



**Washington State  
Board of Hearing and Speech  
Meeting Minutes**

**August 1, 2013**

**Board Members Present**

Lynn Bishop, Chair; Tom Putaansuu; Sheryl Arends; Rudy Gahler, MD; Cary Larson; Gail Rothwell; James Deal, Public Member, Vice-Chair

**Staff Present**

Janette Benham, Program Manager  
Sandie Pearson, Program Representative  
Taylor Linke, HSQA Operations Manager  
Heather Carter, Assistant Attorney General (AAG)

**Members Absent**

Trice Konschuh, Public Member

**Others Present**

Rick Giles  
Dave Moore  
Melissa Johnson, WA Speech & Hearing  
Association

Paul Sass, Costco  
Diane Pavlicek, Costco  
Tammy Clark, Costco

On August 1, 2013, the Board of Hearing and Speech met in Kent, WA at the Department of Health, Creekside Two at CenterPoint, 20425 72<sup>nd</sup> Ave S, Suite 310, Kent, WA 98032. In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the meeting agenda was emailed to the Hearing and Speech listserv.

**OPEN SESSION – 9:00 a.m.**

**1. CALL TO ORDER – Lynn Bishop, Chair**

**9:07 a.m.**

Ms. Bishop called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

**1.1 Approval of the agenda**

The agenda was approved as presented.

**1.2 Introductions**

Board members, staff, and audience members introduced themselves.

Janette Benham, Program Manager, presented Sheryl Arends with a Certificate of Appreciation and thanked her for serving on the board. Ms. Arends has served two terms and is not eligible for re-appointment, however she has agreed to serve until a replacement board member is appointed by the Governor.

**1.3 Approval of the May 3, 2013 Meeting Minutes**

The May 3, 2013 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

**2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

Board members nominated and voted for the vice-chair position effective August 1, 2013 through July 31, 2014. Per RCW 18.35.150(4):

*The chair shall rotate annually among the hearing instrument fitter/dispensers, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and public members serving on the board.*

The current rotation for board chair is a speech-language pathologist. The next rotation for board chair (August 1, 2014 to July 31, 2015) is a public member.

The nomination for 2013-2014 vice-chair was James Deal, Public Member. The board unanimously voted to elect James Deal to serve as vice-chair, effective August 1, 2013 to July 31, 2014.

**3. PROGRAM MANAGER REPORT – Janette Benham, Program Manager**

**3.1 Current Budget Report**

Ms. Benham provided budget report on the Hearing and Speech program budget through June 31, 2013. The report shows that the program started the 2011 - 2013 biennium with a balance of \$292,000 and ended the biennium with a balance of \$602,000. Ms. Benham informed the members that the program’s overall budget was in good shape and that the 2013 - 2015 biennium budget is currently being developed. James Deal, Public Member, asked about cuts to the program’s budget. Ms. Benham explained that all health profession programs are funded by the license/renewal fees of the profession. Because the program is fee driven, a budget cut would be unlikely; however, a reduction in licensing fees may be looked at in the future if the revenue trend continues. Ms. Benham will continue to monitor the development of the 2013 - 2015 operating budget and will provide updated information at the November meeting.

**3.2 Licensing Statistics**

Ms. Benham provided updated licensing statistics. The handout included licensing statistics for August 2012, May 2013, and August 2013. Statistics for August 2013 are as follows:

	<b>Fitter/Dispenser</b>	<b>Audiologist</b>	<b>SLP</b>	<b>SLPA (Certification)</b>
Active Licenses	297	402	2125	206
Inactive License	41	36	30	0
Expired License	897	182	837	45
Revoked License	22	0	1	0
Suspended License	15	2	0	0

Ms. Benham noted that the number of licensed SLPs continues to increase as a result of Health Care Authority rules requiring SLPs to be licensed to receive Medicaid reimbursement for services. In the past, school district Educational Staff Associates (ESAs) did not need to be licensed to receive reimbursement for services. Now that licensure is required for reimbursement, the number of school district ESAs getting their SLP licenses has increased.

### **3.3 Update on expired board member positions, board member recruitment, and board member appointments**

Ms. Benham updated the board on recruitment efforts to fill the vacant audiologist, fitter-dispenser, and public member positions. Applications have been received for each of the positions and are being forwarded to the Governor. Gail Rothwell will be recommended to serve a second term. Ms. Benham also reported that she is continuing to recruit for the MD position; however she has not received any applications at this time. She thanked Dr. Gahler for continuing to serve on the board and for his continued patience while a replacement is appointed.

