



AHS NEWS

A Publication of the Maryland Board of Examiners for
Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers
and Speech-Language Pathologists



Spring 2011

HAD 2011 Renewal Review

A grand total of 106 hearing aid dispensers completed the renewal process. A total of 94 completed the online renewal process. This represents a 10% increase over the first online renewal process in 2009. More than 88% of online renewal applications paid via credit card; this represents a 17% increase over the 2009 renewal process. An additional 12 licensees completed the process entirely by paper.

Board regulations require that ten percent of renewal applications to be audited for compliance with the CEU requirements. Of the licensees selected for audit, 87% submitted their CE documents and were subsequently issued a renewal license.

Non-renew notices were sent to the 18 hearing aid dispensers that did not renew their licenses. To date the Board has reinstated two hearing aid dispenser licenses.

The Board has reviewed the evaluation comments during the renewal process – additional improvements to the online process may be forthcoming if the Board’s IT partner can implement the changes. The Board extends its sincere appreciation to licensees who completed the process in a timely manner and exhibited patience during the renewal license issuing process.

New Board Member

Mr. Rodric McKinnon was appointed as a consumer member for the Board. Mr. McKinnon’s term ends on June 30, 2011.

Mr. McKinnon replaces Ms. Arlinda Harris who served for nearly 3 years. The Board thanks Ms. Harris for her dedication to the consumer public and her interest in the licensing of health care professionals.

The Board and its staff thanks the DHMH’s Office of Executive Appointments for their hard work in this endeavor.

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Board Meeting Dates 2011–2012

- June 16, 2011
- July 21, 2011
- September 15, 2011
- October 20, 2011
- January 19, 2012
- February 16, 2012
- March 15, 2012
- April 19, 2012

The Board meets at 4:00 p.m. at 4201 Patterson Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21215. The Regular Session is open to the public and the Administrative Session is closed to the public.

2011 Legislative Highlights

During the 2011 legislative session there were no bills that were introduced that would have altered this Board's governing statute, provided a reason to amend its regulations, or affect its finances.

However, HB 452/SB 702 were passed—these bills will require insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations (carriers) that provide coverage for hearing aids for adults to allow an adult insured or enrollee to choose a hearing aid that is priced above the benefit limit and pay the difference in cost. The new legislation would apply to all policies, contracts and health benefit plans issued, delivered, or renewed in the State on or after October 1, 2011.

At the time this newsletter was finalized and posted to the Board's website the bills had not yet been signed by the Governor.

As this legislation does not pertain to this Board's statute or otherwise affect its regulations or finances Board staff will not answer any questions about them, its implementation, or its impact to licensees.

Change of Address Forms

It is the responsibility of the licensee to report to the Board any change of name or address to the Board within 30 days after that change. The change of address form will no longer be printed on newsletters—the change of address form is available on the Board's website in the "Forms" section. To change your name you must mail a copy of the official document with your correspondence. If you request a new license reflecting the name and/or address change you must submit a \$5.00 fee for each license printed. Mail all correspondence to Board of AUD, HAD, S-LP at 4201 Patterson Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21215-2299 or you may fax the documents to 410-358-0273.

The Board and Board Staff

Audiologists

Lisa Nelson, Au.D, Board Chair
(term expires 6/30/11)
Charlotte Godfrey, Au.D
(term expires 6/30/12)
Ronald Kaplan, Au.D
(term expires 6/30/13)

Speech Language Pathologists

Cassandra Peters-Johnson, Ph.D, Board Co-Chair
(term expires 6/30/11)
Princess Evans, M.S.
(term expires 6/30/12)
John Sloan, M.S.
(term expires 6/30/14)

Hearing Aid Dispensers

Kenneth Needle, Board Co-Chair
(term expires 6/30/12)
C. Kirk Payne
(term expires 6/30/12)
Billie Jo O'Donovan
(term expires 6/30/14)

Consumer Members

Rebecca L. Conley- Hartman (term expires 6/30/13)
Rodric D. McKinnon (term expires 6/30/11)

Otolaryngologists

Stacey Ishman, M.D. (term expires 6/30/14)
Scott D. London, M.D. (term expires 6/30/14)

The Board of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists has thirteen members. There are 3 audiologists, 3 hearing aid dispensers, 3 speech-language pathologists, 2 otolaryngologists, and 2 consumer members. The Board is supported by an Executive Director, a License Coordinator, an Office Secretary, an Investigator, and Board Counsel.

