



SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY PRACTICE COMMITTEE MEETING
January 26, 2011

Kensington Park Hotel
450 Post Street
"Sherwood Room"
San Francisco, CA
(415) 351-4148

Committee Members Present

Carol Murphy, M.A., Chair
Lisa O'Connor, M.A.
Monty Martin, M.A.

Committee Members Absent

Rodney Diaz, M.D.

Staff Present

Annemarie Del Mugnaio, Executive Officer
LaVonne Powell, Legal Counsel
Cynthia Alameda, Staff
Yvonne Crawford, Staff
Debbie Newcomer, Staff

Guests Present

Alison Grimes, Au.D.
Robert Green, Au.D.
Sandra Danz, Hearing Aid Dispenser
Deane Manning, Hearing Aid Dispenser
Jody Winzelberg, Director of Rehabilitative Services
Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford
Marcia Raggio, California Academy of Audiology (CAA)
Rebecca Bingea, University of California, San Francisco (UCSF)
Robert Powell, California Speech-Language-Hearing Association (CSHA)
Cindy Peffers, HHP CA

I. Call to Order

Carol Murphy, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

II. Introductions

Those in attendance introduced themselves.

III. Telepractice as a Mode of Service Delivery for Speech-Language Pathology Services & Supervision Models via Electronic Observation

Chairperson Murphy reviewed the documents provided for discussion, which included two separate but related documents prepared by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) on

recognizing telepractice as an acceptable form of service delivery and on framework for regulation of interstate practice through the use of a limited licensing provision.

The Committee members discussed the ASHA documents and commented on the role of telepractice and its success as a method of delivery for speech-language pathology services.

Lisa O'Connor shared with the committee information she obtained during a presentation on telepractice at the annual conference for the National Council of State Boards of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (NCSB) in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Ms. O'Connor further shared that many boards from other states had adopted telepractice regulations and inquired on current California regulations.

LaVonne Powell provided clarification that current laws stipulate that all practitioners providing speech-language pathology services to California consumers, regardless of method, must be licensed by the Board.

Annemarie Del Mugnaio added that the Board does receive questions on telepractice by out-of-state practitioners inquiring on their ability to provide services to California consumers, and she confirmed that the Board does inform these individuals that they may offer telepractice services to Californians, but they must first be licensed by the Board.

The Committee requested that information on Board requirements regarding out of state practitioners providing services in California, regardless of method, be highlighted on the website. Ms. Powell stated that she would collaborate with Ms. Del Mugnaio on language for the Board's website on this topic. The issue regarding supervision via telepractice of speech-language pathology assistants (SLPA) was raised, and the Committee elected to move the discussion of this concern to agenda item IV.

IV. Speech-Language Pathology Assistants

A. Proposed Regulatory Changes Regarding Supervision and Field Work Experience Requirements

The Committee resumed their discussion regarding the feasibility of supervision of SLPAs via telepractice.

Monty Martin inquired about the other committee members' knowledge regarding the use of telepractice in speech-language pathology and commented that, in his experience, it was not yet emerging in the school setting.

Ms. O'Connor stated that she has made the recommendation in her practice for consideration of speech-language pathology services via telepractice when services were not available in a client's local area. Ms. O'Connor further stated that she believed that telepractice was a valuable option for clients in rural areas with limited access to critical services. Additionally, Ms. O'Connor stated that she was aware of a telepractice company that is hiring speech-language pathologists specifically for providing services via telepractice.

The Committee discussed the feasibility of providing adequate supervision for SLPAs via telepractice and agreed that it was an acceptable method of supervision.

The Committee agreed that Section 1399 170(c) of the California Code of Regulation (CCR) should be amended to include supervision by electronic means as an acceptable option for direct onsite supervision of SLPAs.

The Committee discussed the need to amend CCR Section 1399.170.10(2) to reflect the most current 2004 ASHA Guidelines for Training, Use, and Supervision of Speech-Language Pathology Assistants, as well as the appropriate Appendix reference. The Committee further discussed the need to amend subsection (c)(2)(B) of the above section to increase the minimum number of field work experience hours from 70 to 100, given the standards in the current ASHA guidelines, as well as the current lack of adequate field work experience hours needed for establishing competency.

