

Ohio

Speech and Hearing Professionals Board



77 South High Street • Suite 1659 • Columbus, Ohio 43215-6108
VOICE (614) 644-9046 • FAX (614) 995-2286 • EMAIL gregg.thornton@shp.ohio.gov
WEBSITE www.shp.ohio.gov



TESTIMONY BEFORE
THE
SENATE HEALTH COMMITTEE
OHIO SENATE

THE HONORABLE STEPHEN A. HUFFMAN, CHAIR

APRIL 25, 2023

STATEHOUSE
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215

EXECUTIVE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FISCAL YEARS 2024-2025

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Chair Huffman and respected members of the Senate Health Committee. 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 nearly 11,000 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 and takes appropriate action 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.

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 FY2024 and FY2025. After board consolidation in 2018, the SHP Board adopted rules that reduced and eliminated 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.

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