



**WISCONSIN SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY
and AUDIOLOGY ASSOCIATION**

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Tuesday, December 13, 2022

Legislative Council Study Committee on Occupational Licenses

RE: LRB-0838/P1, relating to ratification of the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact

Dear Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Wisconsin Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Association (WSHA) is supportive of LRB-0838/P1, which creates the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC). Wisconsin has already passed several licensure compacts including for physicians, nurses, and physical therapists, and compacts for occupational therapists, psychologists, and emergency medical personnel are advancing. Like other compacts, the ASLP-IC compact allows professionals to practice in multiple states without having to obtain additional state licenses. The compact is voluntary for those practicing or desiring to practice in Wisconsin and allows states to retain the ability to regulate practice in their state. A licensure compact is beneficial in many ways ranging from enhancing the workforce and professional development to limiting bureaucratic hurdles for healthcare professionals, something we desperately need as healthcare workforce shortages are becoming more dire. For practitioners and patients to benefit in Wisconsin ASLP-IC legislation must be signed into law, and we look forward to advancing this next session.

In addition to ASLP-IC, WSHA supports another licensure modernization policy that looks to remove duplicative regulation of the practice of speech-language pathology (SLPs). SLPs are educated and trained to diagnose, assess, and treat speech, language, swallowing, and cognitive communication disorders in children and adults and therefore may choose to practice in various work settings including schools, hospitals, skilled nursing, birth-to-three, assisted living, and rehabilitation clinics, to name a few. Under current law a SLP must obtain a teacher license from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to practice in a school setting. To practice in a health care setting a SLP must obtain an occupational license from the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS). The current process is timely, costly, and limits the portability of qualified practitioners who can fill vacancies in both settings. This legislation will transition Wisconsin to a single, comprehensive license while maintaining nationally recognized training, education, and regulatory standards for SLPs. According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association 19 states license SLPs under a comprehensive license including Iowa and Michigan, and Minnesota has legislation drafted ready to be introduced.

The move to a single license in Wisconsin is necessary for several reasons. First, it will allow practitioners more opportunity to practice in their preferred work setting, and functionally get highly qualified speech-language pathologists hired and into paid employment more quickly so they can be available to Wisconsinites in need of services. Second, without the transition to a single, comprehensive license many DPI licensed SLPs would be effectively ineligible for participation in the ASLP-IC, limiting their opportunity to hold a more portable license. Third, healthcare and education sectors are experiencing severe workforce shortages. While reforms to update and streamline the licensing process are not on their own silver bullets to address recruitment, retention, and workforce pipeline challenges they are a step in the right direction.

We look forward to addressing both ASLP-IC and modernizing SLP licensure next session as part of the same legislation or as separate bills.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wisconsin Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Association