



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2003 Wisconsin Act 270 [2003 Assembly Bill 841]	Regulation of Hearing Instrument Specialists, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Audiologists
2003 Acts: www.legis.state.wi.us/2003/data/acts/	Act Memos: www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/act_memo/act_memo.htm

2003 Wisconsin Act 270 makes a number of changes in the statutes that relate to regulation of hearing instrument specialists, speech-language pathologists, and audiologists. Those changes are as follows:

- Prior to the Act, the Hearing and Speech Examining Board consisted of three hearing instrument specialists, one otolaryngologist, one audiologist, one speech-language pathologist, and two public members (one of whom must be a hearing aid user). The Act adds one more audiologist and one more speech-language pathologist to the board.
- Under prior law, a hearing aid may not be fitted for or sold to a person who is 16 years of age or younger unless the person has been examined by a physician within the previous 90 days to determine whether he or she has any physical deficiencies that would prohibit the effective use of a hearing aid. The Act changes this provision to apply to persons who are 17 years of age or younger.
- Under prior law, a person holding a training permit to fit hearing aids must be directly supervised and trained by a person who is a licensed hearing instrument specialist. The Act also allows the person acting under the training permit to be supervised and trained by a licensed audiologist.
- The statutes require a person who is licensed as a hearing instrument specialist, an audiologist, or a speech-language pathologist to complete 20 hours of continuing education every two years in order to renew his or her license. The Act states that this requirement does not apply the first time a licensee applies to renew a license after it is initially granted.
- Under prior law, a hearing instrument specialist or an audiologist must conduct a direct observation of the ear canal of a purchaser of a hearing aid. The Act modifies this to require

This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents.

the observation of the ear canal of a person for whom a hearing aid is purchased. In addition, the Act modifies the law that specifies that a hearing aid may not be sold to a person who is not given tests using appropriate procedures and instruments or without proper measurement of the functional intensity and range of the person's hearing; this statute is modified to specify that the tests must be given by a hearing instrument specialist or an audiologist licensed in Wisconsin or in another state.

- Under prior law, an individual was not required to be licensed by the examining board in order to engage in the practice of speech-language pathology or audiology in a position for which the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) requires DPI licensure as a speech and language pathologist. The Act modifies this to add a reference to a position that requires DPI licensure as an audiologist. The Act also states that this exception to the requirement for examining board licensure does not apply to persons engaging in the practice of fitting and dealing in hearing aids. Also, the Act states that the exemption from examining board licensure for speech-language pathologists or audiologists applies if the individual's entire practice, other than engaging in the practice of fitting and dealing in hearing aids, is limited to the duties of the position for which DPI provides licensure.
- Under prior law, an applicant for licensure as a speech-language pathologist must have completed a postgraduate clinical fellowship in speech-language pathology approved by the examining board. The Act requires that the applicant must have completed such a fellowship or must have completed education or training that the examining board determines is substantially equivalent to the completion of such a fellowship.
- Under prior law, a temporary license to practice speech-language pathology or audiology was valid for not more than nine months. The Act eliminates this time limit and states that a temporary license is valid for a period designated by the examining board by rule. The rules may designate a period that terminates if an applicant fails to take the next available examination for reasons other than inaction by the examining board or hardship.
- The Act allows the examining board to discipline a speech-language pathologist or audiologist who engages in unprofessional conduct as defined by rule by the examining board. (The statutes already allowed the examining board to discipline hearing instrument specialists for unprofessional conduct.)
- The Act eliminates statutory provisions that relate to registration and issuance of certificates of registration for speech-language pathologists and audiologists. Those provisions have not applied since 1993. Speech-language pathologists and audiologists are currently licensed, rather than registered or certified. In addition, the Act eliminates a statutory provision that required completion of a one-time report in 1993.

Effective Date: The Act takes effect on May 1, 2004.

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