

## ASHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING REPORT

ASHA's Board of Directors (BOD) met virtually on August 16–17, 2024. The following are highlights of the Board's discussions.

### **PRESIDENT'S OPENING REMARKS**

ASHA President Tena McNamara convened the virtual BOD meeting at 10:30 a.m. ET on August 16, 2024, and welcomed Board members to the third BOD meeting of the year.

### **CEO UPDATE**

In addition to providing the written summary with the pre-meeting materials, Chief Executive Officer Vicki Deal-Williams shared the following:

#### **Convention**

The excitement for the upcoming ASHA Convention is elevating!

*Program Notifications:* On July 16, notifications were sent to all accepted presenters, informing them of their placement in the program lineup. This marks a significant milestone in preparations, with 1,384 proposals accepted for both in-person and virtual sessions.

*Student and Assistant Volunteer Program:* Student Volunteer applications opened recently; [applications will be accepted through early September.](#)

*Exhibit Sales:* Exhibit sales are also close to the numbers at this point for last year's Boston Convention.

#### **ASHA Renews Official Status With PAHO**

ASHA has renewed its status as a Non-State Actor (NSA) in Official Relations with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization (WHO). The status, which applies for 3 years, will allow ASHA to continue its work with PAHO, strengthening the knowledge and building the capacity of Latin American and Caribbean professionals and institutions addressing communication disorders in the areas of speech, language, swallowing, and hearing. The ASHA–PAHO collaboration gives ASHA members opportunities to address communication sciences and disorders (CSD) in the PAHO region through the exchange of best practices, technical expertise, training, curricula development, article publication, and sharing delivery models. As of today, the ASHA–PAHO collaboration has provided technical assistance in six countries: Honduras, El Salvador, Guyana, Paraguay, Belize, and Ecuador.

#### **ASHA's 2024 Capitol Hill Day**

[ASHA's 2024 Capitol Hill Day](#) resulted in 72 new cosponsors on priority federal legislation in just over 2 months. Seventy-three members representing 41 states and territories participated in more than 130 congressional meetings during the annual fly-in on May 8 to advocate for better payment and coverage of the services ASHA members provide. Highlights from the day included introduction of a [resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Speech-Language-Hearing Month](#), presentation of the ASHA Public Service Award to Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and an opportunity for members to attend the House Ways and Means Committee markup where the Committee approved a 2-year extension of Medicare telehealth authority for audiologists and SLPs.

### **Interstate Compact**

The Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact currently has 33 member states, with Rhode Island's recent adoption. Alaska legislation awaits Governor Dunleavy's signature. The Compact Commission, along with the Occupational Therapy and Counseling Commissions, continues to work with Inspiring Apps to develop the compact data system. It is expected to begin issuing privileges to practice in 2025. ASHA staff are planning for the 2025 legislative sessions and will be providing legislative updates at the upcoming National Council of State Boards meeting and at the Compact Annual Business Meeting in September in San Antonio, TX.

### **Dues Renewal**

Renewals are up 2.4% over this time last year. Final reminders for 2024 dues invoices will be going out this month, after which anyone who has not renewed will be dropped from the ASHA member/affiliate roster.

### **Specialty Certification**

The Council for Clinical Certification in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology's (CFCC) Committee on Clinical Specialty Certification (CCSC) has streamlined the application processes for current petitioning groups to complete their application for recognition as a specialty certification board. At the request of the ASHA BOD, the CCSC will not be accepting new applications/petitioning groups for consideration for the short term.

The CCSC held the regularly scheduled summer meeting of the specialty certification board (SCB) leadership, where there was a collaborative discussion to identify responsible parties for various initiatives and opportunities for educating ASHA certificants about the benefits of specialty certification. The next meeting of the two groups (CCSC and SCB) will be held December 4 at the ASHA Convention in Seattle.

