February 15, 2016

Senator Terry Gerratana
Representative Matthew Ritter
Joint Committee on Public Health
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: S.B. 70

Dear Chairmen Gerratana and Ritter and Members of the Public Health Committee:

On behalf of the Connecticut Speech Language Hearing Association's members, I am writing to support S.B. 70.

The Connecticut Speech Language Hearing Association (CSHA) is the state professional, association for speech-language pathologists and audiologists and students who are studying to become speech-language pathologists and audiologists. Over 2,400 speech-language pathologists and audiologists practice and reside in Connecticut.

Specifically within our state, telepractice will enable speech-language pathologists to reach more patients who may have difficulty making it out to therapy appointments. While there are many SLPs already within the state, the breadth of services in which SLPs are trained is so wide. Areas of need across the life span which SLPs address via telehealth currently include: articulation disorders, motor speech disorders, fluency disorders, language and cognitive disorders, dysphagia, voice disorders. This results in most SLPs specializing in particular niches within the field. Because of this, it makes it more difficult for individuals in less populated areas of the state to find a speech-language pathologist who will work with a specific disorder type. It allows greater access of the patients to be seen by the most appropriate professional.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on this bill. Should you have any questions or need further information, please contact Meghan Gallagher, M.A., CCC-SLP, VP of Legislative Affairs for the Connecticut Speech Language and Hearing Association at megkrodel@gmail.com or 860-832-6288.

Sincerely,

Meghan Gallagher MA CCC-SLP

Meghan Gallagher, M.A. CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist
VP Legislative affairs, CT Speech Language Hearing Association

UCONN
UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences

February 14, 2016

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE TESTIMONY

Re: SB No. 70 An Act Concerning Telehealth Providers

Distinguished committee members, I want to thank you for this opportunity to address SB No. 70. I urge you to pass this important legislation to redefine "telehealth provider" to include Speech Language Pathologist and Audiologist. Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) and Audiologists (AUD) delivering medically necessary services in all settings, including schools, meet state licensure requirements or have completed educational and work requirements equivalent to those required for the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA) Certificate of Clinical Competence.

Telehealth is used, when appropriate, to overcome barriers to accessing service caused by distance, unavailability of specialists and subspecialists, or impaired mobility. Telehealth is growing as a cost-effective and efficient way to provide high-quality services for people who need speech-language treatment. Telehealth is an appropriate model of service delivery for speech-language pathologists and Audiologists. ASHA requires that individuals who provide telehealth abide by the ASHA Code of Ethics, including Principle of Ethics II, Rule B, which states "Individuals shall engage in only those aspects of the profession that are within their competence, considering their level of education, training, and experience" (ASHA, 2010).

Roles and responsibilities for SLPs and AUDs in the provision of services via telehealth include:

- understanding and applying appropriate models of technology used to deliver services;
- understanding the appropriate specifications and operations of technology used in delivery of services;
- calibrating and maintaining clinical instruments and telehealth equipment;
- selecting clients who are appropriate for assessment and intervention services via telehealth;
- selecting and using assessments and interventions that are appropriate to the technology being used and that take into consideration client/patient and disorder variables;
- being sensitive to cultural and linguistic variables that affect the identification, assessment, treatment and management of communication disorders/differences in individuals receiving services via telehealth;
- training and using support personnel appropriately when delivering services;
- being familiar with the available tools and methods and applying them to evaluate the effectiveness of services provided and to measure outcomes;
- maintaining appropriate documentation, including informed consent for use of telehealth and documentation of the telehealth encounter;
- being knowledgeable and compliant with existing rules and regulations regarding telehealth including security and privacy protections, reimbursement for services, and licensure, liability and malpractice concerns;
- collaborating with physicians for timely referral and follow-up services (Hofstetter, Kokesh, Ferguson, & Hood, 2010);
- using web-based technology to engage clients through virtual environments and other personally salient activities (Towey, 2012).

