

# CSHA Advocacy Platform 2019-21

This platform provides a broad policy framework for pursuing the association's mission by identifying and prioritizing those areas of legislative, policy and regulatory issues in which the association will engage.

It guides the association in its policy leadership activities and content strategies, as well as in its partnerships, research efforts, and in working with the media and the public.



## CSHA provides policy and political leadership on critical issues through a variety of programs and special projects:

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### ◆ Policy

- Advancing key policy strategies.
- Policy analysis of local, state and national issues.
- Advisories and publications on critical issues.
- Issue-oriented committees, task forces and working groups.

### ◆ Political

- Governmental relations and legislative advocacy.
- Representation on state and national commissions, and advisory committees.
- Analysis and representation.

### ◆ Partnerships, research and grant funding

- Collaborations with nonprofits, NGOs, local government and other organizations.
- Research on issues of relevance and importance to the association.
- Alliances with philanthropic organizations to support CSHA's Advocacy Platform.

### ◆ Working with the public

- Building awareness and support for issues of importance to CSHA and the field.
- Engaging the public in key issues.
- Identifying and eliminating arbitrary barriers to participation by all stakeholders.

### ◆ Advocating for diversity

- Engaging in the above activities with attention to California's increasing diversity, including along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, education, training, experience, religious beliefs, political beliefs or other ideologies.

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All these efforts are guided by the framework set forth in this platform. For example, it provides a basis for developing testimony to state and federal agencies on critical issues. In addition, when CSHA studies specific issues and develops recommendations, it begins with the general policy framework for that issue, as established by the CSHA Board of Directors in this platform.

Whenever CSHA's leadership and staff take action on these issues, the Advocacy Platform serves as the foundation for these efforts.

## Professional practice and workforce issues

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and audiologists are the leading professionals uniquely trained to assess and treat communication disorders. It is essential that licensure and certification requirements for the professions are preserved, the professions' defined scope of practice is protected, a robust graduate and undergraduate student pipeline is supported, workplace safety is promoted, and competence in working with diverse populations is increased. CSHA's priorities in this area include:

- Pursuing changes in current law regarding Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES) language to: (1) require an SLP's FEES competency be determined by an evaluation from both a physician and an SLP that has previously been deemed competent in the procedure; and (2) remove the supervision requirement following a successful evaluation.
- Advocating for public policies that promote appropriate education, regulation and utilization of speech-language pathology assistants (SLPAs) and audiologist assistants.
- Responding to infringement upon the scopes of practice of speech-language pathology and audiology by other professions that lack the appropriate academic and clinical preparation to assess, treat or manage speech, language, cognitive, hearing, voice and balance, or feeding/swallowing disorders.
- Advocating for public policies that support a robust pipeline of graduate and undergraduate students in speech-pathology and audiology programs, including but not limited to, increasing the number of graduate program slots, access to financial assistance programs, current programmatic accreditation standards, supervision standards, and instruction in policy and procedures in working with diverse populations.
- Advocating for public policies that maintain the independence of state licensing boards and that exempt SLPs and audiologists from burdensome occupational licensing review requirement.
- Advocating for evidence-based public policies that strengthen workplace safety and better serve diverse populations.



## Schools issues

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CSHA members provide critical evidence-based services and supports to students with exceptional needs, including those from diverse populations. These services and supports build functional and meaningful communication skills and facilitate academic achievement. It is essential that all students have meaningful access to appropriately resourced speech-language pathology and audiology services. CSHA's priorities in this area include:

- Advocating for updating California Education Code language to ensure it is accurate, relevant and comprehensive, and reflects current best practices in prevention, assessment and treatment in speech-language pathology and audiology services and supports within the school setting.
- Advocating for updating California Education Code and union contract language that reduces caseload and workload burdens on school-based SLPs and audiologists to ensure both clinical excellence and ethical practice.
- Advocating for increased funding for speech-language pathology and audiology services, including, but not limited to, early intervention under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Medi-Cal.
- Advocating for public policies that maintain current credentialing and licensing requirements to ensure SLPs and audiologists serving students have all the necessary education and training to serve California's increasingly diverse population.
- Advocating for evidence-based and least-biased assessment and intervention of diverse populations, including strategic collaborations with interpreters and translators as needed.

## Health care issues

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SLPs and audiologists provide medically necessary services that result in positive health outcomes and an enhanced quality of life. It is essential that speech-language pathology and audiology services are comprehensively covered and equitably reimbursed by public and private payers. CSHA's priorities in this area include:

- Use of Clinical Fellows (CF) in services provided to Regional Center clients. Pursue a proposal to amend Title 17 to remove the requirement that an SLP have a year's experience working with developmental disabilities and allow for CF SLPs to work with early intervention families.
- Advocating for the inclusion of speech-language pathology and audiology services in alternative payment models and other emerging health care delivery systems.
- Advocating for comprehensive coverage and equitable reimbursement of speech-language pathology and audiology services across the age span and settings, including but not limited to, early intervention by Medicare, Medi-Cal, and third-party payers.
- Preserving the coverage of habilitation and rehabilitation services and devices as essential health benefits.
- Advocating for productivity standards that ensure both clinical excellence and ethical practice.







## Patient, client and student issues

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Effectively assessing and treating communication disorders is determined by the individual needs of each patient, client or student. It is essential that public policies are structured to support individuals with communication disorders and ensure that those individuals have meaningful access to the evidence-based care they require. CSHA's priorities in this area include:

- Early intervention
  - *Rate study for Department of Developmental Services (DDS).* Provide leadership, active participation and input to statewide stakeholder groups to develop appropriate rate settings for speech-language professionals in early intervention, including taking into account the cost of doing business in California.
  - *Education and training.* Provide education to the public and to regional center managers and service coordinators about the scope of practice of SLPs, SLPAs and CFs so they understand: the education and training that goes into becoming an SLP, SLPA and CF; the amount of continuing education that is necessary to maintain one's state license and national certification; the supervision that is necessary for SLPAs and CFs; and how an SLP and/or SLPA differ from "EIs" (Early Interventionists) and other professionals.
- Advocating for public policies ensuring that appropriate assessments, services, funding and informed choice exist to meet the individual needs of patients, clients or students with speech, language, cognitive, hearing, voice and balance or feeding-swallowing disorders in this increasingly diverse state.
- Advocating for California to comply with service mandates under Medicaid's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) program.
- Promoting audiological health care services; safe devices for habilitation, rehabilitation and prevention; and safe hearing environments.



Human Lives. Human Connection.

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