

Submitter: Reigan Hunsucker
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB943

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and members of the committee,
As a first-year audiology student, I am writing to express my strong support for SB 943. This bill is a critical step toward ensuring audiologists can fully utilize their education and training to provide high-quality hearing healthcare. By modernizing outdated licensure statutes, SB 943 will improve patient access to timely and effective care, reducing unnecessary delays and alleviating strain on an already overburdened medical system.

As I progress through my doctoral education, I am learning how audiologists are extensively trained in the evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of hearing and balance disorders across all age groups. Beyond treating hearing loss, audiologists play a vital role in identifying underlying medical conditions, triaging patients to physicians when needed, and ensuring that individuals receive the right care at the right time. However, current regulations create unnecessary limitations on the services audiologists can provide, leading to inefficiencies in patient care.

Outdated Licensure Statutes

Oregon's current audiology licensure statutes contain vague language, creating uncertainty about what procedures audiologists can perform—even when they are well within our training.

Simple health screenings, which are regularly performed by medical assistants and even smartphone apps, are not clearly defined as part of an audiologist's scope, despite our expertise in auditory and vestibular health.

SB 943 clarifies these statutes, ensuring that audiologists can confidently perform the screenings and procedures they are trained to do.

Aligning Scope with Skills

Oregon is experiencing a shortage of primary care and specialist physicians, resulting in long wait times for patients to see providers such as otolaryngologists (ENTs).

Audiologists are trained to recognize "red flag" symptoms of central auditory system disorders and can make appropriate referrals, helping to streamline patient care.

We also receive education in the genetic causes of hearing loss and are often the first to identify these conditions and guide families in their next steps.

By allowing audiologists to order medical imaging and lab work, SB 943 will reduce redundant appointments and speed up treatment for patients.

Better Utilizing Clinical Resources

Current laws allow audiology assistants to perform basic hearing tests under the supervision of physicians or naturopathic physicians, but not under audiologists—the professionals most qualified in assessing hearing.

Allowing audiologists to supervise audiology assistants for routine hearing tests

would enable more efficient use of clinical time, ensuring that audiologists can focus on complex cases.

SB 943 would update the statute to reflect this logical and necessary change.

This bill presents a clear path toward improving patient care, reducing healthcare costs, and ensuring that medical professionals can practice to the full extent of their training. These benefits will be especially meaningful for rural and underserved communities, where access to specialty care is already limited.

As an audiology student, I am excited about the future of this profession and the impact we can make in improving hearing healthcare. I urge you to support SB 943 to help create a system that better serves patients and providers alike.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Reigan Hunsucker

First-Year Doctor of Audiology Student

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