
Health Care Committee

SB 5358

Brief Description: Regarding speech-language pathologists and audiologists.

Sponsors: Senators Keiser and Parlette.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that speech-language pathologists and audiologists holding an interim permit, practice under the supervision of a license holder.
- Prohibits speech-language pathologists and audiologists that are certified educational staff associates from practicing outside the school setting unless they have a license from the Board of Speech and Hearing.

Hearing Date: 3/18/05

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Board of Speech and Hearing licenses speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and hearing instrument fitters/dispensers and acts as the disciplining authority for unprofessional conduct under the Uniform Disciplinary Act. In addition, some speech-language pathologists and audiologists are certified as educational staff associates through the State Board of Education. These educational staff associates are not required to be licensed with the Board of Speech and Hearing. The United States Department of Labor estimates that about half of speech-language pathologists and twenty percent of audiologists work in educational settings.

Speech-language pathology includes the treatment of speech and language disorders that impede oral competencies and the normal process of communication. Audiology relates to hearing disorders that impede the process of human communication, and includes the application of aural rehabilitation and the fitting and dispensing of hearing instruments.

Interim permits may be issued by the Board of Speech and Hearing to speech-language pathologists and audiologists who meet academic and practicum requirements for obtaining a license, but need to complete post-graduate professional experience and examination requirements. Interim permit holders must practice under the direct supervision of a licensed hearing instrument fitter/dispenser, licensed speech-language pathologist, or licensed audiologist. Direct supervision requires that the supervisor be physically present in the same room as the interim permit holder.

Summary of Bill:

The direct supervision requirement for speech-language pathologists and audiologists who practice pursuant to an interim permit is broadened to require supervision, but not necessarily direct supervision.

Speech-language pathologists and audiologists that are certified educational staff associates may not practice outside the school setting unless they have a license from the Board of Speech and Hearing.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.