Letter From the President

The Power of Collaboration and Sharing Resources

“For generations, we have focused on the individual drivers of success: passion, hard work, talent and luck. But today, success is increasingly dependent on how we interact with others. It turns out that at work, most people operate as either takers, matchers or givers. Whereas takers strive to get as much as possible from others and matchers aim to trade evenly, givers are the rare breed of people who contribute to others without expecting anything in return. Givers reject the notion that interdependence is weak. Givers are more likely to see interdependence as a source of strength, a way to harness the skills of multiple people for a greater good.” —— Adam Grant

I feel like I have been a member of the Council of State Speech-Language-Hearing Association Presidents (CSAP) for a long time. I began my CSAP involvement in 2012, when I was president-elect of the New Mexico Speech-Language Hearing Association (NMSHA) and attended the CSAP Conference in Anchorage, Alaska. I had no idea what to expect from this Conference or how it could benefit me or NMSHA. I attended as a “newbie” and spent most of my time listening to other members as well as the then president of NMSHA, Bryan Tierney. I felt like a “fish out of water” but knew that there would be a lot of information to bring back to share with both the board of NMSHA and the membership.

Talk about a steep learning curve … so I survived my first CSAP Conference … and was hooked! I couldn’t get enough from the Conference, new friends/colleagues that I had met at the Conference as well as knowing that other state associations were dealing with similar issues as New Mexico. The CSAP Conferences occur twice a year – spring and fall, but it always seems that there are a million more questions that arise during the rest of the year that you – as the current president-elect, president or past president have to deal with – often without knowing whom is available to discuss issues. So what are the resources available to each state association when there is no CSAP Conference?

It is amazing how CSAP members and resources can assist a state with issues that seem impossible to handle and the CSAP newsletter serves as one of those resources along with the ASHA SEAL, STAMP STAR and the Joint Commission. After a short hiatus, the CSAP newsletter is back! The newsletter will be used to address some of the issues that we don’t have time to address in depth during the CSAP Conference, as well as highlighting some of the successes of a state association.

As many of you have already seen, the political atmosphere in the country is highly charged with changes seemingly occurring every day. As professionals, we need to keep abreast of the ever-changing rules, laws and executive orders coming out of Washington. This CSAP newsletter highlights some of the legislative issues that several states are currently addressing and the current status/results. As speech-language pathologists and audiologists, we seem to be dealing almost daily with issues that affect our profession: Medicare, Medicaid or insurance reimbursement issues, special education and other federal education laws, workload/caseload, evaluation of ancillary personnel, undergraduate/graduate student issues and/or medical issues, etc. The number of questions that arise on a daily basis would almost make it seem like we have little, if any, time to fit in any actual therapy.

I want to encourage each state to use the current issue (and hopefully future issues) of the newsletter as one more resource for your board to utilize as your state addresses similar political/legislative issues. I am confident that the members of CSAP who have submitted articles for this newsletter would be willing to respond to any additional questions that you may have. Some of these issues as well as others will also be addressed during the upcoming spring CSAP Conference in Louisville.

To borrow from Molly Thompson, CSAP President 2012, “We are the premiere organization for educating leadership in speech and hearing organizations.” Let’s use CSAP and all its resources to promote each of our organizations to be the best that they can for our membership.

Michael Kaplan, PhD, CCC-SLP
CSAP President
Given the law that governs the practice of speech-language pathologists and audiologists in the state of Illinois, the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Practice Act (http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=1325&ChapterID=24), is scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2018. This means that we must have a new law in place by that date, or the present law expires, and we become unregulated professions. Of course ISHA would not allow that to happen, and has been working diligently to ensure that the law is updated, improved, passed through the legislature and signed by the Governor by the close of 2017.

What steps have been taken to make sure this happens? In the summer of 2016, an ad-hoc committee for the Practice Act Reauthorization was formed. This committee has been working collaboratively with ISHA’s lobbyist and representatives from the Illinois Academy of Audiology (ILAA) since that time. The first step was a close study of the current law to determine content that needed updates or revisions, as well as identification of new areas that needed to be included. The areas identified included:

- an update and additions to the “Definitions” section of the law
- the addition of “performing basic health screenings” to the scope of practice of both speech-language pathologists and audiologists
- addition of language for the “remote practice” of audiology and speech-language pathology (telepractice)
- clarification of the training requirements for licensed speech-language pathology assistants (SLPA)
- reduction in the number of hours and type of training required to supervise an SLPA
- the addition of ethics content to the continuing education requirements for each license renewal cycle
- an increase from 20 to 22 hours of continuing education per renewal cycle for audiologists (at the request of ILAA)
- clarifying the training requirements for licensure applicants educated internationally so that they match the same certification standards of applicants trained in the U.S.

