**Issue #2**: Speech-language pathology assistants are not a replacement for certified speech-language pathologists.

· Misconceptions did exist about the appropriate use of SLPAs.

- SLPs were concerned that they will be replaced by less costly SLPAs.

-Administrators may be erroneously viewing SLPAs as an avenue to fill speech-language pathology vacancies or temporary leaves/absences.

**Explanation:**

Licensed SLPAs must be appropriately educated and supervised. They are not independent autonomous professionals and cannot be hired to supplant SLPs. SLPAs can assist the SLP with high caseloads, fill hard to staff positions in rural and underserved areas as long as they are appropriately supervised. SLPAs help address the shortage and meet the needs of the many individuals with communication disorders across the state.

**Current Status**:

· SLPAs are not currently licensed in Minnesota, although their role is defined by state statute 148.5192.

* ASHA and Minnesota statute define the proper scope of practice for SLPAs and the role of the SLPA which includes:
* Implementing documented treatment plans or protocols developed by the supervising SLP.

**Tasks Outside the Scope of Practice of an SLPA**

* SLPAs may not perform standardized or nonstandardized tests or interpret test results; consult with a client or family about the client’s status; write, develop, or modify a client’s individualized treatment plan or individualized education program; or select or discharge clients from service.
* SLPAs must not sign any formal documents, including treatment plans, education plans, reimbursement forms, or reports. The SLP must sign or initial all treatment notes written by the assistant.

**Supervision**

· Requirements for supervision of SLPAs are defined by ASHA and Minnesota statute:

* for the first 90 workdays, within a 40-hour work week, 30 percent of the work performed by the SLPA must be supervised and at least 20 percent of the work performed must be under direct supervision; and
* (2) for the work period after the initial 90-day period, within a 40-hour work week, 20 percent of the work performed must be supervised and at least ten percent of the work performed must be under direct supervision.
* SLPs are bound by the ASHA Code of Ethics to ensure that SLPAs under their supervision are compliant with ASHA and state guidelines. School administrators hiring SLPAs must promote the ethical practices outlined by ASHA to prevent jeopardizing the license and certification of the supervising SLPs.

**Solution - Licensure of SLPAs**

* While the Minnesota statute defines the appropriate duties of SLPAs is adopted for from ASHA’s position statement, enacting a license through the Minnesota Department of Health would ensure the proper regulation of SLPAs.

**Supply/Demand**

* There are currently 30 students enrolled in the SLPA program at Alexandria Technical and Community College, and they have graduated 3 classes since inception. Other online programs exist to educate and train SLPAs and can be furnished upon request