

ABESPA NEWSLETTER

Volume XVI

Summer 2007

Alabama Board of Examiners for
Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (ABESPA)
400 S. Union Street, Suite 397
P.O. Box 304760
Montgomery, AL 36130-4760
Phone: (334) 269-1434 or 1-800-219-8315
Fax: (334) 834-9618
Email: abespa@mindspring.com
www.abespa.org

BOARD MEMBERS

Margaret Hemm, Ed.D., CCC-SLP

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District 7 Term: 2003-2007
Committees:
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Ada Holyfield, RN, Consumer

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Special Assistance

Amanda Blaszyznski, Au.D. ABA, FAAA

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Roan Frederick, SLP

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Committees:
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Rules and Regulations, Co-Chair

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Lawrence F. Molt, Ph.D., SLP/A, FASHA

District 3 Term: 2006-2009
Committees:
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Credentials Review and Enforcement

SHAA LIASON

Pat LaCoste, Au.D., CCC-A, FAAA

STAFF

Wanda Rawlinson **Shemicka Williams**
Executive Secretary Administrative Assistant

LEGAL COUNSEL

Yvonne Saxon, J.D.
Assistant District Attorney

A Word From The Chair

Margaret Hemm, Ed.D., CCC-SLP

This past year has been one of change and forward movement. Once the changes in our Statute were achieved in March 2006, the ABESPA Board began revising the Rules and Regulations. These changes were published in the Volume XV, Summer 2006 Edition of the *ABESPA Newsletter* and a public hearing was held on September 8, 2006. The revised Rules and Regulation took effect on January 01, 2007. Primarily, terminology changes were made to the clinical fellowship year as it related to the national educational requirements for Audiology and the 4th Year Internship. In addition, clarification was made to the continuing education requirements for licensure renewal effective January 1, 2007. Please see *page 8* for further clarifications of our current Rules and Regulations. These clarifications were thought necessary based on the questions ABESPA has received from licensees so far this year.

This was the second year for on-line renewals. We had 612 licensees use this means of renewal, which was a 48% increase from the previous year. We have also updated our website in which Ada Holyfield, RN, Consumer, has been instrumental, in conjunction with our Web-Master, Gary Copeland, SLP, to include access for consumers, employers, and licensees to check on-line for verification of current licensure.

I would encourage each of you to consider serving on the Board in the future should you be contacted by members of the Speech and Hearing Association of Alabama (SHAA). It is a wonderful opportunity to represent and protect the consumers of Alabama who have needs for speech-language and hearing services.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

New Board Members	page 2
Upcoming Board Meeting Dates	page 3
Licensure Application Information.....	page 4
Invalid Licenses and Disciplinary Actions	page 5
How Rules and Regulations are Changed (and How You Can Get Involved).....	page 7
Continuing Education Clarification	page 8
ABESPA's Guide for Consumers.....	page 9

The Alabama Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (ABESPA) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.

Welcome New Board Members

Lawrence F. Molt, Ph.D., SLP/A, FASHA
Term: 2006-2009 District 3



Dr. Lawrence Molt is an Associate Professor & former Chair of the Auburn University Communication Disorders Department, and Director of its Neuroprocesses Research Laboratory. Larry holds ASHA CCCs in both SLP and Audiology and was in the initial cadre of ASHA Board-Recognized Fluency Specialists. He is an ASHA Fellow, and was selected as the National Stuttering Association's Speech-Language Pathologist of the Year for 2003. He currently serves as President of the International Fluency Association, and as Chair of the Association of Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders. He has served as Coordinator of ASHA Special Interest Division 4: Fluency and Fluency Disorders, and Chair of ASHA's Scientific and Professional Education Board. Larry also serves on the Board of Directors of Alabama Special Olympics and as state director of that organization's Healthy Hearing program. This is Larry's 13th year at Auburn, and he has also served on the faculty of the University of Georgia, University of Utah, and Florida Atlantic University.

Amanda Blaszyznski, Au.D. ABA, FAAA
Term: 2005-2008 District 4



Dr. Amanda Blaszyznski is a clinical audiologist in Gadsden in a privately owned Audiology clinic. Her professional experience includes: hospital setting, ENT practice, children's rehabilitation, and current clinic setting, which provides hearing aid services as well as diagnostic audiology services. Dr. Blaszyznski is an Alabama native who completed her Bachelor of Science Degree in Speech - Language Pathology and Master's Degree in Audiology at the University of Montevallo. She later went on to complete her doctoral degree in Audiology at PCO, School of Audiology. She has been practicing audiology for ten years and provides audiology services from birth to senior adult. Dr. Blaszyznski will serve on the Board for a 3-year term from 2005-2008.

