

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
HEALTH REGULATION AND LICENSING ADMINISTRATION**

BOARD OF AUDIOLOGY AND SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

AUTHORITY FOR GUIDANCE

21-001
POLICY NO.

March 15, 2021
DATE OF POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

CLARIFICATION OF BOARD APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

In March of 2020, the Mayor and Director of the Health Department issued a Telehealth Waiver for Health Care Professionals in good standing with another state or jurisdiction permission to provide telehealth services to residents residing in the District of Columbia due to the current COVID-19 Pandemic social distancing efforts of reducing the spread of the virus.

Telehealth is considered a method of service delivery. The current, applicable regulations apply to all methods of service delivery, including Telehealth. The licensee is responsible for using professional judgment to determine if the type of service can be delivered via Telehealth at the same standard of care as in-person service.

The Board will excuse the requirement for pre-license supervised experience for Speech Language Pathology and Audiology to be provided on a continuous basis if such continuous experience cannot be completed during the State of Emergency declared by the Mayor relating to the COVID-19 health crisis. For the duration of the current state of emergency, the requirement that supervised experience be obtained on a “continuous” basis will be suspended. One can resume their supervised experience where they left off before it was interrupted by COVID-19.

Clinical fellows are allowed to utilize Telehealth. Telehealth is permissible for the completion of supervised experience. However, Telehealth should not be used as the sole modality, while earning experience toward licensure.

A clinical fellow can be supervised remotely. Appropriate supervision can be provided through the use of distance technology. However, individuals earning their experience will still need direct, regular real-time interactions with their supervisor whether that is accomplished in person or through modern telecommunication technology.

District regulations require that practitioners complete a portion of their continuing education courses in live, in-person settings in order for the practitioner to renew their license, registration, or certificate with the Department. The Board finds there has been a disruption of traditional in-

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person methods of education, including the in-person continuing education courses that practitioners must complete in order to renew their health occupation licenses, registrations, or certificates with the Department. The Board recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has made, and continues to make, in-person continuing education instruction generally unavailable and, in some cases, inadvisable. The Board, therefore, will allow alternatives to the in-person continuing education requirement imposed on professionals. Thus, practitioners affected by the hardship of completing in-person continuing education courses due to the COVID-19 pandemic will have a pathway to fulfill their continuing education obligations in time to renew their health occupation licenses, registrations, or certificates.

The Board, at its discretion, will accept continuing education courses that are completed via remote instruction (e.g., broadcasted live via the internet) in lieu of continuing education courses that must be completed via in-person instruction when extraordinary circumstances make attainment of in-person continuing education courses an undue hardship for the license, registration, or certificate-holders regulated by the Board. The Board may also exempt holders of a license, registration, or certificate from the continuing education requirements in certain circumstances. It is imperative to the health, welfare, and safety of the residents of the District of Columbia that health practitioners be provided a pathway to retain their licenses and continue to provide needed healthcare in extraordinary circumstances, especially during an ongoing pandemic.

The Board supports the effort to amend and update its current statutes and regulations to bring further clarification.

All inquiries pertaining to the practice of audiology and speech-language pathology, including this policy, may be directed to the Board at dcboaud@dc.gov.