

Proposal for Audiology Assistant

The Ohio Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (Board) is considering licensure for Audiology Assistants. If the Board receives legislative authority to license audiology assistants, it would need to establish rules pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Chapter 119 for the qualifications and other requirements for this license type. Before seeking legislative authority and subsequently filing any formal rules through Ohio's rule-making process, the Board is accepting public comment on the following proposal related to the audiology assistant's education, qualifications, supervision, and duties. Please submit your comments to this proposal directly to the Board's Executive Director, Gregg Thornton at: Gregg.thornton@slpaud.ohio.gov by **October 6, 2017**.

Licensure of Audiology Assistants.

(A) Definitions - As used in this chapter:

- (1) "Direct supervision" means the supervising licensed audiologist shall be able to provide direct, comprehensive, documented and immediate supervision to the audiology assistant. Direct supervision is demonstrated when the supervising licensed audiologist is present in the room in which the services are being given by the audiology assistant.
- (2) "Indirect supervision" means the supervising licensed audiologist is in the same physical area and is immediately accessible to provide assistance to the audiology assistant within that particular contact with patient(s) served, including personal contact, telephone, or other means of communication.
- (3) "General supervision" means services provided by the audiology assistant are under the supervising licensed audiologist's guidance. The supervising licensed audiologist's presence is not required during services, but the supervising licensed audiologist must be immediately available by telephone or other means of communication and able to be physically present as needed.
- (4) "Surgically modified ear" means any surgical modification performed on the patient's ear which results in a present or permanent alteration of the external auditory canal and/or tympanic membrane (eardrum), including but not limited to myringotomy with pressure equalization tubes, mastoidectomy, meatoplasty, myringoplasty, and tympanoplasty.
- (5) "Hearing aid" as defined by 4753-8-01 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

(B) A license for an audiology assistant shall be issued only to a person working under an application approved by the board.

(C) An "audiology assistant" is a person who after appropriate training and demonstration of competency, performs tasks that are planned, prescribed, delegated, directed, and supervised by a licensed audiologist, according to an application approved by the board.

(D) The licensed audiologist who signs the application for the assistant shall supervise that particular assistant. The assistant may provide services only under the supervision of the audiology supervisor of record for that applicant. If more than one supervisor is to be involved with the assistant, a plan shall be submitted by each supervisor describing the specific supervision duties for each supervisor.

(E) Qualifications for audiology assistant shall be:

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38 (1) completion of a board approved Audiology Assistant Training Program and at least 25 hours of
39 clinical observation in audiology; or

40 (2) completion of a board approved curriculum of education credits/hours composed of relevant
41 coursework and at least 25 hours of clinical observation in audiology; or

42 (3) a baccalaureate degree in communication science and disorders or equivalent as determined by
43 the board.

44 (F) The audiology assistant application shall be filed with the board for approval and application shall
45 include, but need not be limited to:

46 (1) The location (name and address) where the assistant will work;

47 (2) The business name and address of the employer of the assistant;

48 (3) A description of the activities to be performed by the assistant;

49 (4) A description of any additional training the assistant has received that shall demonstrate the
50 assistant can perform the planned activities;

51 (5) A description of the direct, indirect and general supervision that the assistant shall receive in the
52 performance of the assistant's duties;

53 (6) An agreement to abide by the speech-language pathology and audiology code of ethics.

54 (7) The name and license number of the supervising audiologist.

55 (G) Delegation of tasks shall be conducted by the supervising licensed audiologist.

56 (1) The supervising audiologist shall determine whether the licensed audiology assistant has the
57 competence to perform specific non-diagnostic and non-prohibited duties before delegating
58 tasks, as set forth in subsection M of this rule.

59 (H) The supervising audiologist(s) shall provide appropriate levels of direct, indirect, and general
60 supervision for the tasks being conducted by the audiology assistant. The supervising audiologist is
61 responsible for determining the level of supervision that is required based on the activities that are
62 delegated to the audiology assistant. Delegated tasks shall be based on the knowledge and skills of
63 the audiology assistant, the needs of patient(s) served, the service delivery setting, the tasks
64 assigned, except for the duties listed under section N of this rule.

65 (I) A licensed audiology assistant may not conduct an evaluation which includes diagnostic testing,
66 diagnosis, decision making, statement of severity or implication, case selection or case load
67 decisions.

68 (J) Although the licensed supervising audiologist may delegate specific clinical tasks to a licensed
69 audiology assistant, the responsibility to the patient for all services provided cannot be delegated.
70 The licensed supervising audiologist shall ensure that all services provided are in compliance with
71 this chapter.

72 (K) The licensed audiologist shall keep job descriptions, training, supervision and performance records.

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73 Records shall be current and be made available to the board within 30 days of the date of the board's
74 request for such records. Records shall be kept for four years after the termination of employment
75 of the audiology assistant.

