



**SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY PRACTICE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
May 7, 2009**

Department of Consumer Affairs
2005 Evergreen Street
"Hearing Room"
Sacramento, CA
(916) 263-2666

Committee Members Present

Lisa O'Connor, M.A., Chairperson
Carol Murphy, M.A.
Jennifer Hancock, M.A.

Board Members Present

Alison Grimes, Au.D.
Naomi Smith, Au.D.
Robert Hanyak, Au.D.

Guests Present

Dennis Van Vliet, Audiologist
Clay Whirehead
Jack Lynch
Alexandra Feinberg, Speech-Language Pathologist
Jody Winzelberg, California Academy of Audiology
Katherine Demos, Department of Consumer Affairs
Robert Powell, California Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Staff Present

Annemarie Del Mugnaio, Executive Officer
Cynthia Alameda, Staff Analyst
Lori Pinson, Staff Analyst
George Ritter, Legal Counsel

Board Members Absent

Paul Donald, M.D.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson O'Connor called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.

II. Introductions

Those in attendance introduced themselves.

III. Discuss Proposed Guidelines/ Protocols for Telepractice Services Provided by Licensed Speech-Language Pathologists – Presentation by Alexandra Feinberg, MA- SLP

Chairperson O'Connor introduced Ms. Alexandra Feinberg, who was to address the Committee on telepractice services as provided by speech-language pathologists, and referenced the written materials included in the meeting packets that were prepared by Ms. Feinberg.

Ms. Feinberg presented information to the Committee on the advantages of telepractice for individuals who suffer from fluency disorders and described her experiences using telepractice as an adjunct therapy method in Chicago, Illinois.

Ms. Feinberg indicated that she has been awarded a grant to study the advantages of telepractice and that her plan is to contract with school districts to provide telepractice therapy for children in need of speech and language services by providing 20-week sessions where one particular goal would be addressed for a particular child. She stated that the telepractice model encourages greater access to services beyond the traditional pull-out therapy model and offers more time in therapy for these children.

Ms. Feinberg stated that her purpose for coming before the Committee was to request approval from the Board to provide such telepractice services in the public schools as a Non-Public Agency (NPA).

Ms. Del Mugnaio indicated that the Board does not have authority to independently approve NPAs or activities provided through NPAs, as the agencies are governed by the Department of Education.

Ms. Feinberg responded and stated that it was her understanding that the Board must approve the telepractice model in terms of its appropriateness as a beneficial alternative to a traditional service delivery model.

Ms. Del Mugnaio indicated that it may be that the Department of Education is referring to practice authority, in that the Board would advise an individual whether telepractice is permitted under the license and whether specific parameters are enforced. She stated that, in California, telepractice is permitted as long as the individual is licensed in the state to provide professional services and that the method of delivery, that being telepractice, still achieves an acceptable standard of care and does not compromise the effectiveness of the therapy provided to the client.

Mr. Ritter added that, unless there is a special provision in the statute, the Board is not empowered to endorse or independently approve providers of alternative services.

Ms. Feinberg stated that she would provide a follow-up report to the Committee regarding the status and progress of the telepractice study.

IV. Discussion of Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Training in California

A. Status of Audit of San Joaquin Delta Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Program

Chairperson O'Connor referenced the Board site-review findings and subsequent board action letter to San Joaquin Delta dated April 16, 2009, as included in the board packets. She stated she must recuse herself from the discussion as she has been professionally involved in supervision courses and other consulting roles with the program.

Ms. Del Mugnaio provided background information on the audit of San Joaquin Delta Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Program, indicating that there were concerns expressed by students of the program regarding the program's administration and the lack of program infrastructure at the Santa Rosa satellite campus. She reported that there were findings of deficiency regarding resource allocation and administrative support for students within the program and reported such deficiencies to the program director and requested that a plan of corrective action be submitted by

May 15, 2009. Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that she received a call from a San Joaquin Delta departmental dean indicating that the requested response may be delayed due to the current state budgetary uncertainties, but that as soon as the fiscal matters are solidified, a response would be sent. Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that the current Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Program Director, Sally Van Bebbler-Salter was retiring and that San Joaquin Delta was in the process of recruiting to back-fill the position.

Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that she would provide the Committee details regarding the follow-up response from the San Joaquin Delta Program at the next scheduled meeting, as the Committee will be charged with making a recommendation for final action that must be considered by the full Board.

B. Update on New Training Programs

Ms. Del Mugnaio reported that American River College has been approved to offer a Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA) program, which will enroll its first cohort of students in fall 2009.

Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that the Board office is being inundated with calls from Bachelor's degree holders who are seeking placement in either an undergraduate or SLPA program in order to complete the requisite clinical or field work hours necessary for SLPA registration. She stated that those contacting the Board indicate that the programs are not accepting transfer students into the field work portion of the programs because the programs are already impacted. Ms. Del Mugnaio indicated that some individuals seeking placements are attempting to independently contract with employers to gain the necessary field work, which is not lawful in California.

Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that there are as many as 50 calls per month from Bachelor's degree holders seeking clinical placement opportunities.

Chairperson O'Connor stated that registering all Bachelor's degree holders as SLPAs may not be a responsible course of action, as not all of those who have the academic achievement are qualified to work as an SLPA, nor is registering more SLPAs the solution to the speech-language pathology shortage.

Chairperson O'Connor stated that Sacramento State, Long Beach State, and California State, Los Angeles, offer a field work opportunity course for Bachelor's degree students.

Ms. Del Mugnaio recommended that a joint meeting of the Board, the SLPA program directors, and those universities that offer undergraduate clinical opportunities be held at one of the next scheduled Board meetings to discuss the issue of providing field work or clinical training opportunities to Bachelor's degree holders who wish to make application for SLPA registration.

Chairperson O'Connor stated that it would be beneficial to hold the meeting in southern California since a majority of the programs is located in the southern region.

Chairperson O'Connor adjourned the meeting at 1:10 p.m.