



September 22, 2020

Mr. Mac Williams
Administrator
South Carolina Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology
110 Centerview Dr.
Columbia, SC 29210

RE: ASHA Requesting Support for Speech-Language Pathology Assistants

Dear Mr. Williams:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to request that the South Carolina Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology enact additional allowances for teletherapy hours for those seeking to earn the 100 clock hours for speech-language pathology assistant licensure.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 2,800 ASHA members reside in South Carolina.¹

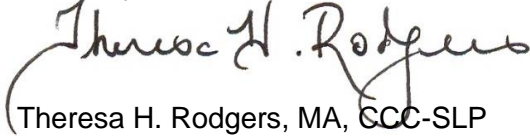
As you are aware, ASHA has created a Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA) certification program. A critical component of this program is to complete a minimum of 100 clock hours of fieldwork, supervised by an ASHA certified speech-language pathologist (SLP), that is not conducted through simulation.² During 2020, SLPAs who are seeking licensure have continued to struggle to secure practicum placements that are face-to-face. ASHA anticipates that this challenge will continue into the future. While the Board's allowance of 10 hours to be earned through teletherapy is helpful, this does not resolve the requirement for completing the remainder of the hours needed for licensure in South Carolina nor the hours required for those wanting to become ASHA certified.

As the leading national organization for the certification and advancement of audiologists and SLPs, ASHA supports the development and use of telehealth, telemedicine, and telepractice. ASHA maintains a collection of professional practice documents, including a position statement that defines telehealth as "the application of telecommunications technology to deliver professional services at a distance by linking clinician to client, or clinician to clinician for assessment, intervention, and/or consultation." ASHA maintains that telehealth, telemedicine, and telepractice are interchangeable terms. These documents include a technical report and service delivery guidelines that may be accessed on ASHA's website.³

ASHA believes that the added flexibility to complete 100 clock hours of fieldwork for SLPAs via teletherapy will help to fill the growing need for competent professionals in many practice settings throughout South Carolina.

Thank you for your consideration of ASHA's position on the proposed changes to SLPA clock hours. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA's director of state association relations, at ecrowe@asha.org.

Sincerely,



Theresa H. Rodgers, MA, CCC-SLP
2020 ASHA President

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2020). *South Carolina* [Quick Facts].
<https://www.asha.org/uploadedFiles/South-Carolina-State-Flyer.pdf>.

² ASHA Assistants Program/ (n.d.). Become a Certified Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA).
<https://www.ashaassistants.org/pathways-speech-language-pathology-assistant/>.

³ The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.) *Practice Portal: Telepractice*.
<http://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Telepractice/>.