



## *Spring Newsletter April 2021*



### *Letter from the President*

***Dear Members,***

It has been a busy, exciting spring for our professions. As we consider the past year, I am amazed at how quickly we pulled together to serve so many through telehealth. Telehealth has benefited so many home-bound during the pandemic and has the potential to benefit so many more in underserved communities in Tennessee. Looking ahead, I hope that we can continue improving and expanding telehealth to serve our most distressed counties identified by the Appalachian Regional Council.

<https://www.tn.gov/transparenttn/state-financial-overview/open-eecd/openecd/tneecd-performance-metrics/openecd-long-term-objectives-quick-stats/distressed-counties.html>

Some other important issues that are important to gain awareness and understanding of are Interstate Compacts and Alternative Payment Models. Below are some links and information to help gain a better understanding.

## Interstate Compacts

*The Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC) reached a significant milestone today when Nebraska became the 10th state to sign ASLP-IC legislation into law. Ten states were needed to adopt the ASLP-IC and initiate the process of making the Compact operational. To date, the participating states include Alabama, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming.*

<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/audiology-and-speech-language-pathology-interstate-compact/>

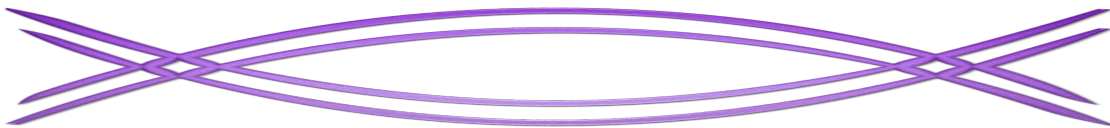
**Alternative Payment Models (APMs)** Alternative Payment Models homepage:

<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/alternative-payment-models/>

I encourage you to reach out to Executive Council members. They would love your input and involvement in area like Legislative Affairs, Communications, Membership, Membership at Large, Public Schools and Convention. Please take a look at our website and consider how you would like to get more involved. <https://taaslp.org/about/leadership/>

Thanks so much for your work in our profession!

**-Jennifer Wilson, M.A., CCC-SLP, BCS-S**  
TAASLP President 2021 -2023

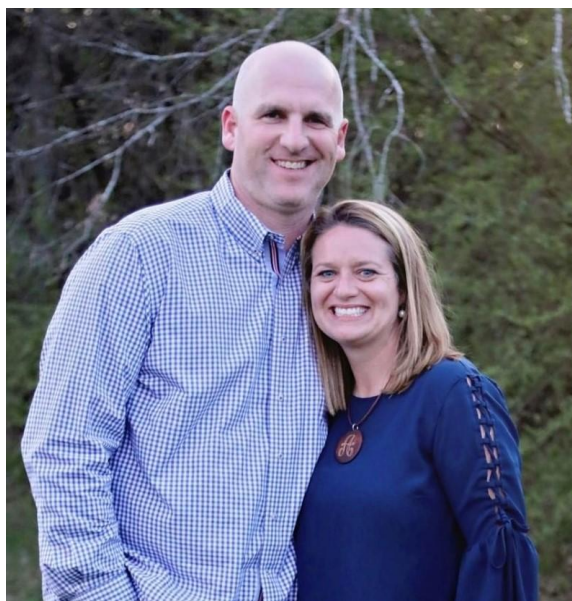


*A Successful Day on the Hill 2021!*



TAASLP Day on the Hill was held virtually this year on Tuesday, March 23, 2021. Eighteen audiologists and speech-language pathologists joined us for a variety of different sessions, which included an introductory session led by Courtney Atnip and Heather Meshell from Capitol and 5<sup>th</sup> Public Strategies. We also had an Advocacy 101 session led by Dr. Bess Sirmon-Taylor from East Tennessee State University. This session helped us to learn more about the power of grassroots advocacy! After our Advocacy 101 session, we had a chance to have meetings with legislators, including Representatives Bob Freeman, Tom Leatherwood, Tandy Darby, and Darren Jernigan. Our meetings focused on current legislation that TAASLP is helping to move through the General Assembly with a focus on telehealth for graduate students (SB0508/HB1265) and the school-based SLP survey (SB0233/HB0023). During our virtual “meet and greet,” Senator Becky Massey stopped by, and we had a wonderful conversation with her about the importance of telehealth and caseload caps. She also shared with us her legislation around the Deaf Mentor Program (SB 0248/HB0631). Overall, it was a very successful day as we were able to share the impact that audiologists and speech-language pathologists have across Tennessee!