During the fall of 2016, the committee, our lobbyist (Jim Morphew), and our ILAA colleagues drafted the amended SLP/AUD Practice Act. Mr. Morphew shared our draft with the IL Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) and the IL State Medical Society for their comments. The Medical Society did not have significant objections to the changes in the amended version of the act. IDFPR had some comments and clarification questions, and we are still working to come to agreement and amend language.

IDFPR filed their draft of the amended SLP/AUD Practice Act (Senate Bill 771 http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=771&GAID=14&DocTypeID=SB&LegId=101911&SessionId=91&GA=100 ) with Senator Iris Martinez on February 1, 2017. ISHA filed our draft of the amended SLP/AUD Practice Act (Senate Bill 1228 http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=1228&GAID=14&DocTypeID=SB&LegId=103455&SessionId=91&GA=100) with Senator Iris Martinez on February 7, 2017. Both bills were filed with Senator Martinez because she is the chair of the Licensed Activities and Pensions Committee. Both bills were assigned to that committee and reviewed.

Senate Bill 1228 (ISHA’s version) was not called for a vote. On March 10, however, many of the provisions from that bill were added to Senate Bill 771, and now SB 771 is amended to reflect everything that IDFPR and ISHA/ILAA agree upon. ISHA, ILAA, and IDFPR will continue working together to find agreement on the remaining unresolved issues and SB 771 will be further amended to reflect that. We all want a bill that can be signed by the Governor and in place and ready to be enacted January 1, 2018.

Please follow the progress and status of SB 771 on the Illinois General Assembly website (ilga.org). If it becomes necessary for ISHA and ILAA members to contact their legislators regarding this process and to provide information, we will contact you via email blast, the ISHA website and ISHA’s social media outlets.

Carol Szymanski
President-Elect
Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Editorial Note: Article is a reprint with the permission of the original author. Article Content was submitted by the ad hoc committee on licensure renewal.

Save the Dates

Spring 2017
May 19-20
Louisville Marriott Downtown
280 West Jefferson Street
Louisville, KY 40202

Thanks to our sponsor: EBS Healthcare

Fall 2017
November 8
Los Angeles, CA

Spring 2018
Watch the CSAP website for information, www.csap.org.

Fall
November 14
Boston, Massachusetts
The New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NJSHA) has identified advocacy as one of its top priorities in its 2015-2017 strategic plan. NJSHA employs a legislative agent who guides the advocacy agenda. This is driven by the NJSHA legislative committee which is comprised of liaisons from all the key standing committees. The legislative committee is guided by the expertise of an employed lobbyist. To facilitate interaction with the regulatory and legislative agenda, by responding to the robust body of legislation in New Jersey and to advance legislation that is pertinent to audiology and speech-language pathology. Below you will read about NJSHA activity involvement in a number of issues and concerns.

Education Issues
The school affairs committee (SAC) enjoys a good working relationship with the New Jersey Department of Education which gives them the opportunity to be invited to respond to pending regulations and legislation, in addition to attending scheduled meetings to discuss issues of mutual interest. The following are examples of current considerations.

Department of Education/Board of Education of Action
As reported in January 2017, there are two pending proposals with proposed amendments to the Department of Education (DOE) fiscal code that have earned a great deal of attention from NJSHA/SAC.

The first amends the fiscal code for Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities (APSSDs). The heart of NJSHA's concerns with the proposal center on the provision of related services at APSSDs asks for clarification of language regarding when and how an APSSD may separately bill a sending district for related services, including when the services required by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) are "beyond what is typically provided during the school day." In both the oral and written testimony submitted by NJSHA, we pointed out practices at applied behavior analysis (ABA) schools where they are designating ABA as the sole therapy for their students, to the exclusion of other therapies, including speech. Please note that the proposal does include improved accounting procedures for the ABA schools. Also on the positive side, we supported the removal of the cap on salaries for contracted related service providers which will allow the APSSDs to hire appropriate professionals to provide speech and other services. The Board of Examiners (BOE) gave final approval to the proposal at its February meeting and it is expected to be published in an upcoming issue of the New Jersey Register. NJSHA will again submit written comments.

The second proposal addresses the fiscal code for school districts. It is a commissioner's proposal which does not need the participation of the BOE. Following the publication of the proposal in the New Jersey Register on December 19, 2016, SAC assembled testimony on one particular component that calls for maximizing the Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI). Sue Goldman and Mary Faella delivered the testimony at a public hearing on January 11, 2017, and also submitted written testimony. The deadline for written comments was February 17. We expect the proposal to be adopted in an upcoming New Jersey Register with few if any changes.

The annual meeting of the SAC and DOE special education leaders was held at the DOE in Trenton, New Jersey, on February 21. The SAC met with John Worthington, the director of special education policy and procedures, and Fran Leibner one of his associates. The Office of Special Education has been redesigned and split into two with the other half (special education and professional development) headed by Lorelei Drew Nevola. She could not attend the meeting.