### **3.4 Update on International Hearing Society (IHS) Computer-Based Examination**

Ms. Benham updated the board on the progress of the IHS computer-based fitter/dispenser examination. She reported that the contract with IHS is being finalized, and is almost in place. Because the contract is not yet in place the department and IHS are working together to schedule one more paper and pencil exam to be held in Tacoma in September. Ms. Benham anticipates that the computer-based exam will be available after September's paper/pencil exam. Updated exam information will be posted to the Hearing and Speech webpage.

### **3.5 Online Renewal Project Update**

Ms. Benham shared with the board that audiologists and fitter/dispensers are now able to renew their licenses online. Ms. Benham explained that the renewal cards have been changed to include an outline of the bond requirements and the attestation. Audiologists and fitter/dispensers renewing their licenses online will need to click on the link provided that will direct them to the bond requirements and the online attestation.

### **3.6 Citizen Advocacy Center 2013 Annual Meeting discussion and update**

Ms. Benham provided handouts regarding the Citizen Advocacy Center (CAC) 2013 Annual Meeting that is in Seattle this year. CAC is a non-profit support program for members who serve on healthcare regulatory boards. The theme of the meeting this year is *Regulation's Impact on Access to Safe Affordable Care*. Secretary John Weisman has been invited to give the keynote address and Assistant Secretary Karen Jensen is scheduled to provide the welcoming open remarks. Board members are invited to attend. Several members expressed interest in attending and will check their schedules and let program staff know if they will be attending.

## **4. REVIEW OF BYLAWS**

The board reviewed and discussed the updated Bylaws. Ms. Benham gave an overview of the board's suggested revisions that were made after discussion at the May meeting. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the updated Bylaws as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by the board.

## **5. SUICIDE IDEATION STUDY**

Carole Hooven from the University of Washington School of Nursing presented results from the suicide ideation education study. The report on suicide prevention training focused on two major questions:

*Does training help reduce the rate of suicide?* – The study looked at suicide rates and prevention among the general population as well as among the military. The studies show significant positive results, including a reduction in the rate of suicide ideation.

*Could they determine which specific professions should take suicide prevention training?* – The task force on suicide prevention surveyed professionals who interact with patients. The survey asked health professionals about their experiences with suicide prevention training. Professionals who were surveyed felt that suicide prevention training was within their scope but they felt they were underprepared and undertrained. Studies show that suicide prevention training led to more acknowledgement and assistance, but research did not focus on individual professions.

The task force did not make a recommendation that certain professions receive the training because there was a lack of profession-specific evidence. In general, research indicated that training in suicide prevention appears to have positive effects for patients and professionals.

## **6. ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL REPORT**

Heather Carter, AAG, reported that Jason Howell has taken a position with another agency and is no longer with the AAG's office. She reminded the board that he had been researching the pre-emption exemption. Mr. Howell forwarded his research and his recommendations to Ms. Carter and a supervisor prior to leaving the AAG's office. Updated information will be provided at a future meeting.

The board asked whether there had been an update regarding the Federal Trade Commission vs. the North Carolina Dental Board anti-trust case. Ms. Carter reported that the appeal was denied; the decision that North Carolina violated anti-trust laws was upheld.

## **7. CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence presented for board members to review at this time.

## **8. REVIEW OF COSTCO'S HEARING AID TRAINING PROGRAM**

The board reviewed Costco's hearing aid training program and a letter requesting the board to consider Costco's training program as an option for hearing instrument fitter/dispenser licensure.

Members reviewed the packet of information provided by Costco. The informational packet included an outline of their Hearing Aid Apprentice Program (HAAP), the Mentor Guide, and the Dispenser Candidate Guide.

The outline provided by Costco shows that their HAAP consists of:

- An online academic program (approximately 231 hours);
- Practical experience, learned on the job while working a minimum of 24 hours per week in a Costco hearing aid department (700 hours).

