

**[If Chair is Rep. Maquetta Ricks:]  
Madam Chair, Members of the Committee,**

My name is Amy Fetter. I'm a speech-language pathologist, Board-Certified Behavior Analyst, and owner of Integrated Speech & Behavior, a private practice serving children with autism and rare genetic disorders who are non-speaking. My practice serves Medicaid-funded families across Boulder, Denver, Arapahoe, and Douglas Counties.

I strongly support **House Bill 1075 with the proposed amendment** and urge you to do the same. This bill is not just about addressing Colorado's severe provider shortage in speech therapy—it is about **clearing up the widespread confusion** that has left practices like mine unable to hire the support we desperately need.

Right now, **clinics across the state are in limbo**. Colorado Medicaid's billing manual states that SLPAs **can** provide services under the direct supervision of a speech-language pathologist, yet there is no explicit allowance or prohibition in the law regarding SLPA ability to provide services outside of public schools. Last summer, I considered hiring an SLPA and I spent months contacting the **Colorado Department of Healthcare Policy and Financing, Colorado Medicaid, and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association** to clarify whether I could hire an SLPA—only to encounter uncertainty at every turn. Despite my lengthy waitlists and unfilled therapist positions, I decided against hiring this provider.

Meanwhile, some clinics in Colorado are confidently hiring SLPAs, while others—like mine—are too afraid to make that hire without certainty. **This inconsistency is unacceptable**. As a practice owner, I am committed to following the rules, yet I have never been able to hire enough speech therapists to meet the overwhelming demand in my community. Families sit on waitlists, while others receive services simply because different clinics interpret the gray area differently. **This should not be a guessing game**.

**This bill would fix that**. It would establish **clear, consistent guidelines** so that every clinic in Colorado can operate under the same rules. It would allow trained, supervised SLPAs to step in where they are needed most—helping children like the ones I serve with complex communication needs. This bill will remove the unacceptable confusion therapy owners all over Colorado experience on this topic. I urge you to support HB 1075 and the proposed amendment.



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TO: The House, Business Affairs and Labor Committee  
FROM: The Arc of Colorado | Meredith Henry, Senior Policy Associate, mhenry@thearcofco.org  
RE: [HB 25-1075, Regulate Speech-Language Pathology Assistants](#)  
DATE: Thursday, January 30, 2025

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Thank you to the Chair and members of the House Business Affairs and Labor Committee for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Meredith Henry, I have the honor of serving as the Senior Policy and Advocacy Associate at The Arc of Colorado. Our mission is to promote and protect the human rights of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), while advocating for their full inclusion and participation in the community.

The Arc of Colorado strongly supports HB25-1075, Individuals with IDD in Colorado often face significant barriers to accessing the speech-language support they need. This bill is a step forward in expanding access by enabling SLPAs to practice in a wider range of settings. We are grateful to the bill sponsors, Rep. Garcia Sander and Rep. Phillips, for their leadership on this important issue.

Access to speech-language therapy is crucial for individuals with IDD, as it provides a vital means of communication. No matter how minimal, being able to express oneself allows individuals to communicate their needs and engage meaningfully with others. Communication is a fundamental part of the human experience, and when individuals cannot communicate, it can severely impact their quality of life.

While many children with IDD currently benefit from support by SLPAs in schools, this bill extends those benefits to adults with IDD. For example, adults with IDD may experience challenges in speech production or have hearing impairments, leading to frequent miscommunications, isolation, frustration, and anxiety. The ability to communicate effectively is key to reducing these challenges and improving overall well-being.

This bill is vital in increasing access to essential speech support for the IDD community in Colorado. We urge your support for HB25-1075.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Meredith Henry

**House Business Affairs & Labor**

**01/30/2025 01:30 PM**

**HB25-1075 Regulate Speech-Language Pathology Assistants**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
Derek Goodner Against themselves	I am voting against this unpopular piece of legislation which is purposely onerous, and it's language which is purposely misleading and vague, and against it's backers, who are primarily from out of state special interest groups.
Emilie McLeod For Amazing Care Home Health Services	<p>Testimony in Support of HB 25-1075 Regulate Speech-Language Pathology Assistants</p> <p>Presented to the Colorado House of Representatives Business Affairs and Labor Committee</p> <p>Madame Chair and members of the committee. My name is Emilie McLeod. I am a Speech Language Pathologist and I am the Director of Clinic Based Therapy Services at Amazing Care Home Health Services. I founded a multidisciplinary pediatric clinic in Castle Rock which has expanded to 8 clinics across the front range. We offer speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy and mental health services to 1,500 children each week. I strongly support HB 25-1075 which would regulate Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (SLPAs).</p> <p>Colorado is facing a critical shortage of licensed Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs). Market conditions and limited SLP graduates in Colorado make hiring qualified therapists extremely difficult. Our waitlists are growing, and our providers are stretched thin. This shortage has a direct impact on children who need speech and language services.</p> <p>Regulating SLPAs so they can be hired outside of the school setting can be part of the solution. When properly regulated, SLPAs can provide essential support under the supervision of licensed SLPs, allowing more patients to receive timely care.</p> <p>This bill is a common-sense step to strengthen our workforce and improve care for our communities. I urge you to support HB 25-1075 to help address our SLP shortage and ensure that all patients receive the speech and language services they need.</p>

