

LBESPA's Response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

* For the safety of our employees and patrons, the Board office building is open for visitors by appointment only. The Board staff is working Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Most documents can be submitted via email or left in the silver mailbox in the front of the building.

Criminal Background Checks

Louisiana State Police Headquarters has closed from March 20 – April 12, 2020, due to the public health emergency. This means that the Board's applicants will experience a delay in the processing of criminal background checks. The Board motioned to grant conditional licenses to individuals who have all required documentation, with the exception of a completed criminal background check. Upon receipt of a clean criminal background check, the Board will consider lifting the conditions.

The Board will also send an email to Michelle Ridge regarding the Board's concerns relating to criminal background checks. (March 23, 2020)

Governor John Bel Edwards worked with the Louisiana State Police, who will process criminal background checks on an as NEEDED basis. Please contact the Board office directly to discuss options. The Board will continue to issue conditional licenses as needed for individuals who are only lacking criminal background checks. (April 2, 2020)

The Louisiana State Police have now dedicated two hours a week to take fingerprinting and process criminal background checks for LBESPA. Once you submit an application for licensure, please contact the Board office at mricca@lbespa.org and you will given a date and time that you are able to go to the Louisiana State Police Headquarters to complete the requirements for the criminal background check. Only individuals who have made arrangements with the Board office will be allowed to enter. (April 7, 2020)

The Board voted to temporarily extend the timeframe for accepting criminal background checks for up to 120 days from the Board's receipt, for COVID-19 related delays. (May 15, 2020)

As of May 15, 2020, the Louisiana State Police Headquarters is open to the public and will no longer schedule appointments. The LSP Headquarters are open from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. Due to limited seating, the LSP is asking that only the person being fingerprinted enter the building. You **MUST** be wearing a mask to enter the building. Please make sure you come with the appropriate Authorization Form (with the Board information and contact signature at the top) and a Rap Disclosure Form completed, driver's license and payment (money orders, debit/credit card). All money orders must be made payable to Louisiana State Police.

Essential/Non-Essential Personnel

In regard to Proclamation Number 33 JBE 2020 issued by Governor John Bel Edwards on March 22, 2020, the Board does not have the authority to determine whether practicing Audiologists and/or Speech-Language Pathologists are essential or non-essential. If you need further clarification on your role during this public health emergency, the Board recommends that you contact the Louisiana Department of Health and/or the Governor's Office for clarification on the proclamation. (March 23, 2020)

Facility Closures

The Board does not have authority to require facility closures. (March 20, 2020)

Renewals

No renewal modifications at this time. (March 18, 2020)

Supervision

Direct Supervision for Provisional and Restricted Speech-Language Pathologists

Board members discussed concerns relating to individuals whose school systems are not set up to provide telehealth services. The Board voted to allow phone conferencing as "direct supervision" is only acceptable for counseling patients/families via phone/IEP meetings. It is not appropriate for a Provisional or Restricted SLP providing therapy services to a child and the supervisor is not able to virtually join the session via a video conference. (March 18, 2020)

While the Board is allowing practice via telehealth services, not every school system or facility has access to a secure, encrypted option to provide the services. It seems that for some individuals, the only ability to provide and/or receive direct supervision in this public health emergency may be via telephone. Please ensure that you are vigilant and protect the consumer/patient in all aspects. Please use the attached document to provide further guidance related to provision of services: <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/february-2020-hipaa-and-novel-coronavirus.pdf> - PDF. (March 23, 2020)

Provisional SLP Experiences

The Board reviewed the CFCC statement relating to supervision for Provisional Speech-Language Pathologists/Clinical Fellows. The Board voted to adopt the same policy relating to supervision to allow Provisional Speech-Language Pathologists to accumulate their 36 weeks of post-graduate professional employment experience through telepractice from March 16 – April 30, 2020. The Board understands that telepractice is not an option in all settings, so CFCC has provided the additional guidance and tips below to help Provisional Speech-Language Pathologists continue their CF experience, even if they cannot directly practice with clients/patients/students at this time.