Costco HAAP apprentices receive training in two broad categories; practical skills and academics. Apprentices obtain their practical skills while on the job and working with their mentor at a Costco Hearing Aid Center. The academic portion of the program is with an online instructor through Costco's web based learning program. Academic assessments are confirmed

with e-learning quizzes on Costco U. Practical evaluations are conducted at various intervals. Industry specific skills include, but are not limited to, anatomy and physiology, audiometric testing, fitting and servicing hearing aids, and patient and family education.

The average length of Costco's HAAP is 12 to 18 months. Upon completion of the program the dispenser apprentice sits for the hearing aid fitter/dispenser exam required for licensure in their state (varies by state). The newly licensed individual continues to be mentored for an additional six months after initial licensure. *Noted in Costco's informational packet is the fact that state laws and their specific requirements and timelines for licensure may differ from what is outlined in the packet. The packet also advises individuals to check with their state licensing board to confirm specific training requirements in their state.*

Costco representatives, Paul Sass and Diane Pavlicek, were in attendance and asked to address the board. Ms. Pavlicek asked the board how Costco would go about obtaining legislation to have the apprenticeship program re-instated, and whether this was something the board did. Ms. Carter, AAG, explained that the board can't request legislation; however, the board can vote to decide to ask the department to request legislation. Ms. Carter added that the two-year degree is a statutory requirement of licensure, and the board's authority regarding any statutory requirement is limited.

Mr. Sass asked about other legal avenues available to have the fitter/dispenser apprenticeship program re-instated, such as a lawsuit. Ms. Carter, AAG, didn't know what type of lawsuit would change the statute.

Melissa Johnson, WA Speech and Hearing Association, explained that Costco could ask their local legislators to introduce a bill to reinstate the fitter/dispenser apprenticeship program. Ms. Johnson added that the 2014 session begins in January and bills being introduced are required to include at least one legislator's name on them.

Mr. Sass shared that he has been disappointed with the working knowledge of the newly licensed dispensers recently hired by Costco. He feels that they can't hire the newly licensed graduates without having them go through the Costco hearing aid training program. Ms. Pavlicek claims that newly licensed graduates aren't showing expected competence. In addition, she feels that the Spokane Falls on-line fitter/dispenser program does not have enough classroom time (18 hours), and that the program at Spokane Falls seems to be an internship/work experience based program.

Cary Larson asked the Costco representatives whether they had approached colleges individually to see whether a college would be interested in adopting and administering Costco's hearing aid training program. Costco has contacted some of the colleges.

Ms. Arends shared that it's been her experience that companies typically will have a training program in place for new hires to learn about the specific types of equipment offered and to ensure employees follows company procedures and policies.

Rick Giles shared that he could see both sides of the issue. As a small business owner, Mr. Giles feels it's difficult to compete with corporations like Costco. As a member of the International Hearing Society (IHS), Mr. Giles reported that IHS supports both paths to initial licensure; the two year degree program and the apprenticeship program. He also noted that 46

states had apprenticeship programs, and four states require secondary education to obtain licensure.

Dr. Gahler shared that he didn't necessarily like that the Spokane Falls Program included only 18 hours of class time. He asked if the board thought they should re-assess the program to ensure that it was in compliance. He added that when the board reviewed the Spokane Falls program for the first approval, he was impressed with it.

Ms. Larson asked about having the board invite both Spokane Falls and Bates to present information regarding each of their fitter/dispenser two year degree programs. Ms. Bishop suggested the Education/Exam Committee continue the discussion of inviting the schools to a future meeting.

Ms. Benham asked how the board would like to respond and proceed with the request from Costco. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved directing Ms. Benham to draft a letter of response to Costco, with RCW references outlining requirements for fitter/dispenser licensure.

## **9. COMMITTEE WORK**

### **9.1 Rules Committee**

Members: Gail Rothwell, SLP; Cary Larson, SLPA; Rudy Gahler, MD; Trice Konschuh, Public Member

- The committee will designate a committee chair.
- The committee will review and discuss rules to add CE requirements for SLPAs and add multicultural education requirements to WAC 246-828-510.

