



MEETING MINUTES
AUDIOLOGY PRACTICE COMMITTEE

August 20, 2014
The Concourse Hotel
6225 W. Century Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90045

I. Call to Order

Committee Chair Grimes called the meeting to order. Members and guests introduced themselves and a quorum was established.

Committee Members Present

Alison Grimes, Committee Chair, Dispensing Audiologist
Jamie Lee, Public, Board Member
Marcia Raggio, Dispensing Audiologist
Amnon Shalev, Hearing Aid Dispenser

Committee Members Absent

Rodney Diaz, M.D.

Staff Present

Paul Sanchez, Executive Officer
Breanne Humphreys, Operations Manager
Sabina Knight, Legal Counsel

Guests Present

Becky Bingea, Audiologist, California Academy of Audiology (CAA)
Vanessa Cajina, KP Public Affairs for Hearing Healthcare Providers (HHP)
Ellen Fagan, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
Dee Parker, Speech Language Pathologist, Board Member
Cynthia Peffers, Hearing Aid Dispenser, HHPCA Member
Patti Solomon-Rice, Speech Language Pathologist, Board Member
Mitzi Shpak, Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), Los Angeles Advocacy
Naomi Smith, Audiologist, CAA
Debbie Snow, Public Board Member
Grace Tiessen, HLAA, LA Advocacy

II. Introductions

III. Approval of the February 6, 2014 and May 22, 2014 Audiology Practice Committee Meeting Minutes

Ms. Raggio motioned to approve the minutes for both meetings as written and Mr. Shalev seconded the motion. The motion carried.

IV. Review/Discussion/Possible Recommendation on Informal Public Comments on the Proposed Regulatory Amendments for Audiology Aide Supervision Standards and Practice Limitations (16 CCR 1399.154-1399.154.4)

Committee Chair Grimes provided an overview of the proposed amendments. Proposed regulations had been sent out for public review and comments; these responses as well as a letter from Hearing Healthcare Providers (HHP) were made available in the board meeting packet. Committee Chair Grimes opened up for discussion among committee members and guests.

Committee Chair Grimes explained that one of the biggest unanswered questions is the issue regarding whether or not a registered audiology aide can provide any service under supervision that, in other circumstances, would require a hearing aid dispenser's license or a trainee license without first obtaining one.

The letter authored by president of HHP, John Tucker, identified activities that lead up to the fitting and selling of a hearing aid, "taking ear impressions, adjusting or modifying a hearing aid or ear mold, among other things" requires a dispenser license or trainee license. HHP is requesting an edit to include the language "an audiology aide may not perform any of the following functions, any of the activities that would require either a hearing aid dispenser license or a trainee license, without first obtaining one."

Discussion ensued regarding what defines the actual "fitting" of a hearing aid. Committee Chair Grimes suggested that hearing aid trainees and audiology aides are both untrained individuals who are working under the supervision of either a licensed Hearing Aid Dispenser or Audiologist who is responsible for them. It was stated that there are more restrictions on a trainee than there are on an aide, based on deadlines for exams and applications required for trainees. Trainees are tested and must pass an exam before they are issued a license whereas there isn't any testing or assessment of aides before they are registered. Mr. Sanchez stated that the committee should make a determination based on both committee and public comments and bring it to the full board discussion.

Committee Chair Grimes recommended that legal counsel research legal definitions of the practice of audiology in relation to the fitting and dispensing of hearing aids and taking of ear mold impressions and report back to the committee.

V. Discussion Regarding MediCal/CCS (California Children's Services)

Committee Chair Grimes stated that approximately 50% of children born in California are receiving services through MediCal/CCS. Due to systematic problems with CCS, there is a dire shortage in the amount of Audiologists participating in the program, which poses a consumer protection issue due to children not being able to obtain services. Audiologists are dropping out of the MediCal/CCS program due to difficulties with receiving reimbursement for services (being reimbursed for less than the cost of services) and inconsistencies with provider requirements as well as service timelines. Representatives from CCS have offered to call in to the full board meeting or attend the next meeting in Sacramento. There is hope that the California Academy of Audiology (CAA) will be able to identify a legislator who can see the issues through on a legislative perspective.

VI. Update on the Outreach Letters Regarding the Services Provided by Regional Centers to Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Ms. Humphreys stated that on February 11, 2014, letters were mailed to six legislative committees from both the Senate and Assembly on Education, Health, and Human Services and the Department of Developmental Services. To date, the Board has received no communication in response to the letters from any of the recipients. Mr. Sanchez will follow up on the letters.

VII. Discussion and Possible Recommendation for an Increase in the Number of Self-Study Hours for Continuing Education

Mr. Sanchez recommended that Board members read regulation 1399.160.3 and 1399.160.4 to understand how complicated and unclear the regulations read.

The committee agreed to make a recommendation to the full Board expressing their interest in discussing further, the possibility of adopting a similar regulation change for Audiologists as the changes being proposed for Speech-Language Pathologists.

Committee Chair Grimes adjourned the meeting at 5:47 p.m.