### *Member Spotlight:*



Angela Shofner is a Speech Language Pathologist specializing in Augmentative Alternative Communication and Assistive Technology in Rutherford County Schools. She has been serving the district for the last four years as the District Wide Assistive Technology Facilitator. Angela has been instrumental in creating and implementing a process for

securing communication devices for the students in Rutherford County Schools. She assists occupational therapists, special education teachers, and SLPs with the implementation of various forms of assistive technology in the school setting. She does presentations on AAC, how to collect data, how to implement the device, and how to secure a communication device for students. Her most recent presentation was for The SLP Connection entitled “AAC... How to do it in this crazy school world we are living in”. You can view her presentation on the Tennessee Talks Website or by [clicking here](#).

In the 13 years prior to her current role, she was a school based SLP within Rutherford County Schools and Coffee County Schools. Angela received a Bachelor’s in Communication Disorders in 2003 from Middle Tennessee State University and she received her Master’s in Speech Language Pathology in 2005 from Tennessee State University. She has worked in the private sector as well throughout her career.

*-Lindsey Eastland, M.S., CCC-SLP: TAASLP Past President*

## *TAASLP Legislation is Moving through the General Assembly*

TAASLP is happy to report that Governor Lee has signed SB0233/HB0023 into law! This legislation, which was sponsored by Representative Tandy Darby and Senator Joey Hensley, is asking that the Tennessee Department of Education conduct a survey of all school districts across the state in regards to staffing of speech-language pathologists. It is our hope that this will lay the groundwork toward much-needed work on workload models and/or possible caseload cap considerations in Tennessee school districts for our school-based SLPs!

Our other piece of legislation that is working its way through the General Assembly is SB1265/HB0508, which focuses on allowing telehealth as a service modality for our pre-licensed individuals. This piece of legislation is really important for our students who are studying audiology and speech-language pathology. TAASLP is happy to report that this has moved out of subcommittee and has passed in the full House of Representatives. It is expected to move to the Senate at the end of March. We are really excited about this legislation and the protection it provides for our students!

**Update...SB1265/HB0508 passed in the Senate! It is now at the Governor's Office to be signed into law. This is great news!**

## *Upcoming Advocacy Steps*

What is coming up next in the world of advocacy? We will continue to work on telehealth with a shift in focus to our licensed individuals. Our current legislation (SB8003/HB8002), which allows for our fully licensed individuals to use telehealth, has an ending date of April 2022. This will become our new focus to ensure that telehealth is a service modality available to all fully licensed audiologists and speech-language pathologists who hold a health board license past the sunset of 4/1/2022. TAASLP is also hopeful that this will help move us forward toward stepping into the ASHA-Interstate Compact.

TAASLP Advocacy is also following several other bills that are currently moving through the General Assembly. If you have questions about any legislation moving in the current session of the General Assembly or any legislation mentioned in the articles here, please feel free to reach out to [Jamie Seek at advocacy@tasslp.org](mailto:jamie_seek@tasslp.org)

*-Jamie Seek, M.A., CCC-SLP, VP Legislative Affairs*



## *Convention Update!!!*



TAASLP Convention 2021 will be held October 21-22 at the Franklin Marriott in Cool Springs, TN. Please join us for a live, in person, convention. Call for presentations begins April 30th and runs through June 30th. Please follow the link on the website to submit a topic. Our planning committee will determine all topics by August 1st, when registration opens. Registration will open August 1st with early bird registration discount running through September 30th. After September 30th, registration will be full price up to, and including the day of the event. You can join us for one day or both days of the convention. We are looking forward to having you! Please email [convention@taaslp.org](mailto:convention@taaslp.org) with any further questions or concerns.

**-Lucas Magee M.S. CCC-SLP VP Convention**

### *TAASLP Foundation Scholarship*

The TAASLP Foundation is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of children and adults with communication disorders. As a part of its mission the Foundation awards two \$2500 annual scholarships to student members to be used for tuition and related school expenses. One scholarship is awarded to an SLP graduate student and one to an AUD student each year typically at the annual TAASLP/TAA Convention.

Along with everyone else, we were disappointed that we could not safely hold our 2020 TAASLP/TAA convention in November where we anticipated presenting \$2500 checks to our two scholarship winners in person at the Awards Luncheon. However, we hope our winners will be able to join us at the 2021 annual convention on October 20-21 at the Cool Springs Marriott in Franklin, TN to be recognized for their accomplishments. The Foundation is proud to introduce to you the outstanding 2020 scholarship winners, Jennifer Lowe and Brandi BeCoats.



