Pathology, Audiology & Hearing Aid Dispensing Board

MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING
Speech-Language Pathology Subcommittee

February 21, 2024

Members Present: Shawn Binn, Marvelee Clayworth, Christy Fleck, Nancy Kuhles, Andrea Menicucci, Branden Murphy, Kim Reddig, Adrienne Williams

Members Absent: Katrina Nicholas

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

Public Present: Katie Allen, Karen Klopfer, Elyse Monroy, Belz & Case "Note-Taking Bot"

Call to Order, Confirmation of Quorum

Jennifer Pierce, Executive Director, began the meeting as this was the first meeting of the Subcommittee and a Chair had not yet been elected. Ms. Pierce called the meeting to order at 4:49pm and a roll call confirmed a quorum was present. Katrina Nicholas was noted as excused absent.

Public Comment

Ms. Pierce 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."

Ms. Pierce then called for public comment. Nancy Kuhles shared her thanks to the Board for establishing the Subcommittee and convening this work, stating that she was grateful for the opportunity to participate.

Election of Subcommittee Chair

Ms. Pierce introduced the item and invited Subcommittee members to nominate any member or themselves for the Chair role, with an election vote to follow. Ms. Pierce called for nominations, and Nancy Kuhles nominated Kim Reddig to serve as the Subcommittee Chair. No other nominations were offered. Ms. Pierce confirmed with

Ms. Reddig that she was willing to serve as the Chair. Ms. Pierce called for a motion and Nancy Kuhles made a motion to elect Kim Reddig as the Chair of the Subcommittee. Andrea Menicucci seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Following the election, Ms. Reddig asked Ms. Pierce to continue managing the meeting as she was attending remotely and would take over at the next meeting.

Review and Recommendation to the Board on Proposed Revision to NRS 637B to Include SLP Assistant Licensing and Telesupervision

Ms. Pierce summarized the Board's prior action to pursue a licensing path for SLP Assistants (SLPAs) in its 2025 legislative work, establishing this Subcommittee to review and make recommendations on draft rules and regulations for SLPAs and telesupervision. Ms. Pierce also explained the Board's attention to aligning this effort with the Nevada Department of Education's (NDE) approved regulation changes that will sunset bachelor's-level SLP staff in October 2026.

Background information on the use of SLPAs nationally was provided to the Subcommittee along with the following list of factors for consideration in drafting bill language:

- NRS language/structure needed, including definitions, qualifications, education, certification, examination, reciprocity, scope of practice, applicability of chapter/alignment with NDE assistants, fees, supervision, telepractice/telesupervision, and continuing education.
- Collaboration, coordination, and alignment with stakeholders and partners, including NDE, higher education programs, Nevada Medicaid, healthcare providers, school districts, & ASHA/NSHA/NV Coalition.
- Fiscal considerations, including expenses for database enhancements, licensing activities, and oversight & discipline.

Ms. Pierce also shared that she met with NDE Office of Educator Development Director Jeff Briske the week prior to this meeting and confirmed that NDE would like to coordinate their work on future NDE regulations to establish SLP Assistants with the Board's effort. It was proposed that NDE would need to first ascertain the Board's decision on a SLPA Scope of Practice to inform their own draft regulations, which will need to be initiated in the spring to allow for LCB review and revision. As such, it was agreed that the Subcommittee would first address Scope of Practice during this meeting.

The Subcommittee reviewed ASHA's *Scope of Practice for the Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA)* as a starting place to consider specific allowable and prohibited SLPA activities. Specifically, five responsibility areas outlined by ASHA:

- Service Delivery: The Subcommittee discussed the 20 activities listed by ASHA, with specific discussion around not allowing "administering and scoring screenings/assessment tools", noting that "administering and scoring progress monitoring tools" and "conducting screenings" would usually be acceptable. The Subcommittee also noted concerns related to "screening or treating clients for swallowing disorders", noting that an SLPA should not engage in any activity involving swallowing, but that working with clients with feeding disorders would likely be acceptable. Suggestions were made for adding clarifying language around delegating to a SLPA such as "depending on the setting and when the SLPA has demonstrated competency."
- Culturally Responsive Practices: There were no concerns noted in this area, with a suggestion to keep this language general.
- Administrative Support: No concerns noted with ASHA's suggested allowable activities in this area.
- Prevention and Advocacy: No concerns noted with ASHA's suggested allowable activities in this area.
- Responsibilities Outside the Scope of Practice for Speech-Language Pathology Assistants: No concerns noted with ASHA's suggested prohibited activities.

The Subcommittee also discussed options for SLPA education & training requirements, reviewing national trends with examples of states requiring a Bachelor's degree but not requiring ASHA SLPA Certification. The Subcommittee came to a swift and unanimous consensus that a Bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology

or communication science disorders should be the minimum educational requirement for an SLPA in Nevada with no option for alternative training paths. Further discussion was held around possible examination and fieldwork requirements, as ASHA Certification requires 100 hours, and NSU and UNR currently provide 100 and 25 hours respectively. Discussion also briefly included reimbursement, as Medicare does not include SLPAs, and efforts to establish Medicaid reimbursement must include work with Nevada Medicaid to amend the state plan and billing guide and add modifiers for SLPAs.

It was agreed that the Subcommittee would continue discussing this item at the next meeting and Ms. Pierce stated that she would draft NRS language for review and discussion. No action was taken.

Review and Recommendation to the Board on Possible Revision to NRS 637B.060 “Practice of speech-language pathology” defined to Address Flexible Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES) Procedure

Ms. Pierce introduced the item and explained that this matter was identified for discussion as a result of guidance questions posed over the years to Board staff and news of other states enacting rules and regulations to outline parameters for the FEES procedure. The Board has taken no action to date on a decision to pursue a related NRS or NAC revision and has delegated this matter to the Subcommittee for a recommendation on whether specific revisions to NRS 637B or NAC 637B are advisable.

Ms. Pierce directed the Subcommittee members to the current SLP Scope of Practice in NRS 637B.060, which includes the following: *(5) The use of oral and nasal endoscopy for the purpose of vocal tract imaging and visualization.* Subcommittee members explained that the FEES procedure was included in this reference, as this is a general description of a number of ways to look at the same nasal structures related to swallowing. The FEES procedure is one of many tools used for this imaging. There was discussion on whether it was necessary to revise the current scope to be more specific. It was explained that there is no standardized training or certification to conduct the FEES procedure, and it is generally left to the practitioner to assess their own competence in doing so. It was also acknowledged that hospitals and treatment facilities will likely have internal policies guiding these procedures. The matter was tabled for further discussion in a future meeting and no action was taken.

Reports from Subcommittee Chair and Members

There were no reports from the Subcommittee Chair or Members. The group discussed the schedule for future meetings, noting that several members had schedule conflicts on Wednesdays. After discussion on possible dates, the next meeting was confirmed for Monday, March 25, 2024 at 5:00pm.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

Jennifer Pierce adjourned the meeting at 6:32pm.