



2023 End of Session Update New York State Speech-Language-Hearing Association

The New York State Legislature adjourned the 2023 legislative session on June 10, 2023. The Senate completed its work around 3am that morning with Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins ending the session saying, "see you in 2024!" The Assembly adjournment ended later that day with the caveat that they would be returning before the end of June to complete some unfinished business. Media reports indicate that the Assembly will return on June 20-21 for a two-day special session. While an agenda has not yet been formally announced by Assembly leadership, we do not anticipate any action to be taken by the Assembly that will impact NYSSLHA.

NYSSLHA had a strong advocacy presence throughout the 2023 Legislative Session with two lobby days. NYSSLHA's Budget Lobby Day was held virtually on February 10 and a Legislative Lobby Day was held virtually on May 19. NYSSLHA's legislative agenda included a number of topics important to the speech-language-pathology and audiology professions and those they serve.

This session, NYSSLHA was successful in:

- Defeating legislation to authorize the for-profit sale of hearing aids by physicians for the 19th year in a row (S1510, Bailey).
- Defeating legislation to authorize a Westchester County pilot program of for-profit sale of hearing aids by physicians (S2697, Harckham/A2478, Paulin).
- Working with the Department of Health to update Medicaid policies to ensure coverage of laryngectomy products.
- Working with the Department of State in the development of formal Guidance to help [hearing aid dispensers](#) and consumers understand the new federal hearing aid rule changes and clarify the differences between OTC and traditional hearing aids, preserving the prohibition on for-profit hearing aid dispensing by physicians.

Early Intervention

NYSSLHA strongly advocated for an 11% rate increase for Early Intervention (EI) providers for the entirety of the 2023 Legislative Session. Despite this strong sustained advocacy by NYSSLHA and other organizations, the final budget that

passed on May 3rd failed to include this EI rate increase. Following passage of the budget, the Senate and Assembly Health Committee Chairs, Senator Gustavo Rivera and Assemblymember Amy Paulin introduced legislation that would authorize DOH to increase EI rates by 11% beginning July 1, 2024. This legislation allowed NYSSLHA to keep this topic at the forefront and continue a sustained advocacy effort, with the goal of influencing the Governor to include funds necessary to effectuate the 11% increase in her next Executive Budget proposal for SFY 2025. While this legislation was approved and reported out of the Senate and Assembly Health Committees, the bills did not pass in either house. NYSSLHA will continue to fight for this increase with other supportive partners and advocate with the Governor's office, the Department of Health, the Senate, and Assembly leading into next year's budget cycle and legislative session.

Insurance Coverage of Hearing Aids

During the legislative session, NYSSLHA has also worked closely with Assemblymember Michaelle Solages' office to recommend strengthening legislation to improve insurance coverage of hearing aids. NYSSLHA will continue to work with the sponsor of this legislation, pending suggested amendments.

Speech Language Pathology Assistants

Last year, Assemblymember Marcela Mitaynes contacted NYSSLHA to discuss establishing professional title for Speech Language Pathology Assistants (SLPAs) in New York State. The Assemblymember has not yet introduced legislation on this topic and NYSSLHA continues to be willing to discuss further with her office to share concerns and better understand the Assemblymember's interest in this topic.

All of us at Reid, McNally & Savage are privileged to work with NYSSLHA. We wish everyone a happy and healthy summer and look forward to continuing to work with you on your Government Affairs agenda.