

IMPORTANT LEGISLATIVE NEWS!

Governor Signs Assembly Bill 1535- Merger of the SLPAB and the HADB -and Senate Bill 821-Changing Audiology Licensing Standards

On October 11, 2009, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed [Assembly Bill 1535](#) which will merge the Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau, Department of Consumer Affairs into the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board to create a new entity, “The Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensers Board (SLPAHADB),” effective January 1, 2010. The newly merged Board will regulate the professions of speech-language pathology, audiology, and hearing aid dispensing. Other provisions included in AB 1535 which will take effect January 1, include:

- The authorization for audiologists to dispense hearing aids under the audiology license provided the audiologist has taken and passed both the written and practical examinations in hearing aid dispensing.
 - ✓ Dispensing audiologists will no longer be required to hold a separate hearing aid dispensers license.
 - ✓ The SLPAHADB will issue dispensing audiologists a “Certificate of Authorization to Dispense” either upon expiration of the Hearing Aid Dispensers license or after passing the requisite practical examination for new applicants.
- Changes the governance structure of the seated Board members to the following: two speech-language pathologists, two audiologists, one of whom must be a dispensing audiologist, and two hearing aid dispensers, all to be appointed by the Governor. The Governor also has the appointing authority for a public member seat which shall be occupied by a licensed physician and surgeon, board certified in otolaryngology. Two other public member seats are to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules and the Speaker of the Assembly, respectively.
- Creates a Hearing Aid Dispensers Committee under the full Board which shall be comprised of both the two audiology and hearing aid dispenser board members, one public member of the Board, and the Otolaryngologist.
- Subjects dispensing audiologists to specific hearing aid dispensing provisions such as, catalogue/direct mail sales, specific product receipt requirements, record retention requirements, and referrals to physicians for specified medical conditions.
- Changes the fee structure for dispensing audiologists to \$280 for initial license fees and renewal fees. ***Also, changes the renewal cycle for dispensing audiologists to an annual renewal as opposed to the current two-year renewal cycle. The audiology renewal cycle will remain a two-year cycle pending further implementing regulations as determined by the new merged Board.***
 - ✓ Non-dispensing audiologists and speech-language pathologists will not be subject to the new fee schedule or revised renewal cycle.
 - ✓ All dispensing audiologists whose license expires between January 31, 2010 – March 31, 2010 will be mailed manual renewal forms indicating the change in license expiration date. Please note: If the Board does not have a current address of record on file, you may not receive the renewal notice in the mail. Should you have any questions regarding your license renewal, please contact the Board for further instructions.

Attention Licensees: Please stay tuned! The Board will be discussing necessary changes to the current continuing professional development requirements for dispensing audiologists!

Also Signed - Senate Bill 821

SB 821 changes the entry-level licensing standards for audiology applicants! Effective January 1, 2010 audiology applicants who graduated from an approved audiology training program after January 1, 2008 must hold a doctorate degree in audiology to qualify for licensure in California. The provisions of SB 821 also make conforming changes to the Required Professional Experience (RPE) requirements for individuals completing the 4th-year AuD externship in another state under the auspice of an approved training program. The new provisions deem the externship as equivalent to an RPE completed in California and **does not** require a student completing the out-of-state externship to hold the Temporary Required Professional Experience License in order to qualify for a permanent license in the state.

SB 821 also provides greater flexibility in the supervision standards for audiology aides. The bill removes the language requiring “direct” supervision for all audiology aide duties and provides the Board with the authority to devise implementing regulations specifying appropriate supervision parameters based on general duties assigned to audiology aides.