



OREGON
**SPEECH-LANGUAGE
& HEARING**
ASSOCIATION

TO: WAYS & MEANS SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

FROM: OREGON SPEECH-LANGUAGE & HEARING ASSOCIATION

**RE: BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY &
AUDIOLOGY 2013-2105 PROPOSED BUDGET**

The Oregon Speech-Language and Hearing Association (OSHA) is a professional non-profit membership organization representing licensed speech-language pathologists, speech-language pathology assistants and audiologists in the state of Oregon.

OSHA supports the proposed budget of the Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (BSPA) including the budget packages and license fee increase.

The number of licensees regulated by BSPA has grown significantly over the last several years. A considerable amount of work is required to explain the licensing process, track the status of the applications, follow up with the applicants, review the credentials of the applicants (including transcripts, criminal/disciplinary history documentation, and professional development documentation if required), and ultimately to issue the licenses. In addition, the Speech and Hearing Sciences graduate program at Portland State University recently doubled their speech-language pathology admissions, and a new program at Pacific University will graduate its first class next year. These program expansions are expected to further increase the number of initial applicants for licenses beginning in the summer of 2013 as it is likely that many graduates from these institutions will choose to remain in Oregon.

The investigative burden of BSPA has also increased considerably during the past several years. Children and adults with communication disorders are a particularly vulnerable population. Consumer protection is a vital function of BSPA, and it is essential that investigations be conducted in a thorough and timely manner. The interests of clients with communication disorders and their families, employers, and the general public who rely on BSPA to regulate the professions must be adequately safeguarded. BSPA is requesting staff to implement criminal background checks

(including fingerprints) for applicants, and to support the growing administrative needs of an increasing volume of licensees.

OSHA recognizes the need for this fee increase in the BSPA budget in order for BSPA to have the resources needed for this very important work. We note that the proposed fee increase would result in a fee level comparable to those of our licensed counterparts in the state of Washington and to many of the license categories regulated by the Oregon Health Licensing Agency and other health care licensure boards in Oregon. Our members do not find this licensee fee unreasonable when weighed against the value of the BSPA and its regulation of the profession.

In conclusion, we urge your support of the proposed budget of the Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (BSPA) including the budget packages and license fee increase.

*Prepared by Bill Cross and Niki Terzieff, OSHA Government Affairs Advocates
February 18, 2013*