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School of Health & Human Services
Departments of Communication Disorders • Marriage & Family Therapy
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Finally, diagnosis has longstanding been within the American Speech Language Hearing Association's (ASHA) Scope of Practice, Preferred Practice Patterns, and Guidelines for Reimbursement. In sum, comprehensive speech-language assessments are to be conducted by appropriately credentialed and trained speech-language pathologists. Expected outcomes of assessment which are consistent with the World Health Organization (WHO) framework, include *diagnosis* of a speech, language, cognitive-communication and/or swallowing disorder.

Thank you for your time and consideration in voting against HB 6265 – An Act Concerning Speech and Language Pathology.

Respectfully,

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February 2, 2009,

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee,

I am writing this letter to respectfully, strongly suggest you vote against HB 6265 – An Act Concerning Speech and Language Pathology. As a speech/language pathologist (SLP) for over 30 years, both in practice and at Southern Connecticut State University, I am very much concerned about the negative consequences if this bill is to move forward (and be passed).

First, speech/language pathologists should continue to be able to provide a diagnosis of speech disorders as evidenced by our accepted use of ICD-9 diagnosis codes. Coding often includes the "primary" or medical diagnosis that comes from a stroke or other medical condition, and the SLP determines the nature of the speech diagnosis that is put on the claim. Physicians do not have the time to conduct assessments *nor* do they have the training in speech-language pathology to determine a speech diagnosis to the specificity that is needed, such as distinguishing aphasia from dysarthria, or dysarthria from apraxia. Without a specific diagnosis, insurance reviewers would not be able to review a chart and determine whether the treatment was appropriate. Importantly then, if SLPs were not to provide the diagnosis, the accuracy and timeliness of processing insurance claims would be severely affected.

Secondly, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation, supports the SLP's practice of diagnosis. Under Section 300.34 (15) of IDEA regulations, speech-language pathology includes: identification of children with speech and/or language impairments; appraisal and *diagnosis* [italics added] of specific speech and/or language impairments; referral for medical or other professional attention necessary for the habilitation of children with speech or language impairments; provisions of speech and/or language services for the prevention of communication impairments or the habilitation of children with such impairments; counseling and guidance for parents, children, and teachers regarding speech and/or language impairments. Therefore, the term diagnosis is used in the context of evaluation, and CT law then should be consistent with IDEA. Further, of interest is that the majority of speech-language disorders are not associated with a medical diagnosis.



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