### **Certification Administration**

*Applications:* Applicants for ASHA certification were up 3% through the first 7 months of 2024, which is attributable to the growth in CAA-accredited programs. Despite the increase in volume, application wait times never exceeded 5 weeks, even during the busy summer application period.

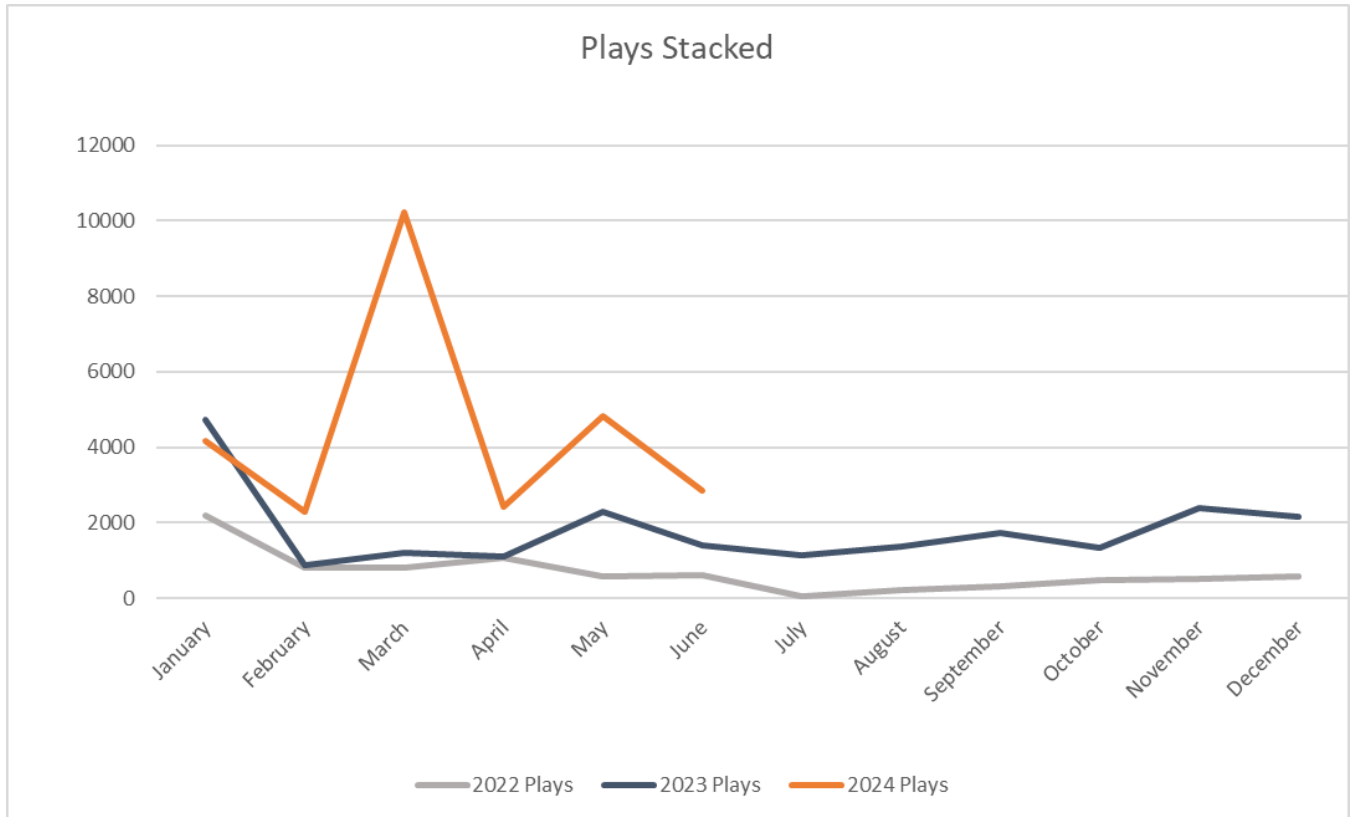
*Assistants:* There continues to be steady growth within the assistant certification program at ASHA, which has certified over 1,100 assistants and has renewal rates of over 90%. The Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Model Education Plans have been finalized and submitted to the BOD for acceptance. The plans will be posted on the ASHA website and other communication channels once they have been accepted.

