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### Overview

This bill establishes licensure requirements for speech-language pathology assistants, to be administered by the commissioner of health. Under a licensure system, only persons who meet predetermined qualifications and obtain a license are able to use protected titles and practice as a speech-language pathology assistant, and persons without those qualifications are prohibited from using protected titles and practicing as a speech-language pathology assistant. This bill establishes requirements for full licensure and restricted licensure. The licensing requirements become effective January 1, 2019.

Speech-language pathology assistants are persons who perform delegated speech-language pathology duties under the supervision of a licensed speech-language pathologist. Minnesota Statutes, section 148.5192, subdivision 2 lists the services a speech-language pathology assistant may perform, and services they cannot perform.

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- 1 Speech-language pathology assistant.** Amends § 148.512, subd. 17a. Amends the definition of speech-language pathology assistant.
- 2 Unlicensed practice prohibited.** Amends § 148.513, subd. 1. Prohibits a person from practicing as a speech-language pathology assistant unless the person is licensed. Strikes a reference to a subdivision specifying a speech-language pathology assistant's duties; similar language is found in new sections 148.5185 and 148.5186.

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- 3**      **Protected titles and restrictions on use; speech-language pathologists and audiologists.** Amend § 148.513, subd. 2. In a subdivision listing protected titles, removes language specifying protected titles for speech-language pathology assistants (protected titles for this occupation are moved to a new subdivision 2b). Also makes technical changes.
- 4**      **Protected titles and restrictions on use; speech-language pathology assistants.** Adds subd. 2b to § 148.513. Lists protected titles for licensed speech-language pathology assistants. Prohibits speech-language pathology assistants from representing to the public that they are licensed speech-language pathologists.
- 5**      **Applicability.** Amends § 148.515, subd. 1. Clarifies that an existing section on qualifications for licensure applies only to licensure of speech-language pathologists and audiologists.
- 6**      **Licensure by equivalency.** Amends § 148.516. Clarifies that an existing section on licensure by equivalency applies only to licensure of speech-language pathologists and audiologists.
- 7**      **Restricted licensure; speech-language pathology assistants.** Adds § 148.5185. Establishes restricted licensure for speech-language pathology assistants with certain qualifications.

**Subd. 1. Qualifications for a restricted license.** To be eligible for a restricted license as a speech-language pathology assistant, requires a person to satisfy the requirements in subdivision 2, 3, or 4.

**Subd. 2. Person practicing as a speech-language pathology assistant before January 1, 2019.** Allows a person practicing as a speech-language pathology assistant before January 1, 2019, who does not meet the qualification requirements for a license under section 148.5186, to apply for a restricted license. Lists information an applicant must submit to the commissioner. Lists coursework and supervised field experience that a person with a restricted license must complete, in order to be eligible for full licensure.

**Subd. 3. Person with a bachelor's degree in communication sciences or disorders and practicing as a speech-language pathology assistant before January 1, 2019.** Allows a person with a bachelor's degree in communication sciences or disorders and who is practicing as a speech-language pathology assistant before January 1, 2019, but who does not meet the qualification requirements for a license under section 148.5186, to apply for a restricted license. Lists information an applicant must submit to the commissioner. Lists coursework and supervised field experience that a person with a restricted license must complete, in order to be eligible for full licensure.

**Subd. 4. Person with an associate degree from a program that does not meet requirements in section 148.5186.** Allows a person with an associate degree from a program that does not meet the requirements in section 148.5186, to apply for a restricted license. Lists information an applicant must submit to the commissioner. Requires a speech-language pathology assistant with a restricted license under this subdivision to complete any missing coursework or supervised field experience, as determined by the commissioner, in order to be eligible for full licensure.

**Subd. 5. Additional requirements; restricted license.** Allows a restricted license to be renewed biennially until January 1, 2025. Requires a speech-language pathology

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assistant with a restricted license and working as a speech-language pathology assistant before January 1, 2019, to only practice with the employer with whom the assistant was employed when the assistant applied for a restricted license.

**Subd. 6. Continuing education.** Requires a speech-language pathology assistant to comply with continuing education requirements for speech-language pathology assistants, in order to renew a restricted license.

**Subd. 7. Scope of practice.** Provides that scope of practice for speech-language pathology assistants with restricted licenses is governed by a subdivision that specifies duties that may and may not be performed by speech-language pathology assistants.

**8      **Licensure, speech-language pathology assistants.**** Adds § 148.5186. Establishes licensure for speech-language pathology assistants with certain qualifications.

**Subd. 1. Requirements for licensure.** Provides that to be eligible for licensure as a speech-language pathology assistant, an applicant must submit evidence of completing:

- an associate degree from an accredited speech-language pathology assistant program, which includes at least 100 hours of supervised field experience; or
- a bachelor's degree in communication sciences or disorders and a speech-language pathology assistant certificate program that includes specified coursework and at least 100 hours of supervised field experience.

**Subd. 2. Licensure by equivalency.** Requires an applicant who applies for licensure by equivalency as a speech-language pathology assistant to provide the commissioner with evidence of satisfying the requirement for licensure in subdivision 1.

**Subd. 3. Scope of practice.** Provides that scope of practice for speech-language pathology assistants licensed under this section is governed by a subdivision that specifies duties that may and may not be performed by speech-language pathology assistants.

**9      **Applications for licensure; speech-language pathologists and audiologists.**** Amends § 148.519, subd. 1. Clarifies that an existing subdivision on licensing procedures applies to applicants for licensure as a speech-language pathologist or audiologist.

**10     **Applications for licensure; speech-language pathology assistants.**** Adds subd. 1a to § 148.519. Lists information an applicant for licensure as a speech-language pathology assistant must submit to the commissioner.

**11     **Delegation requirements.**** Amends § 148.5192, subd. 1. Provides that a speech-language pathologist can only delegate duties to a speech-language pathology assistant who is licensed under section 148.5185 or 148.5186.

**12     **Number of contact hours required.**** Amends § 148.5193, subd. 1. Clarifies that an existing subdivision on continuing education requirements applies to licensed speech-language pathologists or audiologists.

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- 13 Continuing education; speech-language pathology assistants.** Adds subd. 1a to § 148.5193. Requires applicants renewing speech-language pathology assistant licenses to satisfy requirements for continuing education established by the commissioner.
- 14 Speech-language pathology assistant biennial licensure fee.** Adds subd. 3b to § 148.5194. Sets the fee for initial licensure and licensure renewal for speech-language pathology assistants at \$.....
- 15 Penalty fees.** Amends § 148.5194, subd. 8. Establishes penalty fees for a speech-language pathology assistant who uses a protected title or practices speech-language pathology assisting without a current license after a license has expired or who is not licensed. Also establishes a penalty fee for a speech-language pathology assistant who fails to submit a continuing education report by the due date.
- 16 Grounds for disciplinary action by commissioner.** Amends § 148.5195, subd. 3. Makes the following grounds for disciplinary action by the commissioner:
- performing services of a speech-language pathology assistant in an incompetent or negligent manner; or
  - violating a law which directly relates to the practice of speech-language pathology assisting, or an essential element of which is dishonesty.
- 17 Membership.** Amends § 148.5196, subd. 1. Expands the Speech-Language Pathologist and Audiologist Advisory Council from 12 to 13 persons, and adds a licensed speech-language pathology assistant to its membership.
- 18 Duties.** Amends § 148.5196, subd. 3. Adds to the duties of the Speech-Language Pathologist and Audiologist Advisory Council, to include advising the commissioner on speech-language pathology assistant licensure standards, and distributing information about speech-language pathology assistant licensure standards.