



Rhode Island Speech-Language-Hearing Association

April 22, 2025

Chair, House Corporations Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H5557 (Speech-Language Pathology Assistant bill)

Dear Chairperson Solomon and Members of the House Corporations Committee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Speech-Language-Hearing Association (RISHA), I respectfully submit the following comments on House bill 5557, which seeks to license speech-language pathology assistants (SLPAs).

Section 5-48.2-8 Support Personnel

RISHA supports the highest standards of training and preparation for our assistants. We recommend adding the underlined language and deleting the language in red:

(2a) Complete 25 hours of documented observation of a licensed speech language pathologist, which may be accomplished within an undergraduate program of study.

(2b) Complete ~~twenty (20)~~ one-hundred (100) clinical hours under the supervision of ~~observation of clinical practice with~~ a licensed speech language pathologist.

Scope of Practice

For the scope allowances section below, RISHA recommends adding the underlined language:

(2) (b) Scope of practice of speech-language pathology assistants. A licensed speech-language pathology assistant shall only engage in those duties that adhere to the code of ethics of the board and are planned, designed, and supervised by a licensed speech-language pathologist, including:

Developing low-tech augmentative and alternative communication materials for students, patients, and clients.

For the scope prohibited section below, we recommend adding the underlined language:

(2) (c) A speech-language pathologist assistant shall not engage in the practice of speech-language pathology, including the following:

Selecting augmentative and alternative communication systems or devices;

Treating medically fragile students, patients, and clients without 100% direct supervision by a licensed speech-language pathologist.

Licensure vs Registration

RISHA recommends adding the underlined language and deleting the language in red:

(13) (d) A speech-language pathology assistant (SLPA) shall be ~~registered~~ licensed at the department and be required to ~~re-register~~ renew their license every two (2) years.

RISHA supports licensure, rather than registration, for SLPAs.

Section 5-48.2-9 Supervision and Responsibility

Regarding SLPAs, we recommend adding the language below to this section:

Before the SLPA begins to provide support independently, the supervising SLP must have first contact with all individuals on the caseload. First contact includes establishing rapport, gathering baseline data, and securing other necessary documentation to begin (or continue) the plan of care for the student, patient, or client.

Additional Language

RISHA recommends adding the following title protection language:

No person shall hold themselves out to be, or use the title speech-language pathology assistant, unless they are licensed by the state to practice as such.

If you or your staff have any questions or want to discuss this matter further, please contact me at allanbshawslp@gmail.com

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Allan B. Shaw', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Allan B. Shaw, MS, CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist
RISHA President
RIDE Specialist Teacher Certification #69398
RI State DOH License SP01263

P.O. Box 8317
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920