The CFCC has approved the addition of one ASHA-certified assistant from each profession to join the CFCC in 2025.

ASHA staff will conduct an Item Writing session (November 8–10) at the ASHA National Office for the creation of new exam forms for the SLP Assistants (SLPAs) Certification Program. The group will consist of 12 subject matter experts, including SLPAs, supervisors, and educators. The session will be facilitated by Professional Testing, Inc, ASHA's partner for the development of the program.

**Top 10 Videos - June**

Post Title	Plays	Time Watched (Sec)
<a href="#"><u>“A Roadmap”: ASHA-Certified SLP Stephanie Cohen Discusses Developmental Milestones</u></a>	282	11598
<a href="#"><u>Redefining the Work: Passion, People, and Perspective</u></a>	226	300260
<a href="#"><u>How I Got the Job - with Shawnise Carter</u></a>	201	30827
<a href="#"><u>ASHA Exchange Live: A Journey Forward - A Story About Stroke Recovery, Perseverance, and the Benefits of Therapy [Sponsored by Encompass Health]</u></a>	157	77253
<a href="#"><u>ASHA’s Developmental Milestones: Communication (Hearing, Speech, and Language)</u></a>	137	14153
<a href="#"><u>ASHA 101</u></a>	128	18146
<a href="#"><u>Evidence-Based Decision-Making Series: EBP Basics and Tools for Practicing Clinicians 1.1</u></a>	127	20456
<a href="#"><u>Careers in Hearing and Speech - Why Diversity Matters in CSD</u></a>	123	5401
<a href="#"><u>ASHA CEO Live Chat: Open Forum - May 2024</u></a>	77	80671
<a href="#"><u>ASHA’s Developmental Milestones: Feeding and Swallowing</u></a>	76	9673



## **STRATEGIC PATHWAY UPDATE**

An update on ASHA's Strategic Pathway to Excellence was provided and comprised two distinct segments. Vice President for Planning Akilah R. Heggs was joined by Chief Executive Officer Vicki Deal-Williams and Senior Director of the Office of Business Excellence Rozsa Felix to provide this update to BOD members.

The first segment focused on reviewing the Strategic Objectives' Annual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These KPIs are short-term performance metrics that track, monitor, and assess the success of a major objective or focus area for the year. The Strategic Objective Owners identified KPIs for 2024, and the statuses of these KPIs at the end of Q2 2024 were reported to the Board.

In the second segment, major accomplishments for the Strategic Objectives were highlighted. Detailed information about the ongoing work and accomplishments to date is available on ASHA.org under [Strategic Pathway to Excellence: Strategic Objective Highlights](#), which is updated biannually.

## **ASHA's CYBERSECURITY POLICY**

The BOD was provided with an overview of ASHA's information security program by Chief Information Officer Jeffrey Raymond. An overview of the program is provided at least every 2 years to the BOD.

## **DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK STRUCTURE UPDATE**

The ASHA BOD has been piloting the use of a decision-making tool to help determine whether and how to address social justice issues. The framework considers the extent to which an issue relates to the Association's mission, vision, and values, impacts members' ability to deliver services, impacts members or staff, and the extent to which ASHA can influence or enact change. Adjustments have been made to the tool based on BOD feedback and comparisons to other association's frameworks to increase the effectiveness of the tool. Additionally, the BOD agreed to change the name of the tool to Decision-Making Framework: ASHA Viewpoint, to expand its use beyond social justice issues, and to distinguish the positions being discussed from professional practice policy. The BOD agreed to move the tool out of the pilot phase and discussed the need for the framework and process to be dynamic and to continue to evolve as needed.

