

July 25, 2023

Re: Informational Meeting on H.B. 1356 – Social Workers, Marriage, and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors
Act: Providing for licensing and regulating the practice of music therapy.

Chairman Burns and Chairman Metzgar, distinguished committee members, and staff, on behalf of the Pennsylvania Speech Language Hearing Association (PSHA), we want to thank you for this opportunity to address the committee during testimony for House Bill (H.B.) 1356.

PSHA represents speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and speech and hearing scientists from across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Both members and non-members recognize the value of the organization in linking them with pertinent information about practice in Pennsylvania. It is essential that licensure and certification requirements for the professions are closely monitored and preserved, that scopes of practice are defined and protected, and that diverse populations of students and practitioners are supported. SLPs and audiologists are widely recognized, by those in health care settings and in educational settings, as the experts in communication, swallowing disorders, and hearing services, with PSHA as their primary resource across the Commonwealth.

PSHA honors its role to advocate for the professions and the patients we serve under consumer protection, addressing potential infringement upon the scopes of practice by other professions that lack the necessary academic and clinical preparation to evaluate, intervene and manage communication and swallowing disorders. We do not oppose licensure for other professions unless there is an evident scope violation. PSHA believes that the proposed definition of the licensure for Music Therapists in HB 1356, following ongoing work between ASHA and AMTA, has addressed all language that has the potential to encroach on the scope of practice of a variety of disciplines. With the current language, PSHA aligns with ASHA on remaining neutral for this proposed legislation.

Once again, we emphasize that PSHA, representing members and non-members from across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, is neutral to HB 1356.

The membership of PSHA would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation. If you have additional questions or need further information, please contact our leadership through the PSHA office at psha@psha.org or 412-366-9858. We will be happy to take any questions you may have.

Dana Bitetti, PhD, CCC-SL, President, Pennsylvania Speech Language Hearing Association