Board Staff

Christopher J. Kelter, Executive Director
Zoann Mouzone, License Coordinator Yolanda Campbell, Office Secretary
Delia Turano Schadt, Board Counsel

State Furloughs – Board Offices Closed

The Board will be affected by five mandated office closure days in fiscal year 2012. All State offices including the Board's office will be closed on September 2nd, 2011, November 23rd, 2011, December 26th, 2011, and December 30th, 2011. All state offices including the Board's office will be closed on May 27th, 2012.

These days precede regular State holidays and are intended to minimize impact on normal State business. The mandated furlough days as implemented in the last three fiscal years will not be implemented in fiscal year 2012.

At the present time similar mandated office closure days are anticipated for fiscal year 2013 (July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013).

Continuing Education Deadline for SLPs

The Board has begun the process of formally changing the continuing education deadline for speech-language pathologists to December 31 of the year preceding the renewal year through the regulatory change process. The Board will advise affected licensees via e-mail of the comment period for the proposed change when that change has been published in the Maryland register.

Effective with the 2012 renewal speech-language pathologists must complete the minimum required continuing education hours between January 1, 2010 and December 31, 2011.

This change does not apply to speech-language pathology assistants. Speech-language pathology assistants must still complete 10 continuing education units in the two years preceding renewal concurrent with the licensure cycle.

Questions regarding the continuing education deadline for SLPs should be directed to Christopher Kelter, Executive Director, via phone at 410-764-4723 or via e-mail at kelterc@dnhm.state.md.us.

Continuing Education—Increase in Minimum Hours

Effective with the 2014 renewal for audiologists and speech-language pathologists and effective with the 2015 renewal for hearing aid dispensers the minimum number of continuing education hours has been increased to a minimum of 30 continuing hours. The change became official on May 20, 2011.

Specific information regarding the continuing education hours will be posted to the Board's website and general information will be provided via e-mail to all licensees.

The Board will also provide additional information regarding continuing education hours that can be earned through independent activities, pro bono activities, and other non-traditional means.

Replacement License

The “Lost License Form” previously utilized by the Board is null and void effective February 18, 2011. To request a replacement license submit a written request to the Board and enclose a check or money order in the amount of \$5.00. The Board reminds all licensees that pursuant to § 2-311 “each licensee shall display the license in the office or place of employment of the licensee.” It is not acceptable to display a photocopy of a Board-issued license.

Trade Name

If a licensee wishes to create a new corporate trade name, the State Department of Assessment and Taxation will advise you to seek approval of the trade name from the licensing board. State law requires a licensing board to work with the appropriate professional association to meet all statutory requirements for a trade name. Once this process is finalized the Board of Examiners will post all relevant request forms and related information on the Board’s website.

FAQ—Application Processing

Question: Does the Board process applications once a month on days the Board meets?

Answer: In the past it was common practice for any licensing board to finalize applications for licensure during official meetings, which generally only occurred once each month. However, most licensing boards have moved away from this practice in the interest in ensuring qualified individuals are practicing their chosen profession in a timely manner. Currently, the Board continually processes applications. An application is processed once it is complete - this includes receipt and verification of all required documents and fees. Applications may be delayed and/or approved at a Board meeting if an applicant presents a criminal history or other outstanding questions need to be addressed by the full Board at a meeting.

Cultural Competency

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene supports cultural competency of health care providers in Maryland. DHMH’s Office of Minority Health & Health Disparities provides a wealth of information at the following site: <http://www.dhmf.state.md.us/hd/>

This website contains facts, reports, resource materials, grant funding information, and much more. Take some time to avail the resources at your disposal.

