



March 18, 2022

The Honorable Richard Dale Roth
Chair, Senate Committee on Business, Professions and Economic Development
1303 Tenth Street
State Capitol, Room 2053
Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

RE: Flexible Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing- SB 1453

Dear Senator Roth:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to support SB 1453, which clarifies the requirements for speech-language pathologists (SLP) to perform Flexible Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing procedures (FEES).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 223,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 15,000 ASHA members reside in California.¹

ASHA supports language clarifying that in order for an SLP to perform FEES evaluations, a certified Otolaryngologist must verify that the SLP has performed a minimum of twenty-five FEES procedures under supervision. ASHA also supports allowing a verified SLP to perform FEES procedures at a location based on the patient's medical needs. SLPs can provide this service in many states independently. Medicare also recognizes SLPs providing this service when allowed by state law.

The California Speech-Language-Hearing Association is the bill sponsor. They have indicated that questions have arisen in the field regarding the process for verification. As a result, some SLPs have been prohibited from performing FEES evaluation regardless of the needs of the patient. Furthermore, as more patients have required intubation during the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increased need for FEES procedures across multiple settings.

Thank you for your consideration of ASHA's position to support SB 1453. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA's director, state association relations, at ecrowe@asha.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy Rich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judy Rich, EdD, CCC-SLP, BCS-CL
2022 ASHA President

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2021). *California* [Quick Facts]. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/uploadedfiles/California-State-Flyer.pdf>.