Among the topics discussed were the above two rule proposals. Further, in light of the SEMI issue, NJSHA raised the idea of a single license for speech-language pathologists. It was received positively, with the caveat from Mr. Worthington that "it cannot result in a shortage." Further, that would be the jurisdiction of certification, not special education.

Education Legislation Teacher Preparation in Special Education
S1474, Ruiz (D-Essex)/A2786, Benson (D-Mercer) - Requires teacher preparation program for instructional certificate to include a certain amount of instruction or clinical experience in special education and for students with disabilities endorsement to include credit hours in autism spectrum disorder. Governor Christie signed this bill into law on February 6, PL. 2017, c. 6. The bill/law and it specifically pertains only to those educators who receive the instructional certificate.

Education/Health/Private Practice Issues
In stride with a national trend, New Jersey is also faced with the potential licensing of music therapists who were judged to be crossing over into the areas of audiology and speech. The national response by most colleagues in speech-language and hearing was to oppose the effort. Upon careful review of training in music therapy, it was evident that they were not qualified to diagnose and treat communication disorders. NJSHA submitted amendments to that effect and requirements that they can only provide services in collaboration with audiologists and/or speech-language pathologists. MusicTherapist Licensure A783, Andrzejczak (D-Cape May)/S1601, VanDrew (D-Cape May) - Provides licensure for music therapists. There has been no further action on this legislation (it has passed the full Assembly and is awaiting consideration by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee). Staff has told me that issues have developed with some programs at the Department of Human Services which they are attempting to work out.

Telemedicine/Telepractice S291, Vitale (D-Middlesex)/A1457, Lampitt (D-Camden), authorizes health care practitioners to provide health care services via telemedicine/practice and allows for insurance reimbursement.

NJSHA was able to get audiologists and speech-language pathologists listed among the health care provider list. In keeping with other states, NJSHA joined forces with other providers in recommending that out of state providers be required to hold a license in New Jersey.

While the bill was on the February 27 assembly health committee agenda, it was held without any testimony or further consideration. The problems center on a dispute between Committee Chair Conaway, and a group of psychiatrists, on language related to prescribing certain medications as well as on whether or not an in-person visit must first take place. While the Senate bill is poised for a vote by the full chamber, it has been placed on hold pending resolution of the issues in the Assembly. I am of course monitoring any changes to the legislation that could impact speech and hearing professionals.

continued on page 4
A4529, Singleton (D-Burlington), requires Medicaid and New Jersey Family Care reimbursement for telemedicine in public schools if school nurse coordinates the care. This bill was introduced on January 23, and referred to the assembly health committee. It was distributed it to the chairs of the telemedicine, private practice and the SAC.

It does not address NJSHA concerns about potential abuse of telemedicine in school settings. Speaking with the sponsor’s staff, she said that his impetus was addressing the health needs of medically fragile students rather than therapeutic services. However, he would be willing to meet with us to see if the bill could be a vehicle to address NJSHA’s issues.

Health/Private Practice Issues
Dental hygienists performing myofunctional therapy – My next task is to set up a meeting with Jim Schultz, the lobbyist for the NJ Dental Association on this topic. I have brought it up with him in conversation. No further action on this.

State Supervision of Professional Boards A4273, Greenwald (D-Camden), requires state supervision of occupational and professional licensing boards. This legislation is in response to the North Carolina Dental Board case where the U.S. Supreme Court found that the Dental Board was guilty of restraint of trade. The bill was amended on the Assembly floor on February 15. These amendments clarify the role and responsibility of the “regulatory officer” established by the bill, mandating that he or she establish and implement a protocol to review all board regulations and decisions to ensure that they do not limit competition. The amendments also indemnify the members of the professional boards from liability. Again, the bill simply intends to codify the existing state supervision of all professional boards as exemplified by each board being staffed by a Deputy Attorney General. It does NOT mean to create an additional layer of bureaucracy or create a “super board” as feared by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and other states who oppose such bills.

Aphasia Awareness Task Force S2286, Weinberg (D-Bergen)/A3083, Vainieri Huttle (D-Bergen), establishes Mike Adler (Aphasia Task Force) to assess needs of persons with aphasia and their families and ensure adequate provision of support services and information thereto. This task force is a result of the work of a previous aphasia commission charged with studying the extent and needs of aphasia in the state. This bill received a pocket veto last year by the Governor. This year, the bill passed the full Senate (36-0) on January 23. It was referred to the assembly human services committee, chaired by the sponsor, which heard and released it on February 13. It is awaiting an expected vote by the assembly human services committee, chaired by the sponsor, which heard and released it on February 13. It is awaiting an expected vote by the full assembly which is likely to happen in March. It will then head to the Governor’s desk.

