

SB 943 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

Prepared By: Daniel Dietz, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/13

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure defines “audiologist,” specifies education requirements for licensure, defines practices, and establishes investigation procedures for the State Board Examiners for Speech Language Pathology and Audiology.

DETAILED SUMMARY:

- Specifies that an audiologist may:
 - Prescribe, order, sell, dispense, and fit hearing aids and hearing technologies.
 - Externally fit sound processors for osseointegrated devices, cochlear implants, and auditory brainstem implants.
 - Conduct health screenings, remove cerumen and foreign bodies from external auditory canal, and order radiographic imaging and lab cultures.
- Updates accreditation requirements for colleges offering audiology programs, aligning them with standards from the Council on Academic Accreditation and the Accreditation Commission for Audiology Education.
- Establishes that individuals must be licensed to practice audiology or speech-language pathology.
- Redefines practice of audiology to broaden the definition to include prevention, diagnosis, and rehabilitation of auditory and vestibular conditions. Explicitly states that audiologists cannot perform osseointegrated device or cochlear implant surgeries.
- Defines “direct supervision” and “general supervision” for those performing audiology-related work without a license.
- Requires the State Board of Examiners to notify individuals that they are under investigation, to provide a summary of their rights, and to offer an expected timeline for resolution. The Board must allow a 21-day response period for complaints and adopt rules setting specific investigation timelines.
- Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Audiologists are health care professionals who specialize in hearing and balance problems for patients of all ages. The Board of Examiners for Speech Language Pathology and Audiology (“Board”) was established in Oregon in 1973. The Board adopts rules to regulate the professions.

Senate Bill 943 outlines audiology licensure requirements, practices, and investigation procedures for the state licensing board.