

West Virginia Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology

April 8, 2020

Time: 5:00 PM
Location: Emergency Board Meeting via Video Conference from Remote Sites

Present: Board President, Erin Browning
Board Secretary, Vickie Pullins
Board Member, Dr. Michael Zagarella
Board Member, Dr. Vernon Mullins
Citizen Member, Joe Richards
Keith Fisher, Assistant Attorney General – Board Attorney
Patty Nesbitt, Executive Director

President Erin Browning called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

The Board discussed the pros and cons of opening up the practice of telepractice across state lines to licensed providers in their home state. Keith Fisher explained the option of requesting an Executive Order from the Governor to suspend the current limitation of five days specified in our Code. The five day period in a calendar year allows licensed speech pathologists and audiologists from other states to provide services in West Virginia without applying for a license. The providers must, however, register with the Board.

Vickie Pullins made a motion to allow out of state licensees to provide telepractice services throughout the period of the pandemic as long as they register with our Board office.

Mike Zagarella stipulated the motion should include providing telepractice services to existing patients only and throughout the state of emergency instead of the pandemic. Vickie Pullins amended her motion to allow out of state licensees to provide telepractice services to existing patients through the duration of the state of emergency. Because the statute does not stipulate “existing patients/clients”, it will probably not be possible to stipulate the same in the Executive Order.

Vickie Pullins amended the motion to allow practitioners to provide telepractice services in WV during the duration of the state of emergency if they hold a license in their home state. They must also register with the Board. Mike Zagarella seconded the motion. Vernon Mullins and Joe Richards abstained. Motion carried with 3 yeas.

Keith Fisher will write the letter to the Governor requesting an Executive Order per the above motion.

The board had a lengthy discussion regarding the license requirement for public school speech pathologists providing telepractice because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Vickie Pullins made a motion to suspend the application fee of \$100 through June 30th for any public school speech pathologist who meets

the requirements for licensure. The license fee will be reduced to \$50 so continuity of services to the students of WV can continue. Mike Zagarella seconded the motion. Four members voted yes. Joe Richards voted no. Motion carried. Patty Nesbitt will prepare an emergency rule for submission to the Secretary of State's office.

Vernon Mullins made a motion to adjourn. Vickie Pullins seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:37 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia J. Nesbitt for
Vickie Pullins, Secretary