76 (L) The licensed audiology assistant may perform specific components of the clinical hearing program if
77 the licensed supervising audiologist determines that the assistant has received the training and has
78 the skill to accomplish that task, and the licensed supervising audiologist provides supervision to
79 ensure appropriate completion of the task assigned to the licensed assistant.

80 (M) The supervising licensed audiologist may assign duties to the audiology assistant, including but not
81 limited to the following:

82 (1) conduct or participate in screenings;

83 (2) assist in aural habilitation or rehabilitation programs, activities, or therapies;

84 (3) document patient's progress and aural rehabilitation therapy to include supporting data collection
85 and clinical observation;

86 (4) maintain clinical records;

87 (5) prepare clinical materials;

88 (6) assist in research projects, staff development, public relations programs, or similar activities as
89 designated and supervised by the licensed audiologist;;

90 (7) maintain equipment by conducting biologic and electroacoustic calibration of audiometric
91 equipment, perform preventative maintenance checks and safety checks of equipment;

92 (8) explain the use and proper care of hearing instruments and assistive listening devices to patients;

93 (9) maintain hearing instruments;

94 (10) provide case history and/or self-assessment forms and clarifying questions on the forms to
95 patients as needed;

96 (11) assist the audiologist with play audiometry, visual reinforcement audiometry, and tasks such as
97 picture-pointing speech audiometry;

98 (12) assist the audiologist in the evaluation of difficult-to-test patients;

99 (13) assist the audiologist with technical tasks for diagnostic evaluation such as preparing test rooms,
100 attaching electrodes, and preparing patients prior to procedures;

101 (14) perform basic non-diagnostic procedures such as pure tone audiometry, otoacoustic emissions
102 screening, immittance screening, or screening ear canal status with an otoscope;

103 (15) conduct basic record keeping and prepare paperwork for signature by the audiologist;;

104 (16) coordinate ear mold and hearing instrument records or repairs and other orders;

105 (17) connect hearing aids to computers and use software to verify internal electroacoustic settings

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106 and functionality;

107 (18) For patients eighteen years of age or older, perform ear impressions when the supervising
108 licensed audiologist is able to provide direct/indirect supervision, as defined in section A of this
109 rule, subject to the following requirements;

110 (a) demonstrate appropriate training to perform ear impressions under the provisions of
111 paragraphs D, E, and H; and

112 (b) the supervising licensed audiologist of record must perform an initial and post ear impression
113 otoscopy on patients for a minimum of fifty impressions prior to the audiology assistant
114 performing ear impressions on their own; and

115 (c) case history shall include all information obtained pertaining to outer and middle ear
116 pathology and history of surgical modification to the ear.

117 (19) other duties not prohibited in paragraph (N) of this subsection, for which the assistant has been
118 trained and demonstrates appropriate skills, as assigned by the supervising audiologist.

119 (N) The licensed audiology assistant shall not:

120 (1) engage in clinical diagnostic decision-making with regard to conducting and/or interpretation of
121 procedures and/or evaluations;

122 (2) perform any ear impressions on patients under the age of eighteen or on patients with a surgically
123 modified ear which results in permanent or present alteration of the natural anatomy of the
124 external auditory canal and/or tympanic membrane;

125 (3) make diagnostic statements, or propose or develop clinical management strategies;

126 (4) perform cerumen management;

127 (5) determine or modify prescriptive settings of a hearing aid;

128 (6) represent audiology at staff meetings or on an admission, review and dismissal (ARD)
129 committee;

130 (7) design a treatment program;

131 (8) determine patient selection;

132 (9) present written or oral reports of patient information, except to their supervisor;

133 (10) refer a patient to other professionals or other agencies unless directed by the supervising
134 audiologist;

135 (11) use any title which connotes the competency of a licensed audiologist;

136 (12) practice as licensed audiology assistant without a valid license; or

137 (13) independently engage in the fitting, dispensing or sale of a hearing aid.

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138 (O) In any professional context the licensee must indicate the licensee's status as a licensed audiology
139 assistant.

140 (P) The board may audit a random sampling of licensed audiology assistants for compliance with this
141 chapter.

142 (1) The board shall notify a licensed audiology assistant and licensed audiologist by mail that he or
143 she has been selected for an audit.

144 (2) Upon receipt of an audit notification, the licensed audiology assistant and the supervising
145 licensed audiologist shall mail the documentation or information requested by the board.

146 (3) The licensed audiology assistant and the supervising audiologist of record shall comply with the
147 board's request for documentation and information concerning compliance with the audit.

148 (Q) Audiology assistants must complete 10 hours of continuing education units, which includes a
149 minimum of two clock hours related to ethics within the two-year licensure period immediately
150 preceding the licensee's renewal application.

151 (R) An audiologist may not supervise more than a total of two audiology assistants, unless approved by
152 the board. When engaged in an occupational hearing conservation program, the supervising licensed
153 audiologist shall not supervise more the five audiology assistants unless approved by the board.