



January 17, 2025

Dr. Robyn Zeltinger
President, North Dakota State Board of Examiners on Audiology & Speech Language Pathology
PO Box 1338
Bismarck, ND 58502

RE: HB 1049

Dear Dr. Zeltinger:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), I write to express support for House Bill 1049, with recommended amendments, which provides clarifying language for licensing speech-language pathology assistants (SLPAs).

ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 234,000 members, certificate holders, and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists (SLPs); speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology assistants; and students. Over 670 ASHA members reside in North Dakota.¹

ASHA supports the language providing pathway options for a licensed SLPA. However, we recommend adding the underlined language below under Section 2 in the bill.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.

43-37-04. Eligibility for licensure.

- c. An applicant for a speech-language pathology assistant license must possess one hundred hours of supervised clinical experience under a licensed speech-language pathologist. Hours may be completed via an academic practicum or on the job with a speech-language pathologist who currently or previously possessed their Certificate of Clinical Competence.

For the educational pathways, we recommend separating the two options in (2) to create three options and adding the underlined language below:

- (1) A bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology or communication disorders from an accredited institution or
- (2) A two-year degree in speech-language pathology assistants program from an accredited institution; or
- (3) A bachelor's degree in another field from an accredited institution with coursework in the following areas:

The examination requirements currently state the following:

4. Within one year of application an applicant for licensure as a speech-language pathologist, speech-language pathology assistant, or audiologist must pass any applicable examination prescribed by rules adopted by the board.

We recommend deleting “speech-language pathology assistant” from number 4 in the sentence above and adding a new number 5 to state:

5. Upon completion of their academic practicum and clinical hours, a speech-language pathology assistant must pass any applicable examination prescribed by rules adopted by the board.

For reference, passing ASHA’s Assistants Certification Exam is part of the application steps for ASHA’s speech-language pathology assistants certification (C-SLPA).² Therefore, if an individual decides to pursue the C-SLPA, the exam would be part of that process and not offered separately.

ASHA believes appropriately trained and supervised SLPAs can significantly alleviate provider shortages and help those in North Dakota with communication and related disorders.

Thank you for considering ASHA’s recommended amendments to HB 1049. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA’s director of state association relations, at ecrowe@asha.org.

Sincerely,



A. B. Mayfield-Clarke, PhD, CCC-SLP
2025 ASHA President

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2023). *North Dakota* [Quick Facts]. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/advocacy/state-fliers/north-dakota-state-flyer.pdf>

² American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). Education Pathways to Speech-Language Pathology Assistants Certification. <https://www.asha.org/certification/education-pathways-to-speech-language-pathology-assistants-certification/>