ASHA certification standards require a CF experience to be a minimum of 36 weeks and 1,260 hours, while LBESPA requires completion of 36 weeks. A minimum of 80% of a Clinical Fellow's work week must be spent in direct client/ patient contact, which includes the full scope of case management. The remaining 20% may be spent in "other" activities, such as attending info sessions, professional development, giving in-service training, etc. The CFCC has relaxed the "work week" requirement between March 16 – April 30, 2020, to allow Clinical Fellows to count hours and acquire weeks of experience (there is a 5-hour minimum for a week to count) in the ways below, provided your employer and CF mentor are in agreement. ***The Board has also adopted the same allowance to relax the rules to allow Provisional Speech-Language Pathologists to acquire experiences by:***

- completing report writing, notes, billing, IFSPs/IEPs, etc.;
- virtually consulting with teachers or Child Study Team members;

- planning and preparing testing schedules for the end-of-year testing;
- preparing additional take-home packets for their students to use to assist with making up missed sessions; and/or
- completing indirect observations with their CF mentor in the form of reviewing documentation/cases. (March 18, 2020)

Telehealth

The Board reminded all fully licensed SLPs and AUDs that telehealth services provided in Louisiana are covered under their Louisiana license. The Board's Rules and Regulations related to telehealth can be found in Rules 111, 135, and also in the definitions section (<https://www.lbespa.org/index.cfm/rules-and-regulations>). Rule 135 states that providers of telehealth services:

- Must be competent in both the type of services provided and the methodology and equipment used to provide the services;
- Must use methods for protecting client information that include authentication and encryption

The standard of care shall be the same as if the speech-language pathology services were delivered face-to-face. It is the responsibility of the provider to determine candidacy and to ensure that the client is comfortable with the technology being utilized.

The client shall be notified of telehealth services including but not limited to the right to refuse telehealth services, options for service delivery, and instructions on filing and resolving complaints, in all applicable jurisdictions.

Be sure to maintain confidentiality when you provide these services. The board does not have a listing of computer applications that are confidential. (March 12, 2020)

The Board voted to allow Provisional SLPs, SLP Assistants, and Provisional SLP Assistants to provide services telehealth. The same level of direct supervision will be required for the provision of those services. Direct supervision is defined as the supervisor observing the licensee engaging in a specified clinical activity with a patient/client in order to obtain knowledge and provide guidance regarding the supervisee's clinical work. The supervisor shall accomplish this task either by being physically present in the room or through the use of a secure live video, live stream or web cam. This policy will remain in effect during the declared state of emergency. (March 13, 2020)

The Board reiterated that the provision of telehealth services must be completed in accordance with the Rules, via a secure encrypted platform. The Board does not have a list of acceptable platforms. (March 18, 2020)

Board members discussed inquiries from licensees about the requirement for the provision of services via telehealth requirement to be secure and encrypted. The Board will share a link to

the Office for Civil Rights Bulletin regarding HIPAA Privacy and Novel Coronavirus dated February 2020, to guide licensees in their service delivery:

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/february-2020-hipaa-and-novel-coronavirus.pdf>

(March 20, 2020)

Telehealth Registration

Telehealth Registration applications still must be notarized during this time. The Board will accept Telehealth Registration applications through email during this public health emergency.

(March 23, 2020)

Verifications of Licensure from Other State Boards

In the event that other boards may be closed, the Board voted to grant conditional licenses to individuals who have all required documentation, with the exception of a verification of licensure from other state license boards. The Board staff will gather online verifications for applicants and include with the application for review. Upon receipt of a clear verification of licensure directly from other state boards, the Board will consider granting the requested license without conditions. (March 23, 2020)

Electronic verifications from other state boards will continue to be accepted in lieu of a paper copy. (May 15, 2020).

Praxis Examination

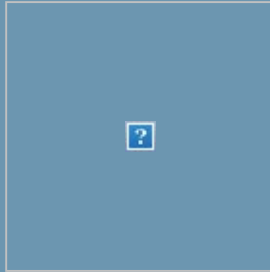
The Board voted not to extend the deadline for successful completion of the Praxis examination. As of May 15, 2020, the Praxis examination is being offered online at home. (May 15, 2020)

Continuing Education

The Board made no changes to continuing education requirements. (May 15, 2020)

Last Updated 5/18/2020

From: [LBESPA](#)
To: [Jolie Jones](#)
Subject: Provision of Telehealth Services by Supervised Licensees (Test)
Date: Friday, March 13, 2020 6:04:45 PM



