



**ADVOCACY  
HEADLINES**

**STAY INFORMED...GET INVOLVED!**

**★ FALL 2024 ★**

# What has SCSHA been doing?



Our lobbyist and our VP of Government Affairs have been working hard to advocate for areas of improvement identified by our committee and board members. We have collaborated with ASHA staff to support our efforts

throughout this process and strive to identify that in posting advocacy wins. Thank you to the many members who are sharing their concerns affecting practice in a variety of ways.

Our lobbyist is contracted with us and funds to pay that contract come from SCSHA's annual budget. We need ongoing member support each year to meet the needs of the annual budget. When members don't renew, we run a risk of having to cut portions of the budget, such as lobbying. If we had to make a sacrifice in this area, there is a strong possibility that our advocacy efforts would be significantly stifled. We are so appreciative of those who have already renewed their SCSHA membership for calendar year 2025!

Advocacy isn't all we do. To find out more, [check out our webpage!](#)

If you are wanting advocacy updates in realtime, please consider creating a Facebook page and joining the private SCSHA Facebook group. We will email members with bigger updates. The feedback from members so far is that emails are not as effective in getting their attention on time-sensitive calls for action. Thank you for considering this method of communicating with SCSHA!

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# SC Medicaid Home Health Update

Work is being done to allow SC to participate in a waiver so that therapists can do the initial and comprehensive evaluation for cases that may also require nursing care. Previously, therapy did



the intake and comprehensive evaluation for "therapy only" cases. This program change has been discussed by our policy experts at ASHA who provided input to CMS on the potential implications of the change.

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# Got Insurance Payer issues?

Get in touch with our SCSHA reimbursement committee chair, [Carrie Hinnant](#), so that your ideas can be added to those being discussed by this committee.



# SC Medicaid Telehealth Update



We have had a lot of discussion and collaboration with SC Medicaid on telehealth for therapy since the end of summer 2024. At present, telehealth for therapy (PT, OT, SLP) stops being reimbursable for Medicaid and Medicare after December 31, 2024.

Here is the good news:

- A US House committee approved a 2 year extension which would end in December 2026.
- SC Medicaid has approved a 2 year extension for therapy services on CPT codes 92507, 97110, and 97530.
- Telehealth will continue to exclude feeding/swallowing therapy (92526) and AAC device programming (92609), but these may be completed as non-reimbursable services in some instances.
- Cognitive therapy codes (97129, 97130) are not covered codes for SLPs via in-person services or via telehealth.
- We are prioritizing improvement in telehealth coverage over the long term, to include all evaluation and treatment codes.
- ASHA Staff have been incredibly helpful on telehealth advocacy and we could not do this without their support.

We know telehealth for therapy is not every member's main priority. However, telehealth is the policy being addressed by the state agency with potential for multiple year effects, which makes it important for SCSHA to address.

[Read the SC DHHS Telehealth proviso from 10/1/24.](#)

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## BCBS of SC and Healthy Blue

We asked for a statement in the Healthy Blue and Blue Cross commercial medical policies which prohibited incident-to billing to be reviewed and removed. In the case of an SLP Intern (clinical fellow) or an SLP Assistant,



**South Carolina**

BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina  
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Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

incident-to billing is the primary way that SLPs bill services, especially in cases of dual-coverage (Medicaid plus commercial), or Medicaid (Healthy Blue), where the SLP Intern or SLP Assistant is credentialed under the supervising SLP's Medicaid provider status.

The good news? The statement that previously did not allow incident-to billing has been removed from the medical policy. If you continue to have claim payment issues with SLP Interns or SLP Assistants, please get in touch with SCSHA reimbursement committee chair, Carrie Hinnant.

# School Based SLP Services

This school year, many of our members have been dealing with a major change from Enrich to EdPlan. Our workload advocacy plan is below!

We are happy to report that direct employees of the school district received a pay raise due to increases in minimum teacher salary schedule from the legislature this year. The amount of the increase is determined by the pay scale used by the district for SLPs.

We are investigating how SLPs can claim CEUs for completing LETRS training. SLPs are able to claim PDH (professional development hours) regardless of whether or not the CEU is granted by ASHA or CE Broker. We will update further if there is more to be done to claim these hours as CEUs.

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## Workload Calculator

We are planning an online webinar in December to share and roll out a brand new workload calculator for school based SLPs. This calculator was piloted by several SLPs in our state and takes into account a variety of factors specific to our state. One of the major differences is that this workload calculator is a case-weighted model versus a time-spent model, and it considers student specific factors. The SCSHA school-based SLP committee leaders and our ASHA SEAL have been working hard on this for you! We will publicize the date of the webinar as well as how to register so you can receive CEUs for participating. One of our goals with the workload calculator is to look at patterns across our state and assist you with advocating at the district level, so surveys will be part of the ongoing process to improve working conditions in schools.