Training of Health Care Professionals S2387, VanDrew (D-Cape May)/A4148, Vainieri Huttle (D-Bergen), requires training of certain staff and health care professionals in interacting with individuals with developmental disabilities. There has been no action on this.

Audiology Issues
Single Licensure for Audiologists S2393, Diegnan (D-Middlesex)/A3974, Vainieri Huttle (D-Bergen), permits audiologists to dispense and fit hearing aids by virtue of their audiology license. Through conversation with staff to our assembly sponsor, we have determined that it will make sense to keep the bill in the assembly financial institutions committee, rather than move it to assembly regulated professions. This establishes our needed pathway to move the bill forward in the Assembly. NJSHA has spoken to the chief of staff to Assembly Craig Coughlin, who chairs the committee, about getting the bill posted there when they next meet after the budget break in April. Our lobbyist wants to secure him as a co-sponsor and we will determine if we need a meeting to do that. Our lobbyist has followed up with the head of government affairs at JFK Medical Center and reiterated the importance of a letter to Assemblyman Coughlin (who represents Middlesex County) stating the support of JFK Medical Center given the JFK Audiology Center. She will begin scheduling meetings with other members of the committee (we have already met with Assemblyman Ciattarelli and Assemblywoman Downey) in March and April 2016. On the Senate side, the process of communicating with Senator Beach (D-Camden), a member of the senate commerce committee, where the bill has been referred, asking him to join on as co-prime sponsor of the bill is in process.

Hearing Impairment Task Force S2705, Diegnan (D-Middlesex)/A4538, Quijano (D-Union), establishes “New Jersey Hearing Impairment Task Force.” Assemblywoman Quijano introduced the bill in the lower house on January 30. As you will recall, Sen Diegnan sought NJSHA’s input as he went through the process of drafting the bill. Both NJSHA and the New Jersey Academy of Audiology have designated representatives on the Task Force.

Higher Education
NJSHA received a grant from ASHA to underwrite this years, advocacy effort. A webinar on pertinent legislative background was developed and presented by the NJSHA legislative agent to prepare students for their visit to the state capitol.

Student Advocacy Day – Our Student Advocacy Day is scheduled for Thursday, March 23, 2017. We are in the process of finalizing the agenda. Three to four students per college will attend with faculty. The event will include a late morning briefing, presentations by one or more legislative staffers (perhaps a visit with a legislator) and an opportunity to observe the full assembly in action. Unfortunately, no committees are meeting on this day nor is the Senate – but this is the date that worked best for the chairs.

Political Action Committee (PAC)
NJSHA is still looking for a chair. In the meantime, PAC support for our single license for the audiologists’ bill is progressing. Our lobbyist firm is holding a private fundraiser for Assemblyman Gary Schaer (D-Passaic) on March 16, at their offices in Trenton. An event such as this gives attendees ample time to discuss their issues with the legislator. Assemblyman Schaer is the chair of the Assembly Budget Committee and an influential member of the Democratic caucus. Our lobbyist recommended that $250 of our current PAC funds be expended for this event and that an audiology representative attend.

Gerard Caracciolo
Gerard Caracciolo, EdD, CCC-SLP
NJSHA President

Mary Faella
Mary Faella, MA, CCC-SLP
NJSHA President-Elect
Colorado Senate Bill 17-108, Speech-Language Pathology Practice Act

The Colorado Speech-Language Hearing Association (CSHA) has been busy supporting the successful outcome of the sunset process for Colorado Senate Bill 17-108, Speech-Language Pathology Practice Act. This bill continues the regulation of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) by the Colorado Department of Regulatory Affairs (DORA) for five more years. The whole process has been a great lesson in how to represent an association of professionals at the state level and how to convince the critical parties that this was a goal worth supporting.

CSHA enlisted the assistance of a state lobbyist to help navigate the legislative process. CSHA leadership was assisted by Craven Management Associates, who provides administrative management, in reviewing the proposals. The decision to hire the lobbyist was based on available budget and the proposal. To help cover some of the costs, CSHA applied for and obtained state legislative grants provided by the American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

The next step was to find volunteers to testify before the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and the House Committee. In some ways the process felt like a hurdle race since the bill had to pass each level of the government to be heard at the next level. Finding volunteers was not easy, people are shy when they hear or read the words “testify” and “committees.” CSHA was able to find some brave souls with years of experience in the profession and in supervisory or management positions. The CSHA board was also represented during these hearings by a member of the board. I testified at the Senate hearing and it was not as scary as I anticipated. I am now grateful that I have been working on my public speaking skills!