Richard Gresham, Au.D. ABA, FAAA
Term: 2005-2008 District 5



Dr. Richard L. Gresham is a private practice audiologist in Florence. Originally from Phenix City, Alabama, he completed his Bachelor of Science and Masters Degree in Communication Disorders from Auburn University. He completed his Doctor of Audiology Degree from the University of Florida. Dr. Gresham practiced in the medical setting for fourteen years before opening his private practice in 1999. His professional experience includes: vestibular testing and rehabilitation, hearing aids and aural rehabilitation for adults and children, general audiology and pediatric audiology. Dr. Gresham has practiced audiology in Alabama for the past 23 years and is also licensed in Mississippi and Tennessee. He previously served on the ABESPA Board and will now serve a 3-year term from 2005-2008.

ABESPA Consumer Member Nominations Needed

Ada Holyfield, RN, Consumer Member

According to Dr. Pat LaCoste, Nominations and Elections Committee for SHAA, there is always a shortage of Consumer Member Nominations to serve on the ABESPA Board. Therefore, per Dr. LaCoste, '*Consumer Nominations will be accepted for any District at any time*'. Of course actual appointments will not occur until there is a vacancy. The consumer member must be a member of the consuming public (this includes a parent of a child who is a consumer) or an allied professional. Names of nominees will be presented to the SHAA membership at large for their vote. After the election, the SHAA President will submit the names of the top three consumers to the Governor's Office. The Governor will select from the nominees to fill the ABESPA Board vacancy. The nominees must commit to attend monthly Board meetings in Montgomery for a term of three years, if appointed by the Governor. Board members are not compensated for their service but are reimbursed for associated travel expenses. This is a wonderful opportunity for a consumer to get involved with the organizations from which they are receiving services. As always, the Board will be happy to answer any questions a prospective Consumer Member may have.

If you know of a consumer who would like to serve on the ABESPA Board, please contact:

Dr. Pat LaCoste, Au.D., CCC-A, FAAA
Nominations and Elections Committee
4 Office Park Circle, Suite 301
Birmingham, Alabama 35223
E-mail: PLacoste@aol.com

Did You Know...

The website for ABESPA is www.ABESPA.org. You can go to the website to verify licensure, as well as meeting dates, minutes, new Rules and Regulations proposals, and download forms such as change of address, licensure applications, and complaint forms. You can also access our statutes. Here you can look up information such as the requirements for licensure, acceptable continuing education classes, programs, or fees.

Upcoming Board Meetings for 2007

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
July 13, 2007	10:00 a.m.	400 South Union Street, Montgomery, AL 36130-4760
August 10, 2007	10:00 a.m.	400 South Union Street, Montgomery, AL 36130-4760
September 7, 2007	10:00 a.m.	400 South Union Street, Montgomery, AL 36130-4760
October 12, 2007	10:00 a.m.	400 South Union Street, Montgomery, AL 36130-4760
November 9, 2007	10:00 a.m.	400 South Union Street, Montgomery, AL 36130-4760
December 14, 2007	10:00 a.m.	400 South Union Street, Montgomery, AL 36130-4760

Licensure Application – Common Omissions

Amanda Blaszyznski, Au.D. ABA, FAAA

The Applications Review Committee receives and reviews all applications that meet ABESPA's requirements for licensure, assistant registration, and Clinical Fellowship Year (CFY) registration. The committee makes recommendations to the Board for approval or other action. Each applicant's information that is sent in is put into a file with an application review worksheet. This makes it much easier to review each file and see specifically what is missing or if it is complete for approval. There are certain items that are most commonly left out when an application is sent in. They are as follows:

- * A letter from the director of the educational program verifying that requirements prior to supervised clinical experience have been completed.
- * Notarized letter from CFY or 4th Year Internship Supervisor containing: number of hours per week worked, place of employment, supervisor's name & AL license number or CCC or its equivalent.
- * Undergraduate and Graduate Transcripts.

Another common misunderstanding is that there are TWO SEPARATE FEES: an application fee (which is \$200), **and** a licensure fee (which is \$75). The application fee is due with the application. The licensure fee may be paid at that same time or paid once the application is approved for licensure.

If there are any further questions please visit our website: www.abespa.org and check under Applications Review.

2008 Licensure Renewal Begins October 1, 2007, through December 31, 2007
<https://www.alabamainteractive.org/abespa/>

Total Licensees

As of June 1, 2007

Speech-Language Pathologists	1088
Audiologists	218
Dual (Speech-Language Pathologists/Audiologists)	5
Total Licensees	1311
CFY (SLP)	27
4 th Year Internship (Au.D.)	1

If you have any suggestions or editorial comments for the Board members regarding this newsletter, please feel free to let us know!