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## Practicing as an SLP in another state:

Ensure you are protecting your professional ability to practice by reviewing licensure guidelines from that state before attempting to work with a patient, whether it is part of disaster relief or a paid position. The North Carolina Board of Examiners in SLP and Audiology has published guidance for Hurricane Helene relief which you can view on the Board's [website](#).

# ASHA survey on dismissal from school based SLP services

Are you an SLP working in schools? We want to hear from you! Help us understand the challenges of dismissing students from speech-language services by taking our survey. Your input will guide ASHA in identifying support needs, developing resources, and sharing valuable insights with key stakeholders. Thank you for helping us shape the future of school-based services!

[Take the survey here.](#)

Questions? Contact [schools@asha.org](mailto:schools@asha.org)



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## What else is SCSHA advocacy working on?

- Collaborating with the Legislative Affairs committee on the practice act project
- Engaging with Medicaid MCOs and commercial insurers
- Regular meetings with the Therapy Coalition (SCSHA, SCOTA, APTA-SC)
- Creating Webinars that may assist us with fundraising to meet our budgetary needs
- Working within existing systems to discuss issues with relevant provider groups such as lactation consultants, ABA therapists, and family trainers (BabyNet).
- Updating FAQ resources on the SCSHA webpage
- Investigating options for being eligible to participate in the public service loan forgiveness (PSLF) program for BabyNet providers to improve recruitment and retention
- Meeting with the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) regarding the background check language for the Audiology and SLP interstate compact, which will require a bill to change in the 2025-2026 legislative session.



# Opportunities to support or obtain Hurricane Helene Relief

The Institute for Child Success, based in Upstate SC, published an article entitled “[Supporting Children After Natural Disasters](#).”

To access support for yourself or your small business, start with FEMA, and then you should receive information from the Small Business Administration.

Call the FEMA Helpline at 1-800-621-3362 or Apply online at [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://DisasterAssistance.gov)

The North Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition (NCBFC) has started a Facebook page where they are posting about ways you can support efforts in Western NC for safe infant feeding. The needs are ongoing given that some areas where people live are completely cut off because of damaged roadways and long-term impacts on infrastructure to include clean running water, electricity, and access to food. Several SLPs in South Carolina have volunteered time and/or resources to assist with the mission of this group after the Hurricane.

[View the information on Facebook.](#)

If you want to help with Hurricane relief efforts in other ways, look for organizations such as United Way, Red Cross, One SC and others. Ensure that any organization you donate to is reputable and accountable for proper use of donated funds and materials.

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## ASHA NOMS Data Snapshots & Interactive Reports

Data snapshots offer a quick look of the impact of SLP services on various populations and treatment areas. Download these data snapshots and engage key audiences about the value of SLP services. Interactive reports offer an in-depth look and analysis of NOMS data. Explore the data by selecting different populations and treatment settings.

[View more info here.](#)



# Help ASHA to advocate to improve United HealthCare prior authorization

Are you experiencing issues with UnitedHealthcare's prior authorization requirements? ASHA wants to hear about it.

“Despite ASHA’s efforts, UHC has not agreed to rescind its 100% prior authorization of speech-language pathology services policy for Medicare Advantage (MA) patients and chose to expand the prior authorization (PA) program to Medicaid managed care plans. We are aware that many UHC Medicaid managed care plans had PA before this new policy for MA plans but are still interested in your experiences with UHC specifically as we have heard this PA process is among the most laborious.

We’ve developed a feedback form (written link below) to gain a clear understanding of your experience with this process to help in our advocacy efforts. We’ve also developed a patient fact sheet (link below) to help facilitate conversations with your patients.

We will continue to fight this policy alongside our association partners including the American Occupational Therapy Association, American Physical Therapy Association, the National Association for Rehabilitation Agencies (NARA), and ADVION. If you have questions, reach out to [reimbursement@asha.org](mailto:reimbursement@asha.org).”

[ASHA newslink on UHC](#)

[ASHA Feedback form](#)

[ASHA Patient fact sheet on UHC.](#)

Email: [reimbursement@asha.org](mailto:reimbursement@asha.org)

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## Links and Resources to share with your colleagues:

[ASHA Advocacy Webinar Series](#)

[ASHA Schools Virtual Town Hall](#)

[ASHA Communication Access Resources](#)

[ASHA Take Action page](#)



# WE NEED YOU!

## Sign Up for a **Committee**, **State Rep** or **Board Position!**

**Babynet** • **School SLPs** • **Augmentative & Alternative Communication** • **Legislative Affairs** •  
**Membership** • **Audiology** • **Annual Convention** • **SLPA** • **ABA Licensure** •  
**State Education Advocacy Leaders (SEAL)** • **VP of Audiology**



# 2025 Annual Convention



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