Statistical Report

As of May 12, 2011 there were 3,021 Speech-Language Pathologists, 32 Speech-Language Pathology Assistants, 399 Audiologists, and 109 Hearing Aid Dispensers with active licenses in Maryland. In addition to active full licensees, the Board has 157 Speech-Language Pathologist—Limited Licensees, 13 Speech-Language Pathologist Assistants-Limited Licensees, and 16 Hearing Aid Dispenser-Limited Licensees. At the present time there are no limited licensees in Audiology.

Disciplinary Matters

Kimberley Hammond, Audiologist, Acceptance of Public Letter of Surrender of her license on April 21, 2011.

Use of Title

The Board has received many complaints and inquiries regarding use of title in advertising. The Board's ensuing investigations reveal that licensees are not properly identifying themselves by title and degree earned. Per statute a licensee must identify themselves by title and degree earned. Please see Health Occupations Article § 2-307.4 for more information.

Board Outreach

The Board's Executive Director attended the Maryland Speech-Hearing Association's 2011 Annual Conference held in Towson, Maryland on April 1st and April 2nd. The Board updated attendees on recent regulatory changes, the 2011 legislative session, and other issues germane to the Board's functions and responsibilities. The Board's Executive Director thanks all of the attendees for their professionalism during the entire event. The questions, inquiries, dialogue and discussion provided insights to ensure that the licensure program is well run and serves its primary mission to protect the consumer public.

The Board's Executive Director and board member Mr. John Sloan, CCC-SLP, spoke to the prospective graduates of the Towson University speech-language pathology Master's program. The discussion was centered around the differences between state licensure and national certification. Additionally, the application process was discussed in detail. The Board thanks former Board member Professor Iona Johnson for her cooperation with this presentation.

The Board's Executive Director will attend the Maryland Academy of Audiology's 2011 Annual Conference in Ellicott City, Maryland on September 8th and 9th.

Letter of Good Standing a.k.a. Verification Letter

To request a verification letter an individual with an active license must submit a written request. There is no fee assessed for the letter of good standing for an active licensee. As there is no fee for active licensees the request may be submitted by fax or e-mail.

An individual whose license has expired must submit a written request and the \$25.00 fee in the form of a check or money order. These requests must be submitted by U.S. Postal Service or overnight delivery service.

The request must include the licensee's name, profession, license number, and where the verification letter should be sent.

In most cases a verification letter is usually mailed to the other licensing Board or prospective employer within five business days.

Continuing Education—Approval

The Board has a process for approval of continuing education (CE) courses and other activities that are not otherwise approved for continuing education credit. First, a CE provider may request approval from the Board to award credit for CE courses. Second, a licensee may request approval from the Board for credit for CE courses. Third, a licensee may request approval for an individual project.

Please review the appropriate forms on the Board's website. The forms to request approval of continuing education programs or activities not otherwise approved for continuing education credit are posted on the Board's website under Forms tab, Continuing Education Forms link.

The Board's regulations governing approval of CE courses state that all requests and forms must be submitted to the Board at least 30 days prior to the start of the activity being requested for approval. Requests for approval received within 30 days of the start of the activity may not be reviewed and approved by the Board. The Board does not have the authority to retroactively approve CE courses not otherwise meeting the requirements.

Infant Hearing Program

The Maryland Family Health Administration (FHA) administers the Infant Hearing Program.

Audiologists that participate in the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program should refer to the Checklist and Guidelines provided by the FHA to ensure that they are following all acceptable procedures.

Communication Via E-Mail

The Board has selected the use of trusted e-Company to assist the Board in meeting its mass communication needs. The use of this provider will allow the Board to use e-mail to advise licensees of the issuance of newsletters, substantive changes to the Board's website, etc. and other important news (e.g., cancellation of Board meetings and other news bulletins of importance that cannot wait for newsletters). This will allow the Board to save a significant amount of funds by reducing mailing costs. The Board is committed to the use of e-mail for mass communication needs. Accordingly, it has never been more important to maintain a current e-mail address with the Board. Changes in e-mail address may be sent to kelterc@dhmh.state.md.us for immediate updating in the Board's records.

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