I urge your support and thank you for your attention to this important issue and your commitment to the health of all Connecticut residents.

Denise Van der Voort, MA, CCC-SLP

UCONN Clinical Faculty

CSHA Treasurer

850 BOLTON ROAD, UNIT 1085
STORRS, CT 06269-1085
PHONE 860.486.2817
FAX 860.486.5422
www.slhs.uconn.edu

An Equal Opportunity Employer

AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

Submitted via e-mail: phtestimony@cga.ct.gov

February 15, 2016

Senator Terry Gerratana
Representative Matthew Ritter
Joint Committee on Public Health
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: S.B. 70

Dear Chairmen Gerratana and Ritter and Members of the Public Health Committee:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's members, I am writing to support S.B. 70.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 182,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 2,400 of our members reside in Connecticut.

We sincerely appreciate your efforts to make telehealth services accessible to all by supporting S.B. 70. We appreciate you including speech-language pathologists, but would ask you to also include audiologists licensed under chapter 397a, so we can ensure that consumers are able to receive all the appropriate services to achieve successful outcomes.

As the leading national organization for the certification and advancement of audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs), we support the development and use of telehealth or "telepractice." ASHA has a family of professional practice documents, approved by ASHA's Board of Directors in 2004, including a position statement that defines telepractice as

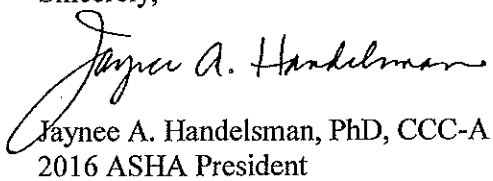
> "the application of telecommunications technology to deliver professional services at a distance by linking clinician to client, or clinician to clinician for assessment, intervention, and/or consultation."

These documents include a technical report, knowledge and skills needed by SLPs providing clinical services via telepractice, and service delivery guidelines that can be accessed on ASHA's website at www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Telepractice/.

The benefits of telehealth are well documented; some of which include providing services in remote underserved areas and providing access to services for clients unable to leave their homes. In addition, telehealth allows practitioners to provide services to individuals where there is a provider shortage and—in some instances—provide access to specialists in the field that have expertise in one specific treatment methodology that are more challenging to locate.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments. Should you have any questions or need further information, please contact Susan Adams, ASHA's director of state legislative and regulatory advocacy, at sadams@asha.org or by phone at 301-296-5665, or Janet Deppe, ASHA's director of state advocacy, at jdeppe@asha.org or by phone at 301-296-5668.

Sincerely,



Jaynee A. Handelsman, PhD, CCC-A
2016 ASHA President

To redefine "telehealth provider" to include speech and language pathologists and respiratory care practitioners.

AN ACT CONCERNING TELEHEALTH PROVIDERS.

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

Section 1. Subdivision (11) of subsection (a) of section 19a-906 of the 2016 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2016*):

(11) "Telehealth provider" means any physician licensed under chapter 370, physical therapist licensed under chapter 376, chiropractor licensed under chapter 372, naturopath licensed under chapter 373, podiatrist licensed under chapter 375, occupational therapist licensed under chapter 376a, optometrist licensed under chapter 380, advanced practice registered nurse licensed under chapter 378, physician assistant licensed under chapter 370, psychologist licensed under chapter 383, marital and family therapist licensed under chapter 383a, clinical social worker or master social worker licensed under chapter 383b, alcohol and drug counselor licensed under chapter 376b, professional counselor licensed under chapter 383c, [or] dietitian-nutritionist certified under chapter 384b, speech and language pathologist licensed under chapter 399 or respiratory care practitioner licensed under chapter 381a, who is providing health care or other health services through the use of telehealth within such person's scope of practice and in accordance with the standard of care applicable to the profession.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	*October 1, 2016*	19a-906(a)(11)

Statement of Purpose:

To redefine "telehealth provider" to include speech and language pathologists and respiratory care practitioners.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]