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February 9, 2022

The Honorable Bill Lippert
Chair
House Committee on Health Care
Vermont General Assembly
115 State Street, Room 45
Montpelier, VT 05633-5501

RE: H. 654

Dear Representative Lippert:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to support H. 654, which would extend provisions related to the delivery of health care services through telemedicine through March 31, 2023.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 218,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 500 ASHA members reside in Vermont.¹

As the leading national organization for the certification and advancement of audiologists and speech-language pathologists, ASHA supports the development and use of telemedicine, also known as “telepractice” or “telehealth.” ASHA maintains a collection of professional practice documents, including a position statement that defines telepractice as “the application of telecommunications technology to deliver professional services at a distance by linking clinician to client or clinician to clinician for assessment, intervention, and/or consultation.”²

ASHA strongly supports the use of telepractice. Research demonstrates the equivalence of telepractice to in-person service delivery for a wide range of diagnostic and treatment procedures for adults and children.³ Studies have shown high levels of patient, clinician, and parent satisfaction supporting telepractice as an effective alternative to the in-person model for delivery of care.⁴ Telepractice expands practitioners’ availability to those in need—regardless of geographic location—saving time and resources for both the provider and the patient.

Despite proven benefits, telepractice remains underutilized within audiology and speech-language pathology due to a lack of clear state laws governing its use or mandating appropriate reimbursement for services delivered. House bill 654 helps address

these barriers by supporting access to telemedicine through March 31, 2023. ASHA hopes that these provisions will eventually be made permanent.

Thank you for your consideration of ASHA's position to support H. 654. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Susan Adams, ASHA's director of state legislative and regulatory affairs, at sadams@asha.org.

Sincerely,


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

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2021). *Vermont* [Quick Facts]. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/uploadedfiles/vermont-state-flyer.pdf>.

² American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). *Telepractice*. <https://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Telepractice/>.

³ Grogan-Johnson, S., Alvares, R., Rowan, L., & Creaghead, N. (2010). A pilot study comparing the effectiveness of speech language therapy provided by telemedicine with conventional on-site therapy. *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare*, 16, 134–139.

⁴ Ibid.