

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Jim Morrison at 1:33 p.m. on March 11, 2003, in Room 143-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except Representatives Landwehr, Bethell, Patterson, Storm and Kirk, all of whom were excused.

Committee staff present:

Bill Wolff, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Renaë Jefferies, Kansas Revisor of Statutes' Office
Gary Deeter, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Marla Rhoden, Director, Health Occupations Credentialing, Bureau of Health Facilities, Kansas Department of Health and Environment
Allan White, President, Kansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Julie Hein, Kansas Hearing Aid Association

Others attending: None listed.

The minutes for the March 10 meeting were unanimously approved.

Jointly chairing the meeting, Representative DeCastro and Representative Svaty opened the hearing on **SB 199**. Chairperson DeCastro welcomed Marla Rhoden, Director, Health Occupations Credentialing, Bureau of Health Facilities, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, who spoke in support of the bill, noting that as the licensing agency for speech-language audiologists, KDHE recognizes the need for the bill. (Attachment 1)

Chairperson Svaty welcomed Allan White, President, Kansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association, who spoke in support of the bill. (Attachment 2) He explained that the bill is needed because audiologists, who for years have been making ear-molds for public school students, have done so thinking they were exempt from being licensed by the Board of Examiners for Fitting and Dispensing Hearing Aids, since they only created ear molds, but did not sell hearing aids or charge a fee for their services, and thus did not encroach on businesses doing so. However, he said a recent Attorney General's opinion stated that the current law is vague on such exemptions; therefore school audiologists requested clarification in the law, a clarification accomplished by **SB 199**. He suggested lines 21-22 be deleted, since they were an inadvertent duplicate of lines 27-28.

Responding to a member's question, Mr. White demonstrated the FM radio transmitters and receivers that enable hearing-impaired school children to hear, a part of the system being the ear-piece created from a mold made by school audiologists. He noted that presently audiologists did not compete with existing businesses, but if they were required to obtain another license to make ear molds, the result might encroach on existing hearing aid businesses. Answering another question, he said a licensed audiologist

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must have a minimum of a Master's Degree, whereas a person who dispenses hearing aids needs only a high school diploma. He said that after the Attorney General's opinion, school audiologists ceased making ear molds, but resuming the practice after a hiatus would not diminish an audiologist's skill.

Julie Hein, representing the Kansas Hearing Aid Association, a professional association for licensing hearing aid dispensers, testified in support of the bill, saying that all interested parties had worked together on the language and intent of the bill. She urged members to be cautious in making any changes to the wording of the bill.

The hearing on **SB 199** was closed.

Chairman Morrison announced that if time allowed, the bill would be worked at the next meeting, Wednesday, March 12. The meeting was adjourned at 2:06 p.m.