

WSR 24-01-120

PERMANENT RULES

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

(Board of Hearing and Speech)

[Filed December 19, 2023, 12:06 p.m., effective January 19, 2024]

Effective Date of Rule: Thirty-one days after filing.

Purpose: Health equity continuing education (CE) rules for the audiologists, hearing aid specialists, speech-language pathologists, and speech-language pathologist assistants professions. The board of hearing and speech (board) is adopting new WAC 246-828-505 and amending WAC 246-828-510 to implement ESSB 5229 (chapter 276, Laws of 2021). The board is adopting and exceeding the health equity model rule minimum standards, WAC 246-12-800 through 246-12-830, for audiologist, hearing aid specialist, speech-language pathologist, and speech-language pathologist assistant professions to comply with RCW 43.70.613.

RCW 43.70.613 (3) (b) directs the rule-making authority for each health profession licensed under Title 18 RCW that is subject to CE to adopt rules requiring a licensee to complete health equity CE at least once every four years. The statute also directs the department of health (department) to create model rules establishing the minimum standards for health equity CE programs. The department filed model rules for health equity CE minimum standards on November 23, 2022, under WSR 22-23-167. The model rules require two hours of training every four years. Any rules developed by the board must meet or exceed the minimum standards in the model rules in WAC 246-12-800 through 246-12-830.

The board's adopted rules require two hours of health equity education be completed every three years as part of the current CE requirements for the professions. The adopted rules do not increase total CE hours but require two hours of health equity CE be absorbed into the existing CE hour requirements. This exceeds the minimum two hours of health equity education required every four years in the model rules.

Citation of Rules Affected by this Order: New WAC 246-828-505; and amending WAC 246-828-510.

Statutory Authority for Adoption: RCW 18.35.161, 18.130.040, 43.70.040, and 43.70.613.

Adopted under notice filed as WSR 23-19-030 on September 12, 2023.

A final cost-benefit analysis is available by contacting Kim-Boi Shadduck, P.O. Box 47877, Olympia, WA 98504-7877, phone 360-236-2912, fax 360-236-2901, TTY 711, email kimboi.shadduck@doh.wa.gov, website doh.wa.gov.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Comply with Federal Statute: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Federal Rules or Standards: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Recently Enacted State Statutes: New 1, Amended 1, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted at the Request of a Nongovernmental Entity: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted on the Agency's own Initiative: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Clarify, Streamline, or Reform Agency Procedures: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted using Negotiated Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Pilot Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Other Alternative Rule Making: New 1, Amended 1, Repealed 0.

Date Adopted: November 3, 2023.

Nichole K. Furness, AuD., Chairperson
Board of Hearing and Speech

OTS-4593.1

NEW SECTION

WAC 246-828-505 Health equity continuing education training requirements. (1) A credential holder must complete a minimum of two hours in health equity continuing education training every three years in accordance with WAC 246-12-800 through 246-12-830.

(2) This training must be completed by the end of the second full continuing education reporting period after January 1, 2024, or the second full continuing education reporting period after initial licensure, whichever is later.

(3) The hours spent completing health equity continuing education under this section count toward meeting applicable continuing education requirements for renewal.

(4) The board may randomly audit up to 25 percent licensed audiologists, hearing aid specialists, speech-language pathologists, or speech-language pathologists assistants every two years for compliance after the license is renewed as allowed by WAC 246-12-190.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 15-14-092, filed 6/29/15, effective 7/1/15)

WAC 246-828-510 Continuing education. The purpose of continuing education is to ensure the highest quality professional care. The objectives are to improve and increase the ability of the hearing aid specialist, audiologist, speech-language pathologist, and speech-language pathology assistant to deliver the highest possible quality professional care and keep the professional abreast of current developments.

Continuing education consists of educational activities designed to review existing concepts and techniques and to convey information and knowledge about advances in hearing instrument fitting and dispensing, audiology, and speech-language pathology fields as applied to the work setting.

(1) Continuing education requirement. A credential holder must complete a minimum of ((thirty)) 30 hours of continuing education every three years.

(a) At least one hour of the continuing education must be on infection control.

(b) Multicultural education aimed at removing barriers to access to care may count for up to five hours of continuing education.

(c) At least (~~twenty-five~~) 25 hours of continuing education must be related to profession specific skills and competencies.

(i) At least two hours of continuing education must be on health equity training, as specified in WAC 246-12-800 through 246-12-830.

(ii) This training must be completed by the end of the second full continuing education reporting period after January 1, 2024, or the second full continuing education reporting period after initial licensure, whichever is later.

(2) Continuing education is defined as any of the following activities:

(a) Courses, seminars, workshops and postgraduate programs offered by accredited educational institutions. These educational activities must be recorded on an official transcript or by documentation stating the number of continuing education hours completed.

(b) Courses, seminars and workshops offering continuing clock or continuing educational units offered by profession-related organizations or industries. These activities will be accepted with documentation of the number of continuing education hours completed.

(c) Attendance at a continuing education program having a featured speaker(s) or panel, which has been provided by, sponsored by, or endorsed by a profession-related organization or industry. This activity will be accepted with documentation of the number of continuing education hours completed.

(d) Participation as a speaker or panel member in a continuing education program which has been provided by, sponsored by, or endorsed by a profession-related organization or industry. A maximum of eight hours, including preparation time, may be applied to the total three-year requirement.

(e) Completion of a written, video, internet, or audio continuing education program which has been provided by, sponsored by, or endorsed by a profession-related organization or industry. Only programs in which proof of completion is provided or with tests that are not self-graded will be accepted.

(3) The board may grant an exception for continuing education requirements under certain circumstances including, but not limited to, severe illness. The credential holder must submit a written request for exception to the board for review. The board will approve or deny the request.

(4) A credential holder may be randomly audited for continuing education compliance as specified in chapter 246-12 WAC, Part 7.