## **BOARD ACTIVITIES AT CONVENTION**

The BOD's schedule for the 2024 ASHA Convention in Seattle this December was reviewed by Board of Directors Manager Marty Moore. BOD involvement is expected in various activities beginning on Tuesday and ending on Saturday. BOD members will also be attending a variety of sessions and activities as presenters, participants, and active supporters and will be available at the ASHA Leadership Q&A: A Membership Chat with the Board of Directors on Saturday, December 9, from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.

## **AD HOC COMMITTEE ON LEADERSHIP STRATEGY REPORT**

In 2022 the Ad Hoc Committee on Leadership Strategy (AHC LS) was created and charged to develop a leadership strategy for the Association and discipline and to make recommendations on how to implement the strategy. Over the years, ASHA has developed a number of leadership development programs and activities—but there was not an overall vision or strategy for moving leadership development forward to achieve specific and desired outcomes. This made it difficult for members to understand all leadership development offerings as well as internally for staff to work together. AHC LS Chair Barbara Goodson and Senior Director, Association Governance Operations Andrea Falzarano reviewed the recommendations of the report including background and current state, research conducted by the committee, and the proposed Leadership Development Framework including leadership categories called profiles, and the focus of each profile, general competencies essential for all stages of leadership

development, and three key objectives and their corresponding strategies and timeline. The BOD discussed the recommendations of the report and supported them to move forward.

### **AUDIOLOGY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

The BOD Audiology Subcommittee met on August 16, 2024, as a part of the August BOD meeting with Board Member At Large for Audiology Anita Vereb facilitating. The following topics were discussed:

Senior Director, Health Care & Education Policy Neela Swanson provided the subcommittee with an update on the 2025 Medicare proposed rule on [payment cuts](#) and changes in coverage of telehealth services. Despite extensive advocacy on the part of ASHA, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) opted not to add audiology (and speech-language pathology) related services to the permanent telehealth services list. Committee members were encouraged to take action in two ways:

- [Sign a petition](#) by September 3 to ask CMS to continue audiology (and SLP) telehealth services in 2025, and
- Contact their members of Congress urging them to make telehealth access for audiology and speech-language pathology services permanent ([ASHA Take Action](#)).

For more details on this issue and many more, see [ASHA's Advocacy page](#).

Director of Federal Affairs, Health Care Josh Krantz provided an update regarding continuing advocacy efforts on audiology issues, including the Medicare Audiology Access Improvement Act (MAAIA), telehealth, and cytomegalovirus (CMV) screening legislation.

Director, State Health Care and Education Affairs Tim Boyd provided an update related to legislative and practice act issues occurring on the state level. Additionally, the Over-the-Counter Tracker (OTC) has been updated and can be found at [State Licensure for Prescription and OTC Hearing Aids \(asha.org\)](#).

Board Member at Large for Audiology Anita Vereb and Chief Staff Officer for Audiology Donna Smiley facilitated an interactive activity with meeting attendees to examine current and future considerations related to the [ASHA Audiology Scope of Practice](#) (2018).

Chief Staff Officer for Audiology Donna Smiley shared that starting on April 1, 2024, ASHA became a subgrantee to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) on their cooperative agreement with Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for the Provider Education Network for EHDI.

Vice President for Science and Research Sumit Dhar provided an update on the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) Workgroup on Affordable and Accessible Hearing Health Care for Adults with Mild to Moderate Hearing Loss.

### **SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

The BOD Speech-Language Pathology Subcommittee met on August 16, 2024, with Board Member at Large in Speech-Language Pathology Treasyri Williams Wood facilitating discussion, providing introductory remarks and an overview of the committee's purpose and procedures.

The subcommittee reviewed the July InTouch Summary report and discussed potential trends and their alignment with the BOD's growth goals. Chief Executive Officer Vicki Deal-Williams was invited to present a report from the National Office.

