

## **AN UPDATE ON UNIVERSAL LICENSURE**

**By**

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After three and one half decades of working to upgrade the standards for licensing speech-language pathologists in Oregon, the Oregon Speech-Language and Hearing Association (OSHA) is supporting Senate Bill 287. This “Deletes the provision that authorizes teachers who are endorsed by Teacher Standards and Practices Commission to practice speech-language pathology without obtaining a license from Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology.” The TSPC is also in support of this legislation.

Currently the Oregon Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (BSPA) has the authority to license speech-language pathologists (SLPs) in Oregon. Oregon Revised Statute 343.211 authorizes those licensed by the BSPA to provide related services in Oregon public schools without holding a license from the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC). Most K-12 and Education Service Districts are employing SLPs with the BSPA license. So, in essence, we have universal licensure. The only problem is that TSPC standards for license content and continuing education are not equivalent of those of the profession.

Having two licenses with different standards leads to confusion. There is the extra cost to those that obtain a license from TSPC and BSPA, not to mention the extra costs for having two state agencies licensing a person to perform the same duties. Lastly, the approach to regulation of licensees differs for TSPC and BSPA.

After July 1, 2016 all of those entering the profession must obtain a license from the BSPA, and this will meet the licensure requirements for any setting. Also, all of those licensed after this date and going forward, will meet the same standards and pay one fee. The number of licensees under TSPC has been dwindling over recent years, with new graduates skipping the confusion and cost of dual licensure by obtaining a license from BSPA only. Another piece of good news is that TSPC will continue to license those who do not meet the BSPA standards. The new law clearly states that these individuals are eligible to only practice in the public schools.

OSHA has a position paper supporting universal licensure. If you would like a copy of this, feel free to e-mail me at [mrjtra@yahoo.com](mailto:mrjtra@yahoo.com). If you would like to track the bill, here is the link <http://gov.oregonlive.com/bill/2015/SB287/>. There is also a link on that page that will take you to a pdf of the entire bill.