

State Issues: The Impact of state legislation/regulation and budget on professional practice

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State Outreach Initiative

Purpose

- To improve communication between recognized state speech-language-hearing associations (SSLHA) and ASHA
- To increase collaboration between ASHA and the SSLHAs
- Overwhelmingly supported by the Executive Board at its October, 2007 meeting

Under the Plan....

- Each state was assigned a direct staff liaison from the State Advocacy Team
- Team members make periodic contact with state association leaders to learn about the important issues in the state in order to provide resources and support
- Team members serve as the primary point of contact for the leadership on state issues and will triage SSLHA to appropriate team members or staff in other units, as needed

State Liaison Map

Direct Liaison Regional Model

- Northeast
- Southeast
- Central
- West



State Team Liaisons

- **Northeast Region** – MA, NH, VT, NY, RI, CT, NJ, PA, DE, MD, OH, ME, DC
Susan Adams sadams@asha.org 800-498-2071, ext. 5685
- **South Region** – VA, WV, KY, NC, TN, SC, GA, FL, AL, MS, LA, AR
Janice Brannon jbrannon@asha.org 800-498-2071, ext. 5686
- **Central Region** – ND, SD, NE, KS, OK, TX, MO, IA, MN, WI, IL, IN, MI
Janet Deppe jdeppe@asha.org 800-498-2071, ext. 5688
- **West Region** – HI, AK, CA, OR, WA, NV, ID, UT, AZ, NM, CO, WY, MT
Eileen Crowe ecrowe@asha.org 800-498-2071, ext. 5687

Threats to Professional Standards

Proposed teaching credentials for SLP services:

- CA - Communication Development Specialist (2010)
- MN – Academic Language and Behavioral Strategist (2011)
- IN – Teacher of Language Disordered (2011)

ASHA Advocacy Efforts on Behalf of Member Issues in States

- ASHA and CSHA's efforts in CA resulted in the elimination of the proposed CDS credential
- A new BA teaching credential focusing on provision of language development assistance to struggling learners in general education was adopted by the CA Teaching Commission
- Similar efforts are underway in other states

Legislative and Regulatory Issues

The state team has reviewed and analyzed over 935 bills and 175 regulations of interest to our members since the beginning of the year.

State Legislative/Regulatory Issues in 2010-2011

- Insurance cover autism spectrum disorders
- Coverage of hearing aids and cochlear implants
- Provisions for Telehealth/telepractice services
- Reduction in Medicaid reimbursement and or restrictions on length of treatment

State Legislative and Regulatory Issues

Insurance coverage for Autism Services

- 24 states introduced bills requiring insurers to cover autism services
- IA, KY MA and MO proposed regulations
- AR and WV enacted provisions
- Five states, MA, NE, NV, ND and WA, had bills in the legislature covering the licensure, supervision and/or training of Applied behavioral Analysts (ABA)

Legislative and Regulatory Issues

Hearing Aid Insurance Coverage and Tax Credit

- 19 states proposed legislation that would provide insurance coverage/tax credit for hearing aids
- Some such as MA required coverage for all recipients
- NY and MS legislation required coverage of aids for children
- TN and MO included hearing aids in the list of covered devices/services under health plans
- NJ and MI provided a tax credit for hearing aid purchases while OK included a sales tax exemption
- RI – proposed to increase the amount of coverage for both children and adults (\$1500 every 5year to actual cost for children) (\$700 per aid for adults every 5 years to \$1500 per aid for adults)

Legislative and Regulatory Issues

Telehealth/Telepractice Coverage Provisions

- CA, FL, GA, IL, and IA proposed bills to require mandatory insurance coverage for services delivered via Telehealth
- Several other states posted bills related to Telemedicine/telehealth services

Medicaid Insurance Coverage

- With the Affordable Care Act, many more individuals will be eligible for services under public insurance – yet states are proposing reductions in reimbursement and limitations on providers
- 10 states have legislation proposed to reduce Medicaid reimbursement rates (FL, HI, ID, IL, MA, MN, NM, OH, TX, VT)
- 10 states have regulations pending to reduce reimbursements rates (FL, ID, MO, NJ,NY,OK,PA,VA,WA,WV)
- 3 states (IN, SC, and VT) have regulatory proposals restricting the number of visits by SLPs

Other interesting legislative issues

- A Texas bill called for a reduction of up to 10% in salary for teachers and SLPs in schools during 2011-2012 school year
- WI, OH and IN all passed bills related to school unions – including elimination of collective bargaining in some
- ME enacted legislation that requires the BOE to accept the SLP license as equivalent to the DOE certification
- AR passed legislation requiring the DOE to pay the SLP salary bonus enacted previously

State Budget Cuts

The significant budget cuts proposed in many states will affect not only health care but also education

- Higher Education Institutions are experiencing funding cuts resulting in reductions in workforce, furloughs and hiring freezes
- School practitioners are reporting increased caseloads and less resources, poorer working conditions
- Early Intervention programs and providers are experiencing cuts in reimbursement and reduction in services, consolidation of services

Conclusion

- ASHA is assisting states to maintain funding and services
- No new legislation or regulatory proposals that require increased funding will be approved
- Plan for future opportunities once the state and federal budgets stabilize.
- Examples of state achievements and challenges from:
 - Tricia in CA, Tara in SC, and Carolyn in MS

Questions

E-mail Janet at jdeppe@asha.org or your state liaison with any questions!

Thank You!