



MEMORANDUM

DATE	October 2, 2019
TO	Hearing Aid Dispensers Committee
FROM	Paul Sanchez, Executive Officer
SUBJECT	Hearing Aid Dispensing Written Examination Requirement and the Possible Use of a National Examination Such as the International Licensing Examination (ILE) from the International Hearing Society (IHS)

BACKGROUND

At the July 18-19, 2019 Board meeting, the Board discussed the current hearing aid dispenser's written examination requirement and the concept of using a national examination such as the International Licensing Examination (ILE) from the International Hearing Society (IHS).

This issue has been referred to the Hearing Aid Dispensing Committee for further discussion and a recommendation to the full Board on how to address this issue.

Business and Professions Code section 2538.25 requires each hearing aid dispenser applicant to take and pass the written and practical examinations as a condition for licensure. The Board is responsible for the administration and development of the hearing aid dispenser's examinations. Currently, the Board utilizes the services of the Office of Professional Examinations and another third-party vendor to accomplish many of the tasks related to the development and administration of the written examination.

The IHS is a membership association that represents hearing aid dispensers worldwide. IHS has existed since 1951 and develops education and training and qualification examination services for its members. Over 40 US states currently use the IHS International Licensing Examination for Hearing Healthcare Professionals (ILE) in their licensing process. This examination consists of 105 multiple-choice, competency-based questions for entry-level hearing aid specialists. There are no other national examinations recognized across the US for licensing purposes.

Current law allows the Board to delegate examination of applicants to a third party provided the Board establish guidelines for and approve the examination.

Business and Professions Code section 2538.25(a)

The board shall prepare, approve, grade, and conduct examinations of applicants for a hearing aid dispenser's license. The board may provide that the preparation and grading of the examination be conducted by a competent person or organization other than the board, provided, however, that the board shall establish the guidelines for the examination and shall approve the actual examination.

If a national examination is used as part of the requirements for California licensure, the national examination program must be reviewed. This includes a review of the occupational analysis used as the basis for the national examination. This process can take six to nine months to complete.

ACTION REQUESTED

The Committee should consider the information provided and discuss the concept of replacing the current written examination requirement with a national written examination. The Committee should also consider factors such as administration, costs and efficiency and provide the Board with a recommendation on how to proceed with this issue.



MEMORANDUM

DATE	October 2, 2019
TO	Hearing Aid Dispensers Committee
FROM	Paul Sanchez, Executive Officer
SUBJECT	Training Requirement for Hearing Aid Dispensers Prior to Taking the Practical Examination.

BACKGROUND

At the July 18-19, 2019 Board meeting, the Board discussed the concept requiring course of instruction or training for HAD applicants in addition to the current licensing requirements of a training requirement.

This issue has been referred to the Hearing Aid Dispensing Committee for further discussion and a recommendation to the full Board on how to address this issue.

Current law provides an HAD trainee option as a pathway to becoming a licensed HAD. Current law requires that a HAD applicant must be 18 years of age and possess a high school diploma or its equivalent. Current law does not require formal education or training.

Business and Professions Code section 2538.17 authorizes the Board to recommend or require additional training for HAD applicants prior to licensure.

Business and Professions Code 2538.17. Course of instruction; Publication and distribution of information

The board may recommend the preparation of and administration of a course of instruction concerned with the fitting and selection of hearing aids. The board may require applicants to first complete the required course of instruction or otherwise satisfy the board that the applicant possesses the necessary background and qualifications to fit or sell hearing aids. If the board promulgates regulations to implement this section to require a course of instruction concerned with fitting and selling hearing aids, the board shall obtain the advice of persons knowledgeable in the preparation and administration of a course of instruction.

The board may publish and distribute information concerning the examination requirements for obtaining a license to engage in the practice of fitting and selling hearing aids within this state.

AB 780, which did not move forward this year, would have created a new apprentice license type. The bill would have created the apprentice license as an alternate pathway to HAD licensure but not as a requirement.

The current examination process measures minimum competence in performing certain tasks related to fitting and selling hearing aids. A formal course of instruction or training requirement could enhance the skills and qualifications of an applicant in performing tasks related to fitting and selling hearing aids and establish consistent uniform training across the state for HAD applicants.

The Board has solicited feedback from Hearing Healthcare Providers of California but has not received any formal comments regarding this issue.

ACTION REQUESTED

The Committee should discuss the establishment of a required course of instruction or training for HAD applicants in addition to the current licensing requirements and make a recommendation to the Board on how to proceed with this issue.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Postings to our website must be ADA complaint. For those Board meeting documents that were not ADA complaint, they will be available at the Board meeting.