



March 30, 2023

The Honorable Katie Hobbs
Office of the Governor
1700 West Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007

RE: Speech Therapy Coverage; SB 1016

Dear Governor Hobbs:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to express support for SB 1016, which would allow for outpatient speech, language, and swallowing therapy for adults in outpatient settings who are age 21 and older.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 228,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 3,400 ASHA members reside in Arizona.¹

Speech-language pathologists provide critical care services that include treating patients who are recovering from a stroke or traumatic brain injury, and patients with head and neck cancer. Coverage of these vital services provides adults with the capacity to reengage not only in their personal lives but in their communities and employment settings. Adults who do not receive appropriate treatment, may be financially impacted by job loss or the inability to provide basic care for themselves or other members of their family. The provision of speech, language, and swallowing therapy services will be at minimal cost to the state, yet provide a substantial impact on the lives of these adults.

Thank you for helping to ensure that the citizens of Arizona have access to speech, language, and swallowing therapy, which will help them participate in activities of daily living and improve their ability to engage in social interaction. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA's director, state association relations, at ecrowe@asha.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert M. Augustine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" and "A".

Robert M. Augustine, PhD, CCC-SLP
2023 ASHA President

cc: Ms. Zaida Dedolph Piccoro, Health Policy Advisor

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2022). *Arizona* [Quick Facts]. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/advocacy/state-fliers/arizona-state-flyer.pdf>.