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## **Speech-Language-Hearing Association of Virginia**

### **Position Statement on Universal Licensure for Speech-Language Pathologists in the Commonwealth of Virginia**

It is our association's position that moving toward a universal licensure requirement for all Speech-Language Pathologists in the Commonwealth would be beneficial and cost effective. Speech-Language Pathologists work in a variety of settings. As a result, they are often required to obtain state licensure through the Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology and a Pupil Personnel Services License Endorsement through the Virginia Department of Education. In addition, many Speech-Language Pathologists choose to be certified by their national professional organization, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (<http://www.asha.org>). The costs of maintaining licensure for both healthcare and school-based settings, in addition to professional certification, can be cost prohibitive for some speech-language pathologists.

Since the Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology requires the SLP to maintain the highest credentials in the state and protects consumers from unqualified, unethical practitioners, a single license through the Board would ensure uniformity across practice settings, guarantee that consumers are being served by competent professionals and be the most cost effective method for the Board and for the practitioner for regulating SLPs.

Moving toward a universal licensure would also allow Speech-Language Pathologists the flexibility to transition between work settings (i.e. school to a medical facility).

On May 23, 2013, the Virginia Department of Education Board met to discuss the following revisions to licensure:

**8 VAC 20-22-140 – 8 VAC 20-22-670**

The amendments would revise the following endorsement areas:

**Special education: speech-language pathologist preK-12.** Discontinue issuing an initial license with an endorsement in speech-language pathology. Individuals will seek a license from the Virginia Board of Examiners for Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology.

SHAV hopes that the Department of Education and the Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology will work collaboratively to ensure that all Speech-Language Pathologists currently working under school contracts, who are ineligible for state licensure by the BASLP, are considered in the discussion during this transition.

Our association, representing speech-language pathologists in the commonwealth, strongly recommends that the Commonwealth consider a move toward universal licensure for all practicing speech language pathologists.

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