A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

MARCH 13, 2020

Provision of Telehealth Services by Supervised Licensees

During this time of crisis, the Board will allow Provisional SLPs, SLP Assistants, and Provisional SLP Assistants to provide services via telehealth. The same level of direct supervision will be required for the provision of those services. Direct supervision is defined as the supervisor observing the licensee engaging in a specified clinical activity with a patient/client in order to obtain knowledge and provide guidance regarding the supervisee's clinical work. The supervisor shall accomplish this task either by being physically present in the room or through the use of a secure live video, live stream or web cam.

A complete summary of the guidelines related to telehealth can be found in Rule 135. This policy will remain in effect during the declared state of emergency.

Thank you,

Jolie Jones

Executive Director

In compliance with Act 655 of the 2018 Regular Legislative Session, the Board gives notice to its licensees and applicants of their opportunity to file a complaint about board actions or procedures. You may submit such complaints to one or more of the following organizations:

La Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, 37283 Swamp Road, Suite 3B, Prairieville, LA 70769; 225-313-6358; aud-slp@lbespa.org

Committee on House & Governmental Affairs; La House of Representatives, P.O. Box 44486, Baton Rouge, LA 70804; 225-342-2403; h&ga@legis.la.gov

Committee on Senate & Governmental Affairs; La Senate, P.O. Box 94183, Baton Rouge, LA 70804; 225-342-9845; s&q@legis.la.gov

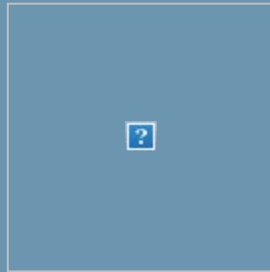
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From: [Marcy Ricca](#)
To: [Jolie Jones](#)
Subject: FW: Provision of Telehealth Services in Louisiana (Test)
Date: Monday, March 23, 2020 11:19:58 AM

From: LBESPA <admin@covalentemail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2020 11:10 AM
To: Marcy Ricca <mricca@lbespa.org>
Subject: Provision of Telehealth Services in Louisiana (Test)



A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

MARCH 12, 2020

Provision of Telehealth Services

As a fully licensed speech-language pathologist and/or audiologist, telehealth services provided in Louisiana are covered under your Louisiana license. Please note that only fully licensed individuals can provide telehealth services. Should you find yourself in a position where you are being asked to provide speech-language pathology and/or audiology services via telehealth, here are some guidelines:

The Board's Rules and Regulations related to telehealth can be found in Rules 111, 135, and also in the definitions section (<https://www.lbespa.org/index.cfm/rules-and-regulations>). Rule 135 states that providers of telehealth services:

- Must be competent in both the type of services provided and the methodology and equipment used to provide the services;
- Must use methods for protecting client information that include authentication and encryption

The standard of care shall be the same as if the speech-language pathology services were delivered face-to-face. It is the responsibility of the provider to determine candidacy and to ensure that the client is comfortable with the technology being utilized.

The client shall be notified of telehealth services including but not limited to the right to refuse telehealth services, options for service delivery, and instructions on filing and resolving complaints, in all applicable jurisdictions.

Be sure to maintain confidentiality when you provide these services. The board does not have a listing of computer applications that are confidential.

Sincerely,

Jolie Jones
Executive Director

In compliance with Act 655 of the 2018 Regular Legislative Session, the Board gives notice to its licensees and applicants of their opportunity to file a complaint about board actions or procedures. You may submit such complaints to one or more of the following organizations:

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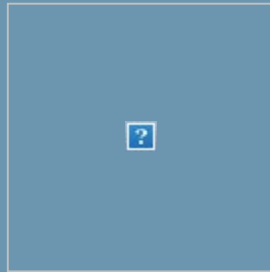
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From: [Marcy Ricca](#)
To: [Jolie Jones](#)
Subject: FW: COVID-19 Update (Test)
Date: Monday, March 23, 2020 11:23:13 AM

From: LBESPA <admin@covalentemail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2020 11:22 AM
To: Marcy Ricca <mricca@lbespa.org>
Subject: COVID-19 Update (Test)



A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

MARCH 23, 2020

COVID-19 Update for Licensees

The Board has relaxed the direct supervision requirement between March 16 – April 30, 2020, to allow licensees who require supervision to use phone counseling of patients as direct supervision, for counseling patients/families via phone/IEP meetings. It is not appropriate if a Provisional SLP is providing therapy services to a child and the supervisor is not able to virtually join the session via a video conference.