### **9.2 Education/Exam Committee**

Members: Lynn Bishop, SLP; Cary Larson, SLPA

- The committee will designate a committee chair.
- The committee will review the curriculum for Eastern New Mexico University's Bachelor of Science in Communicative Disorders and discuss approval of the program for the speech-language pathology assistant profession.
- The committee will review the curriculum for Northern Arizona University's Bachelor of Arts in Communication Sciences and Disorders and discuss approval of the program for the speech-language pathology assistant profession.
- The committee will review the curriculum for the Chico State University's Bachelor of Arts in Communication Sciences and Disorders and discuss approval of the program for the speech-language pathology assistant profession.
- The committee will review the curriculum for the Estrella Mountain Community College Associate in Applied Science in Speech-Language Pathology Assistant and discuss approval of the program.

### **9.3 Disciplinary Committee**

Members: Jim Deal, Public Member; Sheryl Arends, Fitter/Dispenser; Gail Rothwell, SLP; Lynn Bishop, SLP; Tom Putaansuu, Audiologist

- The committee will designate a committee chair.
- The committee will meet in closed session to review any new cases.

### **9.4 Public Relations Committee**

Members: Tom Putaansuu, Audiologist; Jim Deal, Public Member; Rudy Gahler, MD

- The committee will designate a committee chair
- The committee will review any lists and labels requests that have been received by staff.

## **10. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Rules Committee**

- The rules committee designated Gail Rothwell as committee chair.
- The committee reviewed and discussed drafting rules to add CE requirements for SLPAs and to add multicultural education requirements to WAC 246-828-510. Committee members asked Ms. Benham to include an update on the multicultural education requirements be added to the next meeting's agenda.

### **Education/Exam Committee**

- The education/exam committee designated Cary Larson as the committee chair.
- The committee discussed having representatives from Spokane Falls and Bates present an overview of their fitter/dispenser programs at a future board meeting. Tom Putaansuu shared that along with the program overview, he would like to each school to provide their exam statistics. The full board voted to have program staff contact Spokane Falls and Bates and invite them to a future meeting to provide a synopsis of their programs to board members.
- The committee reviewed and discussed the curriculum of the Eastern New Mexico University's Bachelor of Science in Communicative Disorders program for the speech-language pathology assistant profession. The board approved the program for speech-language pathology assistant certification.
- The committee reviewed and discussed the curriculum of the Northern Arizona University's Bachelor of Arts in Communication Sciences and Disorders program for the speech-language pathology assistant profession. The board approved the program for speech-language pathology assistant certification.

- The committee reviewed and discussed the curriculum of the Chico State University's Bachelor of Arts in Communication Sciences and Disorders program for the speech-language pathology assistant profession. The board approved the program for speech-language pathology assistant certification.
- The committee reviewed and discussed the curriculum of the Estrella Mountain Community College's Associate in Applied Science in Speech-Language Pathology Assistant program for the speech-language pathology assistant profession. The board approved the program for speech-language pathology assistant certification.

### **Disciplinary Committee**

- The disciplinary committee designated Tom Putaansuu as the committee chair.
- The disciplinary committee did not meet and did not have a report to the board.

### **Public Relations Committee**

- The public relations committee designated Jim Deal as the committee chair.
- The public relations committee did not meet and did not have a report to the board.

## **11. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

The board discussed adding the following items to future meeting agendas:

- History of Apprenticeship Program, then and now
- Exam Statistics (pass/fail based on states w/ apprenticeships vs. WA two-year program)
- Invite Spokane Falls CC to present F/D Program
- Invite Bates CC to present F/D/ Program
- Rules update, including update on multicultural requirements
- Budget – 2013-2015 Biennium budget update

## **12. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Dave Moore suggested the board invite a spokesperson from the Washington Hearing Association to present a historical overview of what precipitated the change from an apprenticeship program to a two-year degree program for fitter/dispenser licensure. The board discussed Mr. Moore's suggestion. Board members voted in favor of a motion to invite a representative from the Washington Hearing Association to a future meeting to present a historical overview of what initiated the change to a two year fitter/dispenser degree.

## **13. ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

There were no additional items for board discussion at this time.

## **14. CONSENT AGENDA**

- 14.1** A copy of the July issue of "The Sentinel News for DOH Employees" was provided in the board member packets for their review.

**CLOSED SESSION – 1:18 p.m.**

**15. APPLICATION REVIEWS**  
Applicant A-1 – Approved

**OPEN SESSION – 1:26 p.m.**

**16. ADJOURNMENT – 1:27 p.m.**

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Prepared By: Janette Benham, Program Manager

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Date

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Approved By: Lynn Bishop, Chair

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Date