

SLPA RECOMMENDATIONS

WSHA Executive Board

President Tina (Radichel) Eichstadt charged Deb Brossard, Vice President-School Services; Gary Cohen, Vice President-Governmental Affairs; and Barb Grande, Vice President-Health Care Services with preparing an action plan for the 2004-2005 membership year on the SLPA concept and participation within the WSHA organization, in accordance with member needs and requests for information regarding the appropriate use and practice of assistant-level professionals in various settings.

The committee met to discuss the WSHA concerns. The following recommendations were made and it was recommended that these comments and proposed actions be forwarded to the WSHA Executive Board:

1. The concept of and training programs for SLPAs, as outlined by ASHA guidelines, should be supported by WSHA. While the ASHA Legislative Counsel recently rescinded the program approval and registration processes nationally for fiscal reasons, the value of SLPAs and the practice standards set up have been supported nationally by a majority of the professionals.
2. WSHA member education is of utmost need and importance as indicated by the recent WSHA member survey of DPI 820 license holders. The WSHA Board interprets from the results of this survey that there are vast differences in knowledge base among our member colleagues and that there is a need to make past, current, and future information on the topic readable and accessible.
 - a. ACTION: WSHA will actively provide historic and current information re: SLPAs from work done in WSHA and info published by ASHA. This includes Legislative Council (LC) reports, guidelines and standards documents, and reports on the use of SLPAs in multiple clinical settings. This educational information will be housed on the WSHA website under "Hot Topics" for the time being, and updated as information is authorized by the VP-Communications and/or the WSHA Board.
 - b. ACTION: WSHA will actively provide historic and current information re: SLPAs from work done in WSHA and published within the WSHA membership and around Wisconsin. Various committees and individuals with expertise and experience in working with SLPAs across settings have done a tremendous amount of work and advocacy for clear guidelines and proposed directions for SLPAs in Wisconsin. This educational information will be housed on the WSHA website under "Hot Topics" for the time being, and updated as information is authorized by the VP-Communications and/or the WSHA Board.
3. SLPAs should be afforded membership status upon completion of the Associate Degree in Speech/Language Pathology from a program that has followed the ASHA guidelines or equivalent for scope and knowledge base.
 - a. ACTION: The WSHA Board will initiate the process for a proposed bylaws change to WSHA members to include a membership category called "Assistant Member" for those who have completed a technical training degree (i.e., SLPAs) effective 7/1/04. Exact wording and rights of the membership category will be proposed by the Bylaws Committee for member review, as well as wording for membership of those who are currently practicing under the title of SLPAs.
 - b. ACTION: The WSHA Board will initiate the process for a proposed bylaws change to WSHA members to include a Presidential appointee Board role for one (1) SLPA.
4. The impact of working with qualified SLPAs varies widely among all practice settings in the professions. It is imperative that WSHA simultaneously monitor, support, and advocate for legislation, rules, and state-level guidelines that protect the implementation and use of SLPAs as

outlined by the most recent ASHA guidelines. Some language currently exists for certain practice settings, but not for all. Issues such as caseload/workload limits in the context of SLPAs, training of supervising SLPs, DPI, and LEAs, IDEA reauthorization with clarified language, MA billing, and other issues.

- a. ACTION: The LSHSS committee, in connection with the WSHA Board, WSHA's lobbyist, and SLPA experts will lead member efforts to pursue advocacy in all settings related to SLPAs.

Certainly, there will be other issues and related matters that will emerge through these efforts. However, with solid member education as a beginning, we believe that our multifaceted efforts will benefit the professions in Wisconsin while also serving as a potential model for other states not yet acknowledging the reality of SLPAs in practice settings across the professions.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Vice President-Governmental Affairs