	<p>Emilie McLeod, MS CCC-SLP                  Director of Clinic Based Therapy Services at Amazing Care Home Health Services                  Founder of Straka Pediatric Therapies</p>
<p>Amber Rea                  For                  themself</p>	<p>Madam Chair &amp; Members of the Committee:</p> <p>My name is Amber Rea and I am a speech language pathologist and the clinic director of Straka Pediatric Therapies in Castle Rock. Our clinics have served the birth to age 21 population in Douglas and El Paso Counties for the last 40 years by providing speech/language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, feeding therapy and mental health counseling services.</p> <p>I am here to urge the committee's support of House Bill 1075 with the amendment that has been proposed. This bill will allow Speech Language Pathology Assistants to be hired and work under the supervision of an speech language pathologist, in settings beyond the school setting in Colorado.</p> <p>Currently, Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (SLPAs) can only work in schools and are not permitted to work in private practices or other community-based settings. This restriction limits the ability of clinics and providers to expand services and meet the growing demand for speech therapy – In comparison, other therapies, such as Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy, have allowed assistants to work under supervision in various settings for years.</p> <p>I think everyone here today has a personal connection to someone receiving speech therapy in some form or fashion --from a child with Autism using a device to talk or an aging parent struggling with cognition and swallowing post stroke. Speech therapy covers such a wide range of services and frankly, we need support. There are just not enough SLPs in the state of Colorado that can meet the needs of these growing populations. The passing of this bill would ensure much needed access to care and alleviate ever-growing waitlists.</p> <p>So, with that in mind, please consider that niece or nephew with a lisp, the elderly neighbor battling memory issues or that college student with a stutter—these are the people that will benefit from your support of this bill.</p> <p>Thank you!</p>

**House Business Affairs & Labor**

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Kimberly Smith  
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1/30/2025

Chairperson Ricks  
Members of the House Business Affairs and Labor Committee  
Colorado State Legislature

Subject: Testimony in Support of Bill Number HB25-1075 (Regulate Speech-Language Pathology Assistants)

Dear Chairwoman Ricks and Members of the House Business Affairs and Labor Committee,

My name is Kimberly Smith, and I am here as an SLPA in favor of this bill.

Regulating speech-language pathology assistants (SLPAs) in Colorado would significantly benefit the field. It would ultimately improve access to care and support both professionals and the individuals they serve.

Regulating SLPAs will increase access to services. Colorado struggles with a shortage of qualified Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs). By regulating SLPAs, we can expand access to therapy services for individuals who might otherwise experience long waiting times or limited intervention.

Regulating SLPAs offers support to SLPs. SLPs continuously have large caseloads, making it difficult to provide individualized care to every patient. SLPAs can help alleviate this burden by handling routine tasks under supervision, allowing SLPs to focus on more complex cases and evaluations.

Regulating SLPAs will improve patient outcomes. With more trained professionals, patients of all ages receive consistent, high-quality therapy. More frequent therapy leads to better progress and improved communication skills.

Regulating SLPAs will create standardization and quality assurance, ensuring they meet educational and clinical standards and creating consistency in service delivery across the state. This will lead to better training, ethical practice, and accountability.

Who Would Benefit Most?

Patients & Families—More frequent therapy, better outcomes, and increased service availability mean individuals with communication disorders get the support they need.

SLPs – With trained SLPAs assisting them, SLPs can focus on more complex cases, reduce burnout, and improve work-life balance.

Clinics and healthcare Facilities—More trained professionals allow institutions to serve more individuals efficiently without overburdening existing SLPs.

This legislation does not create new regulations but extends a proven model already implemented for school-based SLPAs to other essential settings, including private practice, home health, early intervention, and hospitals. Doing so ensures consistent professional standards and oversight while addressing the significant workforce shortage of SLPs in Colorado.

The demand for speech-language services continues to grow, yet the shortage of qualified SLPs has made it increasingly difficult for businesses to fill open positions. Without the passage of this bill, hundreds of currently practicing SLPAs may face job uncertainty, and patients requiring these essential services may experience reduced access to care.

By approving this bill, you will help strengthen our healthcare system, provide stability for practicing SLPAs, and, most importantly, improve access to vital speech-language services for individuals and families in need. I urge you to vote in favor of this critical measure.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Smith, B.S., M.A, SLPA