



**Michigan Speech-Language-Hearing Association**  
Assistance, Awareness & Advocacy in Communication Sciences & Disorders

Date: September 26, 2023

The Michigan Speech-Language-Hearing Association (MSHA) represents speech-language pathologists (SLPs) in the state of Michigan.

Thank you for hearing HB 4101 today. This bill modifies the educational limited license outlined in PA 368 for speech-language pathologists who have recently graduated with their master's degree, and is a critical workforce issue for a mental health position – clinical, in schools, and in communities – that is already facing a shortage.

The educational limited license requires 1,260 supervised working hours and is aligned with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's (ASHA's) requirements for completion of a clinical fellowship program, a time where recent graduates receive direct and indirect supervision from an experienced and certified SLP. ASHA proposes that this supervision experience be completed in a minimum of 36 weeks working 35 hours per week and cannot exceed 4 years following the beginning of the clinical fellowship experience. Following completion of the 1,260-hour supervised program, the SLP is able to become fully licensed by the state of Michigan and certified by ASHA, allowing for independent practice as an SLP. The proposed changes outlined in HB 4101 allow for flexibility in the completion of the required supervised hours for recent graduates.

The current statutory limit of a 12-month, nonrenewable license is untenable for many SLPs across the state. There are many circumstances in which an individual holding an educational limited license may not be able to complete the required 1,260 supervised hours within 12 months. Some examples include an unplanned, extended medical leave from work or lack of full-time employment. Should an SLP with an educational limited license obtain employment in a school setting, there is a significant chance that they may not work for the three months over the summer, putting further strain on the supervised clock hour and time sensitive requirements for their license. Part-time employees, working less than 24 hours per week, would not be able to complete 1,260 hours within a 12-month time frame. Additionally, as we have all learned while living and working through a global pandemic, there are many unknown circumstances that can arise, limiting working hours and places of employment, thereby reducing the ability to gain experience and clinical hours toward the 1,260-hour requirements.

By modifying PA 368 and extending the length of time for the educational limited license, SLPs in these circumstances are allowed more flexibility in completing their supervision requirements. Michigan is experiencing a shortage of SLPs across the state. Should HB 4101 not pass, we are concerned that recent graduates in the field of speech-language pathology may leave the State of Michigan to complete their clinical fellowship, perhaps never to return. In a survey conducted in April 2021 of 215 graduate students across 7 universities in the state of Michigan, 64% of the students indicated that they planned on staying in the state of Michigan following graduation, with an additional 25% stating that they were considering staying in the state. However, nearly all of the students surveyed expressed concerns about completing the required supervision within 12 months. Should graduates leave the state because of this 12-month time limit, there will be a tremendous strain on the field of speech-language pathology in the state of Michigan,

as we are already experiencing a shortage of qualified professionals. Additionally, the trajectory for the need for SLPs in a variety of settings is not decreasing. This limitation encourages recent graduates of speech-language pathology programs to look beyond state lines to complete the certification requirements in order to practice at the fullest extent of their license and certification. We are hopeful that the proposed changes to the educational limited license in HB 4101 will assuage the concerns expressed and keep qualified SLPs in the state.

This proposal was initially introduced to the legislature in 2022 as SB 811. It passed the Senate unanimously on March 10, 2022, and was referred by the House Health Policy Committee without amendment and with recommendation to pass on November 10, 2022. However, due to the limited number of meetings held by the 101<sup>st</sup> legislature in the fall of 2022, the bill never received a final vote in the House of Representatives. We ask that you recommend HB 4101 for a vote in the House of Representatives and help us keep qualified SLPs in the workforce. Thank you for considering our requests regarding changes to the licensing requirements with HB 4101 for educational limited licenses of SLPs in the State of Michigan.

Sincerely,



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