Credentials Review and Enforcement Committee

Lawrence F. Molt, Ph.D., SLP/A, FASHA

The Credentials Review and Enforcement Committee (CREC) is charged with investigating instances of possible violations of the Alabama Code governing the licensing of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists. This is typically done in two ways: by monitoring license renewals and by investigating complaints submitted to the CREC.

In the instance of non-renewal of licensure, the ABESPA Executive Secretary notifies the licensee by mail, shortly after December 31st, that the Board did not receive all necessary licensure renewal material and, if still practicing in a non-exempt setting as of January 1st, the individual is in violation of the Alabama State law. If the license is not renewed within 30 days of receipt of that letter, or an appropriate explanation of licensure non-renewal is not provided, the CREC Chair issues a formal cease and desist letter and the investigation of possible Alabama Code violations begins.

Based on information available in our office as of June 8, 2007, **the licenses of the individuals listed below are now invalid.** These licensees have failed to renew for 2007 and have not responded to the ABESPA office regarding licensure status. Anyone with information, which would raise questions about the validity of the listing, is asked to notify the Board's office. A list of valid licensees is available on the ABESPA website at www.abespa.org:

NAME OF LICENSEE	TYPE	LICENSE NUMBER
Erin Bryan	SLP	2160
Sheree Cosgrove	SLP	2502
Sandra Gilliam	SLP	1814
Angela Godfrey	SLP	2473
Cynthia Harrell	SLP	1328
Sarah Hughes	SLP	2482
Stacey Ishee	SLP	2432
Martha Johnson	SLP	1224
Sandra Liddell	SLP	645
Barbara McDaniel	SLP	2425
Angela Moore	SLP	2498
Thomas Ross	AUD	0976a
Jewell Rowell	SLP	2314
Lauren Stott	AUD	0964a
Nicole Moss	AUD	0885a

Disciplinary Actions

During 2006, three complaints were received by the CREC. Two of the complaints proceeded with more Board action. One has moved forward to a formal disciplinary hearing and is awaiting a final Board decision. As of the date of this article, no complaints have been filed with the CREC in 2007.

Ethics and Third Party Billing

Yvonne A. H. Saxon, Assistant Attorney General

“If I give my license number to a school system so that they can proceed with Medicaid billing for health related services in the schools and I am told to back bill without adequate documentation, instruction or attendance records, and encouraged to comply under the pressure of losing my job, am I held accountable for the ABESPA ethics or is the LEA responsible? If I am not able to use my professional judgment, how can I be accountable?”

The short answer to your questions is you remain accountable for your actions as a licensee of the Alabama Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (ABESPA).

Although you work in an exempt setting and employed by the Alabama Department of Education, you are responsible for your actions as a licensee. The responsibility arises out of the need for a license to bill Medicaid for your services. If you were not licensed by ABESPA, you could still be employed by the Department of Education in an exempt status as a speech-language pathologist or audiologist, but you could not bill Medicaid for your services.

The actions you describe, “back bill without adequate documentation, instruction or attendance records”, are deemed a violation of Alabama Code Section 34-28A-26(a),(2), and (4) (1975). This Code section provides:

- (a) The license of any licensee under this chapter may be suspended or revoked, or a reprimand may be issued by the board, upon a finding of the board that the licensee has committed any of, but not limited to, the following acts:
- (2) Has been guilty of fraud or deceit in connection with his or her services rendered as a speech-language pathologist or audiologist.
- (4) Has been guilty of unprofessional conduct as defined by the rules established by the board or has violated the code of ethics made and published by the board.”

Additionally, the Code of Ethics of ABESPA that address your questions provide:

“870-X-6-.02 Principles of Ethics I.

- (1) Individuals shall honor their responsibility to hold paramount the welfare of persons they serve professionally.
- (h) Individuals shall maintain adequate records of professional services rendered and products dispensed, and shall allow access to these records when appropriately authorized.
- (j) Individuals shall not charge for services not rendered, nor shall they misrepresent, in any fashion, services rendered or products dispensed.”

“870-X-6-.04 Principles of Ethics III.

- (1) Individuals shall honor their responsibility to the public understanding of the professions, by supporting the development of services designed to fulfill the unmet needs of the public, and by providing accurate information in all communications involving any aspect of the profession.
- (c) Individuals shall not misrepresent diagnostic information, services rendered, or products dispensed or engage in any scheme or artifice to defraud in connection with obtaining payment or reimbursement for such services or products.”

