

**Ohio**

**Speech and Hearing Professionals Board**



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TESTIMONY BEFORE  
THE  
FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION  
OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

THE HONORABLE BOB CUPP, CHAIR  
THE HONORABLE JOHN PATTERSON, CO-CHAIR

APRIL 2, 2019  
11:00 A.M.  
ROOM 122  
STATEHOUSE  
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215

EXECUTIVE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FISCAL YEARS 2020-2021

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Good morning, Chairman Cupp, Co-Chairman Patterson and respected members of the Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee. My name is Gregg Thornton, and I am the Executive Director for the Ohio Speech and Hearing Professionals Board. Thank you on behalf of the Ohio Speech and Hearing Professionals Board (SHP Board) for allowing me the opportunity to present testimony and address any questions you may have regarding the Executive Budget recommendations.

## **THE OHIO SPEECH AND HEARING PROFESSIONALS BOARD:**

The mission of the SHP Board is to protect consumers by regulating the practice of audiology, hearing aid dealing, fitting and dispensing, and speech-language pathology by establishing, promoting, and enforcing practice standards and professional competency among licensees pursuant to Chapters 4744, 4747, and 4753 of the Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Administrative Code. The Board accomplishes this mission through a 9-member board composed of licensed professionals and public members that establishes the requirements for minimal competency for entry into the three health-related occupations numbering just over 10,000 professionals. The SHP Board licenses speech-language pathologists, audiologists, hearing aid fitters, hearing aid dealers, trainee permit holders, aides, and conditional speech-language pathologists. These licensees work throughout the State of Ohio in a broad range of settings, including community based/non-profit centers, home healthcare, governmental agencies, hospitals, private practice, rehabilitation facilities, retail, schools, skilled nursing facilities, universities, etc., serving consumers in all age groups. The Board also establishes and enforces practice standards and ethical codes of conduct. The Board grants licenses to qualified individuals and oversees the administration of professional examinations, both administered through vendor partners and directly by the SHP Board. To ensure licensees maintain and continue to develop their competency, the SHP Board has appropriate continuing education requirements. The SHP Board also investigates violations of the laws and rules governing the practice of speech-language pathology, audiology and hearing aid dealing and fitting. If a licensee is found to have violated the laws and rules, appropriate action is taken by the SHP Board to address the violation and ensure the public is protected. The Board is supported by a staff of four full time employees, all of whom are cross-trained, fulfill essential public protection and customer service roles.

In the last biennium, the SHP Board:

- Fulfilled the statutory requirements of board consolidation under Am. Sub. H.B. 49 (132<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly) with the abolishment of the Ohio Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and the Ohio Hearing Aid Dealers and Fitters Licensing Board, which formed the Ohio Speech and Hearing Professionals Board, effective January 21, 2018.

- Initiated additional efficiencies and streamlined processes via the eLicense Ohio license management system pursuant to a statute clean-up bill adopted under HB 420 (132<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly), effective April 5, 2019.
- Issued and renewed licenses promptly, efficiently and accurately.
- Timely conducted thorough investigations and imposed appropriate disciplinary actions.
- Regularly reviewed rules, policies, and procedures to identify ways to improve program delivery, operational effectiveness, and efficiency.

**REVENUE GENERATION:**

The SHP Board is a non-GRF funded agency. The SHP Board projects generating sufficient revenue to meet its expenditures and operate within the executive budget recommendations for FY2020 and FY2021. The Board is in the process of adopting rules that will reduce licensure fees for hearing aid dealers and fitters. There has been no increase in application fees for speech-language pathologists and audiologists since 1992.

**BOARD EFFICIENCIES:**

The SHP Board fully utilizes the back-office support functions and services provided by the Department of Administrative Service – Central Service Agency (“CSA”). By consolidating support services provided by the CSA, the SHP Board does not have to hire personnel to manage functions related to fiscal processing, information technology, human resources, or procurement. The SHP Board also shares access to the eLicense Ohio system with other regulatory boards to process and manage all aspects of licensure activities, including the processing of licensure applications, issuance of licenses, enforcement activities, and continuing education requirements. As a result of this leveraging, there has been no increase in the Board’s staff since 1994. The SHP Board is in the process of completing implementation of additional functionality in eLicense Ohio as a result of the statutory clean-up related to the board’s consolidation. The SHP Board has integrated CE Broker into its continuing education process to assist with continuing education tracking and auditing.

**CONCLUSION:**

We appreciate this opportunity to share information with you about the SHP Board’s mission, and how we strive to ensure that our mission is efficiently accomplished for all Ohioans.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregg B. Thornton, Esq.  
Executive Director  
Ohio Speech and Hearing Professionals Board