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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/25/11
LAST UPDATED 03/08/11 **HB** 475/aHTRC

SPONSOR Alcon

SHORT TITLE Speech & Hearing Therapist Revisions **SB** _____

ANALYST Hanika-Ortiz

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY11	FY12	FY13		
	\$0.0		Recurring	Speech Language Pathology, Audiology And Hearing Aid Dispensing Practices Board Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Revenue Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Regulation and Licensing Department (RLD)

Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of HTRC Amendment

The House Taxation and Revenue Committee Amendment replaces the term “endorsement” with the term “specialty” when referring to bilingual/multilingual skill recognition; and further clarifies that such specialty be granted (upon submitting satisfactory evidence as determined by the board) to a person eligible for, in the process of obtaining, or who has an active license issued pursuant to the Act.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 475 (HB 475) seeks to amend Section 61-14B NMSA 1978, the Speech-Language Pathology, Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensing Practices Act (Act), in the following manner:

- includes a definition for “appropriate supervisor” to refer to a person licensed pursuant to the Act who has two year’s post experience after a clinical fellowship year;
- adds a scope of practice for the clinical fellow for speech language pathology;
- includes dispensing hearing aids in the scope of practice for audiologists;
- adds a speech language pathologist (SLP) to the board changing the composition from ten to eleven members;

- revises licensure requirements for audiologists to include six months experience dispensing hearing aids and maintaining or occupying a business location where hearing aids are dispensed;
- removes the requirement that a hearing aid dispenser be an audiologist, clinical fellow in audiology or an otolaryngologist;
- requires clinical fellows of audiology and apprentices in speech and language to work under supervision;
- revises the scope of practice for hearing aid dispensers to include the fitting of hearing aids;
- changes the licensing renewal period for annually to biennially;
- requires clinical fellows to pass the national examination by year two;
- requires hearing aid dispensers to submit evidence of board certification;
- increases license and renewal fees;
- adds a fee to receive bilingual or multilingual endorsement; and
- repeals the section of the law related to the endorsement to dispense hearing aids as an audiologist or otolaryngologist.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

*The bill changes the licensing renewal period to every two years and revises the fee schedule. For instance, license fees for audiologists and SLPs are increased to \$300 for two years as opposed to \$100 for each year; however, license fees for hearing aid dispensers are decreased to \$400 for two years as opposed to \$300 for each year. The revenue table above reflects a probably net effect. The cash balance in the statutory “speech language pathology, audiology and hearing aid dispensing practices board fund” as of September 28, 2010 was \$286,149.58. However, it is unknown if any credit has been taken for next year’s operations.

The bill will allow the board to provide for staggered biennial terms, including renewing licenses for one year to establish the renewal cycle.

The bill also includes an additional endorsement fee for actively licensed bilingual or multilingual SLPs that hold a bilingual endorsement from the Public Education Department (PED) or have a minimum of five years practicing with clients who use a language other than English.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

RLD maintain that the proposed changes will help the state licensure of these providers to conform to national standards.

The bill adds the additional scope of practice for a clinical fellow of speech-language pathology. The bill also outlines what is meant by appropriate supervision for this type of professional.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

The bill appears to remove the requirement that otolaryngologists are subject to the Act.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

RLD notes that ninety-five percent of the issues brought before the board are related to SLPs. Adding another SLP member may help alleviate the workload from the two SLP members currently on the board.

TEHCNICAL ISSUES

Section 61-14B-20 may be confusing regarding what generates a biennial fee and what may be a one-time only fee. Exams, late-renewals (and sometimes endorsements) are often a one-time fee.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

SLPs provide testing and treatment of speech, voice or language disorders.

Audiologists test for and evaluate hearing problems and assist with hearing aid selection or other functions related to hearing disorders.

Hearing aid dispensers test, fit, sell, and service hearing aids.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

RLD believes the state licensing statute for these providers will continue to not conform to national standards.

QUESTIONS

Why would a bilingual SLP pay for an additional endorsement if already endorsed through PED?
Does the additional bilingual endorsement for these providers allow them to bill at higher rates?

AHO/svb:bym