



Speech-Language Pathology Assistants Licensure HF2998 (Coulter)/SF2982 (Boldon)

What does this legislation do?

This legislation establishes licensure requirements for speech-language pathology assistants, administered by the MN Department of Health. The legislation also clarifies current state law governing supervision of speech-language pathology assistants.

What is a speech-language pathology assistant?

A speech-language pathology assistant provides services to remediate communication issues related to articulation, language, or voice impairment under the supervision of a licensed speech-language pathologist (SLP).

What work settings do speech-language pathology assistant serve?

Speech-language pathology assistants provide care in acute care and rehabilitation hospitals, outpatient clinics, schools, nursing homes, private pediatric practices, private practice, autism programs and other medical facilities

Why licensure?

- Licensing protects those being served by communications disorders professionals and protects the scope of practice of the professionals themselves. The clients working with a speech-language pathology assistant have varying communication impairments and may range in age from birth to elderly adults. Because of their age or disability, individuals being served by a speech-language pathology assistant are potentially vulnerable and licensing ensures that individuals may not practice as a speech-language pathology assistant without adequate professional training.
- Additionally, the lack of licensure for assistants creates barriers as many medical settings will not hire someone in this capacity without licensure.
- Licensing of assistants already exists for other health professions in Minnesota, including occupational therapy assistants and physical therapy assistants.

What is the need for speech-language pathology assistants?

More support is needed to serve a growing and diverse client base and to address the severe and growing shortage of speech-language pathologists in medical settings and schools.

By utilizing a qualified speech-language pathology assistant, the supervising speech-language pathologist can then extend services (i.e., increase the frequency and intensity of services to patients or clients on their caseload), focus more on professional-level work, increase client access to the program, and achieve more efficient and effective use of time and resources to better serve individuals.

Is there a licensure training program in Minnesota?

An online training program for speech-language pathology assistants began in August 2013 at Alexandria Technical and Community College. Since its inception, this program has graduated 9 classes of SLP assistants.

What is happening in other states?

According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), there are 17 states with licensure requirements for speech-language pathology assistants in a medical setting and 11 states with licensure requirements for speech-language pathology assistants in an education setting.

What are the proposed licensure requirements under HF2998/SF2982?

Under this proposal, an applicant for licensure would submit to the MDH a transcript from an educational institution documenting satisfactory completion of either:

- 1) an associate degree from a speech-language pathology assistant program at a higher education institution that is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of College or its equivalent and at least 100 hours of supervised field work experience in speech-language pathology assisting; or
- 2) a bachelor's degree in the discipline of communication sciences or disorders AND a speech-language pathology assistant certificate program that includes coursework in an introduction to speech-language pathology assisting, stuttering, articulation disorders, and language disorders; and at least 100 hours of supervised field work experience in speech-language pathology assisting.