The above provisions prohibit an ABESPA licensee, whether working in an exempt status or not, from engaging in the actions you describe. If a licensee participates in the actions you question, their actions would be in direct violation of the law and the rules and regulations of ABESPA. Violations of ABESPA’s laws and rules and regulations, if proven, can cause a licensee’s license to be revoked, suspended, or reprimanded. Therefore, you are advised not to allow your license to be used for false undocumented billing to Medicaid, when you were not the speech-language pathologist or audiologist who treated the student/child/patient.

How Rules and Regulations are Changed

(And How You Can Get Involved)

Richard Gresham, Au.D. ABA, FAAA

The Rules and Regulation Committee is charged with continuous review of existing rules and regulations and with developing and writing new rules and regulations. As our professions in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology grow and change, it becomes necessary to adopt new rules and regulations or to amend or repeal the current law.

The Board encourages any person to submit a written proposal regarding changes in the current rules and regulations to the Rules and Regulation Committee. The committee will review the proposal and submit it to the Board for approval. Once approved by the Board, appropriate forms must be filed, the proposed changes are published in the Alabama Administrative Monthly for review by other boards or interested parties, and a public hearing is held.

Following their adoption, such rules and regulations shall work in conjunction with the Section 34-28A-1 et. seq. of the Code of Alabama (1975). Both govern the profession and control the professional conduct of every person who holds a license to practice Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology in this state.

ABESPA is in the process of revising the Rules and Regulations.

Please submit all suggestions in writing to the ABESPA office by October 1, 2007.

How to Submit Continuing Education Pre-Approvals

Roan Frederick, SLP

Pre-Approval of an upcoming Continuing Education opportunity may be submitted to the ABESPA office at any time. Approval or disapprovals are decided upon by review and vote of the entire Board. Submitting a request to an individual member results in that member submitting the individual request to the Board as a whole during the regularly scheduled meeting (*see page 3 for scheduled Board Meeting Dates*). The appropriate steps to follow include:

- (1) Log on to the ABESPA website and download the appropriate form for CEU Pre-Approval and follow the directions on the form.
- (2) The information submitted to the Board must include:
 - Course Objectives
 - Biographically Information about the Speaker
 - Classification of the Course as Content I or Content II (*see page 8*)
- (3) Submit the form to: ABESPA
400 South Union Street, Suite 397
Attn: Wanda Rawlinson, Executive Secretary
P.O. Box 304760
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-4760

Please note the timeliness required to obtain an answer to the submitted request. Remember it is a vote of the Board that determines the status of a CEU request.

Continuing Education Clarification

Carmen Taylor, Ph.D., CCC-A

In spite of the recent changes to the Rules and Regulations clarifying which conference/seminar topics count for CEU credit, there remain some topics of ambiguity. Autism and Early Childhood Development are two such topics. The Board would like to take a minute to offer caution and concern about these topics. Although both areas have significant impact on the knowledge base of a speech-language pathologist or audiologist, there are times in which the workshop or conference seminar being presented is not significant. According to our rules and regulations, there must be a link between these topics and clinical practice to qualify for CEU credit. Otherwise, the Board cannot approve the topic.

One additional point of clarification regarding CEUs is related to the 6 hours self-study restriction per year. The Board, after reviewing national trends, as well as changing technology options and demographics of the state, decided that no longer is it necessary for licensees to get all 12 hours through self-study alone. That option was created during a time of limited accessibility to CEU courses. Technology and more workshop options throughout the state have increased the accessibility of CEUs. We would like to clarify that when we wrote the rule, that the limits were placed on self-study that required no interaction -- for example, CELL tapes, journals tests, and multiple choice on-line options. The Board believes that interaction with another professional(s) is paramount to the ultimate success of a clinical practitioner. Therefore, we are allowing technology based CEUs options where there is interaction with an instructor, either real-time or delayed.

12 Hours of CEUs are Required Each Year*:

All 12 CEUs can be obtained from Content Area I

(improves the professional competency of the licensee in the area of licensure)

However, if desired, 2 of the required 12 CEUs may come from Content Area II
(must be related to the professional competency of Speech-Language Pathology and/or Audiology).

Only 2 CEUs will be allowed from Content Area II each year.

Only 6 of the 12 required CEUs will be allowed from self-study courses each year

(CELL, Journals, Online Courses, etc.). Live interaction courses with an instructor, via internet or teleconference are allowed and are not limited to 6 hours per renewal period.