During this process, CSHA reached out to its membership, ASHA and SLPs in Colorado for input. Some of the language from the original bill had to be changed due to the legislative process in Colorado affecting all bills. This led to a lot of confusion since the concerned parties misinterpreted these changes in the language or failed to see that only certain sections of the bill were changed, but not all of it. The CSHA board handled all these queries and strove to help people understand the importance of presenting a united front before the government representatives. The lobbyist collaborated in modifying the language to satisfy the concerns expressed while working within legislative constraints that were beyond the lobbyist and CSHA’s control.

SB 17-108 has now passed the House Committee and it may have to take a side trip to the Finance Committee. State budgets are on everyone’s minds this year. Supporting the sunset process for this bill is a worthy cause because it protects consumers at the state level and provides Colorado SLPs with a more visible and stronger platform when advocating for reimbursement and billing issues at the state level.

Liliana Stagakes
Liliana Stagakes, MS, CCC-SLP
President
Colorado Speech-Language-Hearing Association

California Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Legislative Update Summary From the Golden State

1) Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and Regional Center Requirements: In an effort to obtain a higher reimbursement rate for specialized cases from the federal government, DDS needed to specify how particular speech-language pathologists (SLPs) were “specialized” for use of this code and higher reimbursement rate. As a result, DDS implemented language that specifies a speech-language pathologist must have one year of experience to be recognized as a specialized provider. The local regional centers are interpreting this language in a way that prohibits the employment of CFY/RPE candidates (new grads) as they don’t have one year of work experience in early intervention. We are working with the heads of DDS to help better define the required experience so that we can help new graduates achieve employment in this setting.

2) Use of Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (SLPAs) in Regional Centers: We have also been working with DDS on establishing language that allows for SLPAs to treat early intervention. Language has been added and it is now out for public review.

3) NPA Audits: Non-public agencies are being asked to conduct expensive audits. Although it has been in place for many years (since 1999), it wasn’t until recently that it has been mandated. CSHA is working with other agencies such as CalABA to approach the CDE regarding modifications to the parameters which would allow for exemptions to the audit requirement.

4) AB 387: Minimum Wage: Health Professionals: Interns: This bill would mandate that all interns be paid a minimum wage for their clinical practicums. CSHA is working with many other health professions to oppose this legislation. Unfortunately, this legislation is tied to other minimum wage issues which is making it difficult to get removed from the legislative docket. CSHA will continue to work with the other professions such as the California Medical Association and higher education learning institutions to apply pressure to the legislature for a “no” vote.

5) SB 198: Hearing Aid Dispensers Cerumen Management. This bill would allow hearing aid dispensers to conduct cerumen management procedures. CSHA views this as an issue of encroachment and concern for consumers. The biggest issue is how do hearing aid dispensers prove competency? There is a lack of specificity regarding safeguards for the consumer.
What seemed like a simple process of transferring licensing for speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and audiologists from one state agency to another to enable us to work to regulate and certify speech-language pathology assistants (SLPAs) has turned into a multi-year licensing nightmare for the Vermont Speech-Language Hearing Association (VSHA).

SLPs have been licensed, regardless of practice setting, by the Agency of Education (AOE) since licensing began in 2003. A survey approximately five years after that indicated that there was a desire to regulate SLPAs to maintain integrity within the profession. The Agency of Education did not want to support this idea, but the Office of Professional Regulation (OPR) in the Secretary of State’s office did. They felt that they should, as the state licensing agency, also license and regulate SLPs and audiologists. After months of discussions with AOE, it was agreed that licensing would migrate to OPR. This happened in 2015, with the support of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) state association grants to help us hire a lobbyist.

However, the summer after the legislation was passed, AOE made the unilateral decision to instate a rule saying that any SLP who was employed by a school district would require both licenses and needed regulation from AOE because they could not issue an endorsement to SLPs to practice in schools without a license attached to it. In addition to unnecessary double fees, the AOE has increased continuing education requirements over and above what ASHA requires. There was a concern that these SLPs would be excluded from teachers’ retirement and collective bargaining benefits, so supplemental legislation was created to ensure they did not lose this benefit. Efforts to overturn the AOE’s decision were unsuccessful despite testimony from former ASHA president Patty Prelock, among others, that regarding the practice setting all SLPs receive virtually the same education.

This legislative session is the first one in a number of years when VSHA did not apply for a state association grant. It was our intent to monitor the situation, which has, in our minds, potentially grown worse. There is currently a bill in the legislature that has passed the Senate and is now in the House to split the profession into two parts: school-based SLPs will get licenses only through AOE, and all others through OPR only. The Agency of Education does not recognize us as specialists with the same training who pursue different settings following graduation. There is a misconception that school-based SLPs and medical setting-based SLPs are fundamentally different, and we have had a very hard time convincing the legislature otherwise.

At this juncture, our state association is polling the state’s SLPs to determine their level of support for splitting the profession and if the idea of regulating SLPAs is still valid.

