



Submitted July 15, 2020 to the Houston Chronicle Letters to The Editor:

Regarding the July 1st article, "[How Houston med students are helping doctors through the pandemic](#)," the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association applauds the McGovern Medical School students for their generosity in providing assistance for physicians and their families during these disruptive times.

But it is important to note that state licensure laws as well as other credentialing standards and regulations govern speech therapy (for example, Texas Occupations Code 401.301; 16 TAC 111.30(a) Practice as a speech-language pathologist or representing oneself as a speech-language pathologist without a license). Such governance is a key reason why the "speech therapy" referenced in the article was mischaracterized.

Actual speech therapy is governed by such laws and practiced by speech-language pathologists (SLPs), credentialed professionals who are graduates of rigorous higher education and training as well as continued professional education throughout their careers. While watching YouTube—the guidance source for the medical students—may be helpful in learning how to practice producing correct speech sounds, it is not at all a substitute for the provision of speech therapy, which is a credentialed service not only in Texas, but also nationwide.

Houston has a significant number of SLPs in the area, some of whom practice telehealth, and I encourage the public to reach out to them for speech-language therapy services as needed. Communication disorders are too serious for them not to be addressed by anyone other than licensed, credentialed, and appropriately educated and trained professionals.

Sincerely,

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2020 ASHA President