Discussion focused on members' experiences regarding caseload and workload concerns their school

districts, national trends related to caseload averages, and advocacy and support for members regarding caseload and workload. Senior Director of School Services Tiffany White provided an extensive contextual overview that served as a foundation for these discussions. The key question addressed was "How are we implementing practice advocacy to support school-based SLPs with caseload/workload management?" Director of Education Policy Bill Knudsen then presented on current policy strategies geared toward supporting school-based SLPs in relation to the Association's current public policy agenda. The meeting concluded with Board of Directors' SLP members engaging in thoughtful, in-depth discussions on trends and issues.

### **GENERATIVE DISCUSSION; AUTOMATING WORK**

A Generative Discussion on the topic of "Augmenting Human Capabilities" was facilitated by Chief Staff Officer for Science and Research Margaret Rogers. Multiple applications in CSD of machine learning and automation were reviewed including in education and clinical service delivery. Discussion about future opportunities and challenges afforded by these technological advancements focused on the potential effects on ASHA, audiologists, SLPs, and those whom we serve.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

ASHA's financial report was presented by Vice President for Finance Lawrence (Larry) Molt. He reported on the 2nd quarter, June 30, 2024, which showed total operating revenue of \$37,511,276 and total operating expenses of \$31,593,110, equating to preliminary net revenue (revenue minus expenses) of \$5,918,166. Vice President Molt cautioned the BOD that the 2nd quarter surplus is largely due to unrealized gains from ASHA's investment portfolio, and that larger expenses expected later in the fiscal year may likely impact the bottom-line.

### **Q&A SESSION**

The following topics were posted prior to the BOD meeting for review by each BOD member, with the opportunity to provide feedback or have questions answered during the BOD meeting.

#### **InTouch Report**

[InTouch Forms](#) and member feedback are summarized monthly and reviewed with the BOD at Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Subcommittee meetings and at each BOD meeting. InTouch Forms received from members since the last BOD meeting, along with a cumulative summary of the messages, were shared prior to the meeting. Chief Staff Officer for Communications Selena A. Ramkeesoon answered BOD members' questions regarding topics covered in the InTouch forms. Emerging issues and trends that require consideration by the BOD or select CBCs were also reviewed.

In response to members' questions about artificial intelligence (AI), ASHA encourages members to focus on person-centered care while embracing innovations that are clinically effective. Since there is a lack of standardized, curated, high-quality data sets to train large language models, any claims about the efficacy of an AI tool must be substantiated with evidence and research. ASHA will continue to educate members about AI through articles, research symposia, and professional development resources.

### **NSSLHA Update**

National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) National Advisor Belinda Daugherty provided updates on National NSSLHA governance, activities, and upcoming programs for students.

- **Student Volunteer Leaders:** As of July 1, six students began their 2-year terms on the National NSSLHA Executive Council. Each NSSLHA Councilor is paired with an ASHA BOD member and expectations of the mentor-mentee pairs were reiterated. More information about student

leader and volunteer opportunities is available on the [National NSSLHA website](#).

- **Strategic Plan Update:** National NSSLHA has begun working toward the goals in their new [2024-2026 Strategic Plan](#). They are making steady progress across all four of their goals, especially strengthening connections between National NSSLHA and campus chapters by hosting their second annual Chapter Leadership Summit on August 25, 2024.
- **NSSLHA Membership Scholarship:** In 2023, National NSSLHA launched a new [membership scholarship](#), funded through donations, and they were able to give away 41 memberships to students. The scholarships are given away on a rolling basis and as funds permit. Students can apply for this year's membership scholarships starting in September.
- **Upcoming Student Opportunities:** The [National NSSLHA Undergrad Scholarship](#) application will open September 1 and will close December 30. Six \$1,000 scholarships for undergraduate juniors and four \$500 scholarships for undergraduate sophomores are available. National NSSLHA also provided a preview of their fall virtual events and their events at ASHA Convention. More information about upcoming [virtual events](#) and [NSSLHA events at ASHA Convention](#) are now available on the National NSSLHA website.

The Board of Directors meeting was adjourned on August 17 at 4:10 p.m. ET.