The Committee further discussed the need to amend CCR Section 1399.170.15(b)(4) to require supervisors for SLPAs to obtain not fewer than six (6) hours of continuing professional development in supervision training prior to the commencement of supervision in place of the previous requirement that allowed for the completion in the initial two-year period of supervision.

M/S/C: O'Connor/Murphy

The Committee recommended to the Board to approve the amendments to the SLPA regulations in California Code of Regulations Sections 1399.170 (c), 1399.170.10 (c)(2)(B), 1399.170.11(c), and 1399.170.15 (b)(4) as referenced above.

B. Employment Challenges

The Committee discussed the current employment challenges as well as practice concerns for SLPAs who have different educational credentials.

Ms. O'Connor stated that she had concerns regarding the educational training for those SLPAs who received their education in a BA degree program, which is structured to train an independent practitioner, in contrast to the AA degree program, which is structured to train an individual to provide services as support personnel.

Ms. Del Mugnaio addressed Ms. O'Connor's concerns by calling attention to the fieldwork requirement that both AA and BA degree students are required to complete, which ensures that they are educated on the appropriate level of service that the SLPA is authorized to provide.

Ms. O'Connor further stated a concern that employers prefer the BA level SLPA to the AA level SLPA and then utilize the BA level SLPA inappropriately as more of an independent practitioner given their higher degree of education. Specifically, Ms. O'Connor's concern surrounded school districts allowing the BA level SLPAs to function in the capacity of a speech-language pathologist.

Ms. Del Mugnaio responded that the Board's responsibility is to ensure that licensees are qualified and competent, and that employers' preferences of a BA to an AA degree holder was not in particular a consumer protection issue. Additionally, Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that the misuse of SLPAs is an issue that can be addressed through the Board's enforcement program.

Chairperson Murphy stated that she conducted an informal survey of several special education directors in Northern California regarding the use of SLPAs. Ms. Murphy stated that the results from the survey indicated that, in addition to confusion among the directors on the distinction between speech-language pathologists, assistants, and aides, as well as the supervision required for each of the paraprofessional categories, directors had difficulty establishing salary schedules for SLPAs with varying degrees of education.

Ms. Del Mugnaio shared with the Committee that the Board had compiled a comprehensive package for all school districts when the SLPA license category was developed to mitigate confusion regarding the SLPA license. Ms. Del Mugnaio reported that the information is available on the

Board's website. Ms. Del Mugnaio further noted that when answering the questions of special education program coordinators regarding the SLPA scope of responsibility, school personnel have referenced the information provided by the Board.

Ms. Murphy provided a regional map of California showing the areas of residence for the current SLPA population. It was noted by the Committee that the SLPA population was concentrated in the areas that also offered the SLPA training programs.

The Committee discussed the possibility of further surveying school district special education programs as well as private practices to inquire on employer preferences regarding SLPA BA versus AA degree holders and their experiences with the performance and competencies of SLPAs with the different degrees.

V. English Language Competency as a Prerequisite to Licensure and the Proposal for Conducting a Standard Setting Study for the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) Examination

The Committee revisited the consideration for implementing an English language competency prerequisite for licensure.

Ms. Del Mugnaio reported that ASHA was not currently interested in partnering with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the Board to conduct the standard setting process needed to establish the appropriate passing score for speech-language pathologists for the TOEIC writing and speaking assessments. Currently, the TOEIC has standards for speech-language pathologists for both reading and listening but not the writing and speaking elements deemed necessary by the Board for adequate evaluation.

The Committee requested that Ms. Del Mugnaio contact ETS, again for the cost for the Board to have the standard setting process conducted for the writing and speaking assessments for speech-language pathologists. The Committee also requested that Ms. Del Mugnaio inquire on the possible timeframes that ETS anticipates completing their own standard setting for the writing and speaking assessments for all healing arts professions.

Carol Murphy, Committee Chair, adjourned the meeting at 4:15 p.m.