On a related, more positive note, there is also legislation this session that creates parity for telepractice that would be beneficial for anyone who bills insurance. VSHA did not participate in creating this legislation at all.

Lisa Durstin
Legislative Committee Chair
Vermont Speech-Language Hearing Association

Legislative Issues From the Heartland of America

The Nebraska Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NSLHA) has been diligently working on a number of legislative issues. More broadly, our legislative issues fall under our advocacy work. Last year, we completed state-wide road shows in which we traveled across Nebraska and held six local meetings with audiologists, speech-language pathologists (SLPs), and students in the fields. NSLHA leadership members, the lobbyist and area state legislators presented. The state senators, along with our lobbyist, discussed the importance of advocacy and building relationships with lawmakers. NSLHA leadership members highlighted the important work being conducted by NSLHA, particularly our legislative advocacy for the professions and clients we serve, and, more importantly, we received feedback from audiologists and speech-language pathologists about the issues that they are facing. The feedback we received could be split into two general domains—private practice and school-based SLP issues. Concerns from those in private practice centered on reimbursement issues, especially with regard to Medicaid. From the school-based SLPs, the concerns involved high caseload sizes, pay, retention and lack of access to quality continuing education (CEU) opportunities.

To more effectively deal with the issues facing school-based SLPs, we have started scheduling face-to-face meetings with school administrators from school districts throughout Nebraska. Most recently, we had a productive meeting with an administrator at the largest school district in Nebraska, where we discussed caseload sizes, CEUs and lack of uniformity on qualification for services guidelines. We have also started regular meetings with the Nebraska Department of Education to begin a process for addressing some of these issues.

Legislatively, we have been actively pursuing a number of state-level legislative bills. We recently had a bill introduced that would drop the requirement that audiologists have a hearing instrument specialist license in addition to their audiology license. If this bill is passed, audiologists would only need an audiology license to practice. We are working to have dyslexia defined as a disability within the state, are actively opposing efforts to eliminate licensure boards and to prevent cuts to provider rates for Medicaid. Please feel free to contact any of us if you have questions about the advocacy efforts or would like to know more about the practicalities of conducting road shows so as to replicate our success in your state.

Marc Brennan
President
NSLHA

Shari DeVeney
Past President
NSLHA

Janet Seelhoff
Executive Director
NSLHA

Richard Lombardi
Lobbyist
NSLHA

Executive Director
NSLHA
It was another successful day at the Capitol for the Arkansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ArkSHA) second Student Advocacy Day. The graduate programs from around the state were well represented by their student representatives. This year, 12 graduate students participated in the day’s activities. ArkSHA board members and our lobbyists welcomed the students with goody bags at the Capitol. Randy Thurman, one of our lobbyists, gave a tour of the Capitol to the students and introduced them to Senator Cheatham who spoke about the importance of advocacy for our professions. Senator Cheatham was key in getting House Bill 1149 Act 607 passed and signed that would allow incentive bonuses for nationally certified speech-language pathologists who work in the schools.

Understanding the history of the past decade in trying to get the bonus funded was paramount in getting the students ready to advocate before the House members regarding our role in the schools. Finding a sponsor to make sure the speech pathology language that had been recently cut from Senator Clark’s SB555 was amended and put back in place was also key to the day’s success. We all saw the importance of relationships and advocacy work up close and personal when Morgan Miller, a graduate student from UALR/UAAMS who has a personal relationship with Representative DeAnn Vaught spoke to her with Randy and Kami and asked her to sponsor the amendment. Representative Vaught was more than happy to help Morgan, ArkSHA and our profession in this endeavor. Following our main goal for the day being accomplished, the students also heard from Representative Fite.

The graduate students, the ArkSHA board members and ArkSHA lobbyists hosted lunch for members of the House and Senate at the Capitol Hill Apartments. Graduate students were able to discuss interests and areas of concern with legislators while Dr. Franklin’s AuD and audiology students provided free hearing screenings. Following lunch, ArkSHA lobbyists gave Student Advocacy Day attendees access to additional legislative hearings and presented further relevant information on activism in politics. ArkSHA received positive feedback from participants and legislators. We look forward to continuing the tradition of Student Advocacy Day again in 2018.

Kamela Rowland, MS, CCC-SLP
Past President
Arkansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Student Call to Action!

Students who get involved at some level of their state Convention and have a positive experience, are more likely to join their state association. Set them on the pathway to becoming a member by getting them involved in:

1. NSSLHA National Office:
   National Student Speech Language Hearing Association
   2200 Research Boulevard #322
   Rockville, MD 20850-3289
   E-mail: nsslha@asha.org
2. Volunteering at Convention
3. Advocacy day
4. Committee members
The Georgia Speech-Language-Hearing Association is committed to keeping members and the public informed, engaged and empowered to make a difference. GSHA encouraged members to support its mission and vision toward the goal of communication for all to have a voice and be heard. GSHA grassroots advocacy kicked into gear long before the 2017 legislative session with high visibility initiatives to help increase legislative awareness, know your legislators, understand the facts and take action!

