



**House Bill No. 5497**

**Public Act No. 12-110**

**AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF HEARING INSTRUMENT SPECIALISTS AND AUDIOLOGISTS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 20-398 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2012*):

(a) No person may engage in the practice of fitting or selling hearing aids, or display a sign or in any other way advertise or claim to be a person who sells or engages in the practice of fitting or selling hearing aids unless such person has obtained a license under this chapter or as an audiologist under sections 20-395a to 20-395g, inclusive. [No audiologist, other than an audiologist who is a licensed hearing instrument specialist on and after July 1, 1996, shall engage in the practice of fitting or selling hearing aids until such audiologist has presented satisfactory evidence to the commissioner that the audiologist has (1) completed at least six semester hours of coursework regarding the selection and fitting of hearing aids and eighty hours of supervised clinical experience with children and adults in the selection and fitting of hearing aids at an institution of higher education in a program accredited, at the time of the audiologist's completion of

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coursework and clinical experience, by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association or such successor organization as may be approved by the department, or (2) has satisfactorily passed the written section of the examination required by this section for licensure as a hearing instrument specialist.] No person may receive a license, except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, unless such person has submitted proof satisfactory to the department that such person has completed a four-year course at an approved high school or has an equivalent education as determined by the department; has satisfactorily completed a course of study in the fitting and selling of hearing aids or a period of training approved by the department; and has satisfactorily passed a written, oral and practical examination given by the department. Application for the examination shall be on forms prescribed and furnished by the department. Examinations shall be given at least twice yearly. The fee for the examination shall be two hundred dollars; and for the initial license and each renewal thereof shall be two hundred fifty dollars.

(b) Nothing in this chapter shall prohibit a corporation, partnership, trust, association or other like organization maintaining an established business address from engaging in the business of selling or offering for sale hearing aids at retail, provided such organization employs only persons licensed, in accordance with the provisions of this chapter or as audiologists under sections 20-395a to 20-395g, inclusive, in the direct sale and fitting of such products.

(c) Nothing in this chapter shall prohibit a hearing instrument specialist licensed under this chapter from making impressions for earmolds or a physician licensed in this state or an audiologist licensed under the provisions of sections 20-395a to 20-395g, inclusive, from making impressions for earmolds in the course of such person's clinical practice.

Sec. 2. Section 20-402 of the general statutes is repealed and the

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following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2012*):

(a) Licenses issued under this chapter shall be renewed once every two years, in accordance with the provisions of section 19a-88, on payment of the renewal fee of two hundred dollars to the department and on production of evidence of satisfactory completion of continuing education requirements established by the Commissioner of Public Health, in accordance with subsection (b) of this section.

(b) (1) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, for registration periods beginning on and after October 1, 2014, a licensee applying for license renewal shall earn not less than sixteen hours of continuing education within the preceding twenty-four-month period. Such continuing education shall consist of courses offered or approved by the National Board of Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences, the American Academy of Audiology or the American Speech-Language Hearing Association or such successor organizations as may be approved by the Commissioner of Public Health.

(2) Each licensee applying for license renewal pursuant to section 19a-88, except a licensee applying for a license renewal for the first time, shall sign a statement attesting that he or she has satisfied the continuing education requirements described in subdivision (1) of this subsection on a form prescribed by the department. Each licensee shall retain records of attendance or certificates of completion that demonstrate compliance with the continuing education requirements described in subdivision (1) of this subsection for not less than three years following the date on which the continuing education was completed. Each licensee shall submit such records to the department for inspection not later than forty-five days after a request by the department for such records.

(3) In individual cases involving medical disability or illness, the commissioner may grant a waiver of the continuing education

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requirements or an extension of time within which to fulfill such requirements of this subsection to any licensee, provided the licensee submits to the department an application for waiver or extension of time on a form prescribed by the commissioner, along with a certification by a licensed physician of the disability or illness and such other documentation as may be required by the department. The commissioner may grant a waiver or extension for a period not to exceed one registration period, except that the commissioner may grant additional waivers or extensions if the medical disability or illness upon which a waiver or extension is granted continues beyond the period of the waiver or extension and the licensee applies for an additional waiver or extension.

(c) A licensee applying for the first time for license renewal pursuant to section 19a-88 is exempt from the continuing education requirements of this section.

(d) A licensee whose license has become void pursuant to section 19a-88 and who applies to the department for reinstatement of such license, shall submit evidence documenting the successful completion of eight hours of continuing education within the one-year period immediately preceding application for reinstatement.