Dual Licensees must obtain 24 CEUs each year (adhering to the above guidelines):

12 CEUs in Speech-Language Pathology **AND** 12 CEUs in Audiology

*One (1) hour of continuing education credit shall be given for each clock hour of attendance.

CONTENT AREA I:

- (1) Anatomic and physiologic bases for the normal development and use of speech, language and hearing and balance
- (2) Physical bases and processes of the production and perception of speech, language and hearing
- (3) Linguistic and psycho-linguistic variables related to normal development and use of speech, language and hearing
- (4) Technological, biomedical, engineering and instrumentation information which would enable expansion of knowledge in the basic communication processes
- (5) Various types of disorders of communication, their manifestations, classification and cause
- (6) Evaluation skills, including procedures, techniques, and instrumentation for assessment
- (7) Principles in habilitation and rehabilitation of communication disorders
- (8) Principles in diagnosis and rehabilitation of balance and vestibular disorders
- (9) Ethical Practices

CONTENT AREA II:

- (1) Regulations and implementation of federal and/or state regulated programs
- (2) Service delivery models
- (3) Administration/supervision issues
- (4) Related areas which interface with delivery of speech-language pathology and audiology services



ABESPA'S Guide for Consumers

The Alabama Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (ABESPA) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.

What is the purpose of the Alabama Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (ABESPA)?

To help ensure the highest quality of speech-language pathology and/or audiology services to the consumers of Alabama, it is necessary to provide regulatory authority over persons offering such services to the public. The practice of speech-language pathology and audiology is a privilege granted to qualified persons by legislative authority in the interest of public health, safety, and welfare. The intent of the licensure law is to:

- (1) Require educational training and licensure of any person who engages in the practice of speech-language pathology and/or audiology.
- (2) To encourage better educational training programs.
- (3) To prohibit the unauthorized and unqualified practice of speech-language pathology and/or audiology, and
- (4) To prohibit the unprofessional conduct of persons licensed to practice speech-language pathology and/or audiology.

In an effort to protect the consumers of Alabama, a process has been provided by which complaints can be filed against persons violating ABESPA's licensure law.

Who Can File a Complaint?

A complaint can be filed by anyone who believes that an individual has acted illegally, irresponsibly, or unprofessionally in providing care to a client. The most effective complaints are those that contain firsthand, verifiable information. The Board cannot act on anonymous complaints. Therefore, all complaints must be in writing.

How do I file a Complaint?

A complaint must first be submitted in writing and signed before it can be processed. Individuals who file complaints are notified in writing of the status of their complaint throughout the process.

When submitting a complaint, as much detail as possible should be stated, as well as copies of any documents that can be used as evidence. Original documents should not be mailed. Dates, times and the type of service received should be included whenever possible.

What Other Documentation Does ABESPA Require to Process a Complaint?

To facilitate the process of a complaint, the following forms are available at www.abespa.org or you may contact the ABESPA office:

Complaint Form – This form can help structure your complaint, although a written letter describing the same information is acceptable.

Waiver of Anonymity – The complainant (person filing the complaint) must sign this form so ABESPA can investigate the given complaint.

Authorization for Disclosure/Request of Protected Health Information (PHI) – ABESPA will need authorization to obtain medical records for the investigation of a given complaint (if applicable).

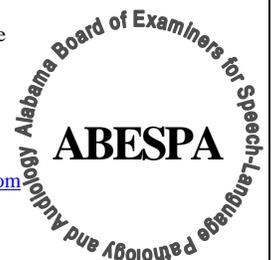
How are Complaints Processed?

Once a complaint has been received, a letter is mailed to the complainant confirming receipt of their complaint and a case number is assigned. The case number protects the anonymity of the complainant and the person being reported. Only the Executive Secretary, the Assistant Attorney General and the Credentials Review Chair know the identities of the involved parties.

After investigating the complaint, the Credentials Review Chair will make a recommendation to the Board, and the Board will make a ruling. If the Board rules to pursue a formal disciplinary hearing, the complaint is forwarded to the Assistant Attorney General who represents the State in the matter.

The entire process of a complaint can be completed within a couple of months or may take much longer depending upon the unique circumstances and complexities of each case. The outcomes can vary, but are not limited to: closing the file with no action from the Board, imposing fines, license suspension, reprimand issuance, or revocation of licensure.

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Change of Address Notification

Name:	License Number:
Previous	Current
Business Name	Business Name
Address	Address
City, State and Zip Code	City, State and Zip Code

Please Submit via Mail, Fax or Email to:

Alabama Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (ABESPA)
 400 S. Union Street, Suite 397
 P.O. Box 304760
 Montgomery, AL 36130-4760
 Fax: (334) 834-9618
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