Advocacy in Action: GSHA 2017 Day at the Capitol

GSHA held its interactive Day at the Capitol under the gold dome on March 2, 2017. Members, University of West Georgia (UWG) undergraduate and graduate students and advocates were afforded the opportunity to network, share mentoring moments and increase literacy about the legislative process. Legislators and the public sipped thickened refreshments and viewed a live liquid thickening demonstration by GSHA public relations chair, Sarah Rapillard and Convention Co-Chair Kara Jones. Tobi Dynavox augmentative and alternative communication devices and resources were available for the public to experience. Executive Council members and GSHA lobbyist Helen Sloat of Nelson Mullins reviewed and provided input on Senate Bill 2. GSHA was visible at First Lady, Sandra Deal’s kick off of Read Across Georgia Month. GSHA was pleased to be joined by all and looked forward to sharing more professional development and outreach opportunities. We encourage faculty, students and advocates to join, lead and support GSHA’s mission and vision for communication for all to have a voice and be heard!

1. Senate Bill 206 Passed in House Rules Committee 155-5: Senate Bill 206 passed in the House and posed a risk of landing in a Conference Committee where added language could be included. GSHA member support made a difference to ensure it passed in the House Rules Committee. GSHA members contacted members of the House Rules Committee, chaired by Representative Richard Smith (R-Columbus), in support of SB 206!

2. Senate Bill 2 (FAST ACT) Substitute Offered: Senate Bill 2 focuses on municipalities and contained a section related to licensing. The newest substitute on Bill 2 takes out professional licensing boards from bifurcated fee provisions. It does have language about reciprocity of license from other states. There was a positive result on learning more about the substitute offered to SB2 and its impact.

3. Senate Bill 164: FAIR Co-Pays for SLPs and AUDs: The current language includes physical therapists, occupational therapists and chiropractors among the professionals in the bill. Speech-language pathologists and audiologists are NOT INCLUDED in this language. GSHA believes this needs to be amended to specifically include the professions in the language through an amendment in the house. Senate Bill 164 supports co-pay equity and would require insurers to impose a co-pay for occupational therapy, physical therapy and chiropractic services that is not greater than the co-pay for those services rendered by a person engaged in the practice of medicine. Individuals who have communication disorders need access to these services to improve their quality of life. Members were encouraged to Take Action by contacting their local senator to VOTE YES to amend SB 164 to include AUDs and SLPs!

GSHA provided access to finding local leaders and to access the GA SB 164: Co-Pay Equity Bill, to be entitled An Act to Amend Chapter 24 of Title 33 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general insurance provisions to prohibit certain insurers from imposing a co-payment, coinsurance or office visit deductible amount greater than such charges imposed on a physician or an osteopath to an insured for services rendered by a physical therapist, an occupational therapist or chiropractor.

LaBrita Cash-Baskett, CCC-SLP, CF.APMP
President
Georgia Speech-Language-Hearing Association
A senate bill moving through the Arizona state government generated concern from the speech-language pathology community. In brief, SB 1317 would expand specially designed instruction to include instruction from a person certified by the Board of Education and determined by the individualized education program (IEP) team to be an appropriate provider for the student’s needs. The concern is that it allows too much flexibility for districts to put “providers” on an IEP in lieu of a speech-language pathologist. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association became involved and wrote a comment letter to the legislative sponsor of the bill. ArSHA’s lobbyist met with stakeholders to express ArSHA’s concerns regarding the bill. Through the advocacy of both ASHA and ArSHA new language was added to the bill to ensure that only qualified and licensed professionals address the speech and language needs of students. The language added to the bill is as follows:

“It is the legislature’s intent that all children with disabilities have access to the most qualified professionals identified by the individualized education program team to meet their unique, individualized needs. The changes in this act will provide parents of children with disabilities with more choices, promote education in the least restrictive environment, enhance collaboration between general education and special education personnel, and improve student achievement. This act is not intended to allow unqualified, unprepared or untrained individuals to provide special education services or unlicensed professionals to perform a scope of services that require licensure.”

Lorri Andrews
Lorri Andrews
President
Arizona Speech-Language-Hearing Association

On March 2, 2017, Wyoming Governor Matt Mead signed into law Senate Enrolled Act 44 creating the position of speech-language pathology assistant (SLPA). Previous to this change in statute, the minimum requirement for a speech aide in our state was a high school diploma. In addition, the training of these aides was incumbent upon their supervising speech-language pathologist.

