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*** Bill No. ***

Introduced By *****

A Bill for an Act entitled: "An Act providing for licensure of speech-language pathology and audiology assistants; and amending sections."

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Montana:

Section 1. Section 37-15-102, MCA, is amended to read:

37-15-102. Definitions. As used in this chapter, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Audiologist" means a person who practices audiology and who meets the qualifications set forth in this chapter. A person represents to the public that the person is an audiologist by incorporating in any title or description of services or functions that the person directly or indirectly performs the words "audiologist", "audiology", "audiometrist", "audiometry", "audiological", "audiometrics", "hearing clinician", "hearing clinic", "hearing therapist", "hearing therapy", "hearing center", "hearing aid audiologist", or any similar title or description of services.

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(2) "Audiology ~~aide or~~ assistant" means any person meeting the minimum requirements established by the board of speech-language pathologists and audiologists who works directly under the supervision of a licensed audiologist.

(3) "Board" means the board of speech-language pathologists and audiologists provided for in **2-15-1739**.

(4) "Department" means the department of labor and industry provided for in Title 2, chapter 15, part 17.

(5) "Facilitator" means a trained individual who is physically present with the patient and facilitates telepractice at the direction of an audiologist or speech-language pathologist. A facilitator may be but is not limited to an audiology assistant or speech-language pathology ~~aide or~~ assistant.

(6) "Patient" means a consumer of services from an audiologist, audiology assistant, speech-language pathology assistant, or speech-language pathologist, including a consumer of those services provided through telepractice.

(7) "Practice of audiology" means nonmedical diagnosis, assessment, and treatment services relating to auditory and vestibular disorders as provided by board rule and includes the selling, dispensing, and fitting of hearing aids.

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(8) "Practice of speech-language pathology" means nonmedical diagnosis, assessment, and treatment services relating to speech-language pathology as provided by board rule.

(9) "Speech-language pathologist" means a person who practices speech-language pathology and who meets the qualifications set forth in this chapter. A person represents to the public that the person is a speech-language pathologist by incorporating in any title or description of services or functions that the person directly or indirectly performs the words "speech pathologist", "speech pathology", "speech correctionist", "speech corrections", "speech therapist", "speech therapy", "speech clinician", "speech clinic", "language pathologist", "language pathology", "voice therapist", "voice therapy", "voice pathologist", "voice pathology", "logopedist", "logopedics", "communicologist", "communicology", "aphasiologist", "aphasiology", "phoniatriest", "language therapist", "language clinician", or any similar title or description of services or functions.

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(10) "Speech-language pathology ~~aid~~~~er~~ assistant" means a person meeting the minimum requirements established by the board who works directly under the supervision of a licensed speech-language pathologist.

(11) "Telepractice" means the practice of audiology or speech-language pathology by an audiologist or speech-language pathologist at a distance through any means, method, device, or instrumentality for the purposes of assessment, intervention, and consultation.

Section 2. Section 37-15-301, MCA, is amended to read:

37-15-301. License required. (1) A license must be issued to qualified persons either in speech-language pathology or audiology. A person may be licensed in both areas if the person meets the respective qualifications, and in those instances, the license fee must be as though for one license.

(2) A person may not practice or represent to the public that the person is a speech-language pathology assistant, speech-language pathologist, audiology assistant, or audiologist in this state unless the person is licensed in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

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(3) The board may issue a limited license to qualified individuals engaged in supervised professional experience, as defined by board rule.

Section 3. Section 37-15-302, MCA, is amended to read:

37-15-302. Application forms. An application for examination for licensing a speech-language pathologist, speech-language pathology assistant, audiology assistant, or audiologist must be made upon forms prescribed by the department.

Section 4. Section 37-15-303, MCA, is amended to read:

37-15-303. Qualifications. (1) To be eligible for licensing by the board as a speech-language pathologist, speech-language pathology assistant, audiology assistant, or audiologist, the applicant:

(a) must meet the current academic, supervised clinical practicum, and supervised professional experience requirements as defined by board rule;

(b) shall pass an examination approved by the board.

(2) The board shall determine the subject and scope of the examination.

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(3) The standards defined by the board must be equal to or greater than the standards generally accepted as the national norm.

Section 5. Section 37-15-307, MCA, is amended to read:

37-15-307. Application and examination fee -- license fee -- registration fee. The board shall determine the amount of fees, which may be adjusted annually by rule, that are necessary to meet costs and projected expenditures for:

(1) a renewed license as a speech-language pathologist, speech-language pathology assistant, audiology assistant, or audiologist;

(2) a limited license for a person engaged in supervised professional experience;

(3) an initial application for a license or registration; and

(4) examinations; ~~and~~

~~(5) registration as a speech-language pathology aide or assistant or audiology aide or assistant.~~

Section 6. Section 37-15-311, MCA, is amended to read:

37-15-311. Municipal tax prohibited. No license tax shall be imposed upon speech-language pathologists, speech-

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language pathology assistants, audiology assistants, or audiologists by a municipality or any other subdivision of the state.

~~Section 7. Section 37-15-313, MCA, is amended to read:~~

~~37-15-313. Registration of aides or assistants. Each licensed speech-language pathologist and audiologist shall annually, on or before February 1October 31, register with the board on forms provided by the board all speech-language pathology aides or assistants and audiology aides or assistants working directly under the supervision of the licensee.~~

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