Please keep in mind that all local, state, and federal regulations, and employer policies, must be followed at all times. We know that everyone is doing their best to continue client/patient/student care and that Provisional Speech-Language Pathologists need to continue to increase their skills/readiness for independent practice. The Board understands the uniqueness of the situation; however, we have the responsibility to ensure that Provisional Speech-Language Pathology experiences are completed in a reasonable and responsible way to ensure Provisional Speech-Language Pathologists are prepared for independent practice without sacrificing client/patient/student care.

While the Board is allowing practice via telehealth services, not every school system or facility has access to a secure, encrypted option to provide the services. It seems that for some individuals, the only ability to provide and/or receive direct supervision in this public health emergency may be via telephone. Please ensure that you are vigilant and protect the consumer/patient in all aspects. Please use the attached document to provide further guidance related to provision of services:

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/february-2020-hipaa-and-novel-coronavirus.pdf> - PDF.

The Board office building is closed at this time, but the Board staff is available via email or phone to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Jolie Jones
Executive Director

In compliance with Act 655 of the 2018 Regular Legislative Session, the Board gives notice to its licensees and applicants of their opportunity to file a complaint about board actions or procedures. You may submit such complaints to one or more of the following organizations:

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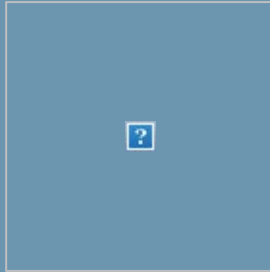
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From: [LBESPA](#)
To: [Jolie Jones](#)
Subject: Essential/Non-Essential Personnel (Test)
Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2020 9:59:33 AM



A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

MARCH 24, 2020

Essential/Non-Essential Personnel

Dear Licensee,

In regards to Proclamation Number 33 JBE 2020 issued by Governor John Bel Edwards on March 22, 2020, the Board does not have the authority to determine whether practicing Audiologists and/or Speech-Language Pathologists are essential or non-essential. If you need further clarification on your role during this public health emergency, the Board recommends that you contact the Louisiana Department of Health and/or the Governor's Office for clarification on the proclamation.

Thank you,

Jolie Jones

Executive Director

In compliance with Act 655 of the 2018 Regular Legislative Session, the Board gives notice to its licensees and applicants of their opportunity to file a complaint about board actions or procedures. You may submit such complaints to one or more of the following organizations:

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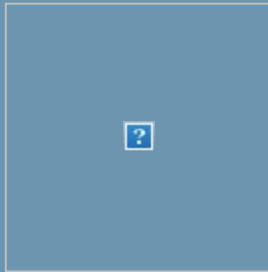
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From: [Marcy Ricca](#)
To: [Jolie Jones](#)
Subject: FW: Continuing Education Requirements for 2020 Renewal (Test)
Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2020 12:12:00 PM

From: LBESPA <admin@covalentemail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 15, 2020 12:10 PM
To: Marcy Ricca <mricca@lbespa.org>
Subject: Continuing Education Requirements for 2020 Renewal (Test)



A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

APRIL 15, 2020

Requirements for the 2020 Renewal Period

April 15, 2020

Please be reminded that it is your professional responsibility to comply with all terms for the renewal of your license. Continuing education and supervision documentation are required and are not being waived due to COVID-19. If your documentation was left at your workplace and you cannot gain access, please be reminded that we have 2 ½ months to gain additional continuing education for renewal by June 30th. Observation and supervision forms should be completed in accordance with therapy provided. To better prepare in the future, the Board suggests that you log CE as it is obtained in your Licensee Dashboard.

Sincerely,

Jolie Jones
Executive Director

In compliance with Act 655 of the 2018 Regular Legislative Session, the Board gives notice to its licensees and applicants of their opportunity to file a complaint about board actions or procedures. You may submit such complaints to one or more of the following organizations:

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