This new law will require at a minimum an SLPA associate degree for SLPA’s working within Wyoming. Additionally, this law now offers another career path for undergraduate students who have not been accepted into a graduate program as they also can work as SLPA’s in Wyoming.

While the Wyoming Speech-Language-Hearing Association (WSHA) was working with the Wyoming Licensing Board to get SF 44 passed through legislation, these two boards were simultaneously working with Laramie County Community College in Cheyenne, Wyoming, to develop an online two-year Associate of Applied Science degree for SLPA’s. This program is now set to launch in the Fall of 2017.

Although it has been a long road, WSHA is proud of the positive changes they have been able to accomplish this year with the Wyoming State Licensing Board to improve the quality of speech-language services provided throughout our state.

Sue Torméy, MA, CCC-SLP
Past President
Wyoming Speech-Language-Hearing Association
**Key legislation the Connecticut Speech-Language-Hearing Association (CSHA) watched during the 2017 session follows:**

1) **HB 5269 - An act concerning health insurance coverage for hearing aids.** Its purpose is to require health insurance coverage for hearing aids for individuals with a hearing loss of ninety per cent or greater and to establish a graduated deductible for such individuals. January 19, 2017, reserved for subject matter public hearing. There is also HB 229 - expanding health insurance coverage for hearing aids. Its purpose is to expand health insurance coverage for hearing aids to insureds beyond children twelve years of age or younger. February 7, 2017, public hearing, but no action has been taken since that time. These bills are introduced into the legislative process every year and continually lose. Unfortunately these bills will likely not pass again this year due to the potential cost to the state in a tight budget year. Any program that does not have proper funding is getting shut down. The insurance companies have also been a very strong voice in opposing additional insurance mandates as Connecticut has very heavy insurance mandates already.

2) **HB 5759 - establishing a Connecticut health freedom and access act.** This permits a health care provider who is not licensed, certified or registered by the state to provide health care services in the state. January 17, 2017, referred to joint committee on public health committee. It has not moved since this time. This bill would be opposed by CSHA and the American Speech-Language Hearing Association in an effort to protect the integrity of our licensure.

3) **HB 5811 - concerning the provision of telehealth services.** Its purpose is to place certain requirements on telehealth services. January 18, 2017, referred to joint committee on public health committee. This bill would require an individual to see a care provider in person prior to seeking telehealth services. It would essentially require at least one in-person meeting for evaluation or treatment prior to the telehealth services being needed. While this may be difficult for some patients, Connecticut being a small state makes it a more feasible expectation. However as a rule, we would oppose any legislation that puts a greater burden delivery of services in general. This bill was scheduled for a Public Hearing on February 17, 2017, but there has been no further movement on this bill. CSHA did not speak against this bill at the public hearing.

4) **HB 5812 - revising the scope of practice review process.** Its purpose is to amend the process of approval of requests for a scope of practice review. January 18, 2017, referred to joint committee on public health committee. It has passed the public hearing and is now in committee. So this bill is moving forward. The changes in the scope of practice would mean that a professional scope of practice would need to be in place for five years prior to it being revisited for modifications. Currently in Connecticut, our scope of practice has been in place for longer than five years, so this bill would not stop us from making changes to the scope of practice. However it could be a problem with new scopes of practice that are being put into place.

The Connecticut Speech-Language-Hearing Association will need to be diligent at reviewing bills being introduced by other professions, to make sure that the scope of practice being proposed does not compromise the expertise of speech-language pathologists or audiologists.

5) **HB 6964 - act concerning insurance coverage for special education costs.** Its purpose is to reduce the cost of special education to school districts. January 26, 2017, referred to joint committee on insurance and real estate committee. It has not moved past this point. In the Senate there is also SB 468 - act concerning insurance coverage for special education expenses. Its purpose is to reduce the cost of special education to school districts. January 20, 2017, referred to joint committee on education committee and has also not moved past this point. The Connecticut Speech-Language-Hearing Association would be opposing this bill if it goes to public hearing, as it would increase the amount of paperwork required for school SLPs and could potentially hurt caseloads for outpatient SLPs.

6) **SB 715 - (1) codify the definition of “evidence-based-structured literacy,” as adopted by the Department of Education, (2) develop a program of study for individuals with an endorsement in special education or speech-language pathologists to receive training in evidence-based structured literacy interventions, (3) establish a dyslexia advisory council for the purpose of developing model templates for elementary, special education and remedial reading planned programs of study that delineate how course work is meeting statutory requirements relating to dyslexia and (4) enhance the assessment requirement of section 10-14t of the general statutes. January 25, 2017, referred to joint committee on education committee. It has not moved past this point.

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Meghan Krodel  
Legislative Chair  
Connecticut Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Julie Zellner  
President  
Connecticut Speech-Language-Hearing Association
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