



Posted May 2020

Important Notice

To: Ohio Licensed Audiologists, Hearing Aid Fitters, and Trainee Permit Holders regarding requirements for hearing test procedures for the sale of hearing aids in the midst of COVID-19

The Ohio Speech and Hearing Professionals Board (Board) has received inquiries whether testing requirements for the sale and dispensing of hearing aids are waived due to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). The Board's testing procedures for the sale of hearing aids are not waived or relaxed.

Licensed Audiologists

In Ohio, for an audiologist, the measurement and testing of human hearing by means of an audiometer or by any other means is a requirement for the purpose of selecting, adapting, and selling a hearing aid to any person. Best practice would include an otoscopic examination - see Ohio Administrative Code [Chapter 4753-8](#). There is also a duty to refer the patient to a physician if the results of the examination or evaluation of the patient determine the presence of an otological or systemic disease – see Ohio Revised Code section [4753.14](#). A screening for hearing loss does not meet the Board's rules/requirements for selecting, adapting, and selling of a hearing aid.

Licensed Hearing Aid Fitters and Trainee Permit Holders

For a hearing aid fitter and trainee, the following rule specifies the required hearing tests that shall be completed before recommending, selling or fitting of a hearing aid – see Ohio Administrative Code [section 4747-1-19](#). The hearing aid fitter or trainee shall use an otoscope to complete an ear canal inspection of both ears. Any identified abnormalities shall be noted on the test record. There is also a duty to refer a prospective hearing aid user to a licensed physician and promptly document the fact that such a referral was made in the individual's case record, if conditions specified in the rule exist. A screening for hearing loss does not meet the Board's rules/requirements for selecting, adapting, and selling of a hearing aid.

Ohio's Stay-At-Home order went into effect on March 23, amended on April 2, and as of today set to expire on May 29, 2020, with certain exceptions. One of the exceptions made allows individuals to leave their residence to work or to obtain services through healthcare providers, which includes all individuals licensed under the licensure board's Ohio Revised and Administrative Code Chapters 4744, 4747, and 4753.

Practitioners are permitted to make in-home visits and provide office visits to consumers while maintaining social distancing and complying with local health department recommendations to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. We are also cognizant that some licensees are in the process of reopening and returning to work in a variety of practice settings. The Board would like to share Governor Mike DeWine's "Responsible RestartOhio Plan" as a resource at: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/>. The Ohio Department of Health hotline, 1-833-4-ASK-ODH and coronavirus.ohio.gov are also great resources for those who have questions.

If you, as a provider, see a concern regarding hearing test procedures, we would like to remind licensees of their duty to report violations to the licensure board. Complaints should be filed through the eLicense Ohio complaint portal at: https://elicense.ohio.gov/OH_FileComplaint.

You may contact the Board with any questions via e-mail at: board@shp.ohio.gov or calling us at: (614) 466-3145, M-F; 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Best Regards,

Board Members

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