Jennifer Lowe entered the AUD program at East Tennessee State University after receiving her masters degree in chemistry and biology and teaching in the public schools. She was selected as one of the trainees for the prestigious Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) program and has coordinated a bi-monthly audiology in-service program for third year ETSU medical school students, a 5K for Autism Awareness and a fundraiser for Taking Action for Special Kids. Her faculty members and clinical mentors describe her as an “intelligent, active learner, critical thinker” who has a “true passion in wanting to help individuals with hearing deficits.” Her primary goal after graduation is to establish pediatric vestibular evaluation and rehabilitation services in her native rural East Tennessee/Southwest Virginia region.



Brandi BeCoats is a second-year graduate student at Tennessee State University where she has served as the president of the university NSSLHA chapter. In addition, she was a member of the College Bowl at the National Black Association of Speech Language Hearing (NBASLH). She has recently served as the student representative to the Foundation Executive Board. Her advocacy efforts also include spearheading TSU’s student participation in the TAASLP Day on the Hill. Her professors and clinical educators commend not only her leadership skills but the “way she communicates charismatically with her peers and supervisors” as well as her “resilience, creativity, and preparedness in executing her clinical skills with the use of teletherapy.” These skills will enhance her post-graduation plans to participate in travel therapy prior to pursuing a doctoral degree in neurogenic research.

The TAASLP Foundation applauds our 2020 scholarship winners on their achievements and looks forward to learning about their continued advocacy to improve the quality of life and

communication for individuals with communication challenges. If you know of deserving students, please encourage them to apply for the 2021 scholarships through their university NSSLHA or SAA advisor or the TAASLP website. To be eligible applicants must be full-time graduate audiology or speech-language pathology students enrolled in an accredited institution of higher education in the state of Tennessee. One SLP and one AUD student are selected based on merit in a competitive application process with applications due at the end of August.

We look forward to receiving many well-qualified 2021 applications and presenting our 2020 and our 2021 scholarship winners to the membership in October.

*By Mary Dale Fitzgerald, Ph.D.  
CCC-SLP, CCC-A, ASHA Fellow, FAAA*

## *Perks of TAASLP Membership*

*Spring into action and support TAASLP through your membership!*

A few benefits include:

- Receive important state and national legislative updates and “advocacy action requests”
- Fund Lobbyists' efforts to advocate for our professions
- Receive discounts on annual convention/continuing education costs
- Help identify and solve problems affecting our fields of practice
- Find out about networking and leadership development opportunities
- Stay up to date on local job postings, research notifications, and continuing education opportunities
- Access the TAASLP newsletter, membership directory, and other resources

***Did you know?*** A portion of your dues helps support our TAASLP Lobbyists, who tirelessly advocate for us at the state level. Recently, our Lobbyists helped us pass legislation (HB508/SB1265) in the House, which allows SLP/AuD students to use telehealth services toward completion of their training hours.

**Thank you for your continued support of TAASLP and our professions!**

# sidekick

## THERAPY PARTNERS

Sidekick Therapy Partners - an energetic, growing company with 40 years of experience serving Tennessee – is hiring Speech Therapists. Sidekick Therapy Partners is actively hiring Speech Therapists in Upper East Tennessee (Tri-Cities), Nashville & Knoxville regions. At Sidekick, our mission is to employ teamwork and therapeutic excellence to empower our clients to live full and purposeful lives.

Sidekick Therapy Partners serves 19 school districts across Tennessee, and we have been Tennessee-owned and operated for over 40 years. In addition, we are the largest vendor for Tennessee Early Intervention System (TEIS) serving the birth to three population, as well as children in our outpatient offices. Our team has over 125 Speech-Language Therapists (SLP) that provide high-quality care for patients in school systems, homes, daycares, and our outpatient offices—so they can become the heroes of their own journeys.

### **A few benefits you will enjoy while working for Sidekick Therapy Partners:**

- **All staff are W2 employees (including per session!) with benefits**
- **Choose either salary or per-session compensation**
- **Enjoy a flexible work schedule**
- **Individualized care with one-on-one treatment sessions & small caseload sizes in the school system (30-40 children per caseload!)**
- **Third-party handing of all billing requirements**
- **Online/paperless documentation system created specifically for SLPs by Sidekick's IT team**
- **Work with various populations & diagnoses**

**"I love that while working at Sidekick, I am able to see a wide range of diverse populations in diverse settings. For me, this has been crucial to decreasing the monotony that comes along with some places of employment. The level of support provided to CFs and CCC therapists is awesome! Flexibility in our schedules is just another perk when working for Sidekick!"**

**— Shequria W. MS CCC-SLP**

**Upload your resume and Apply Today at <https://www.mysidekicktherapy.com/careers>**





**Chariti Skinner, M.S., CCC-SLP**

Pediatric Feeding Therapist  
Career Development Strategist

**Sidekick Therapy Partners**  
SLP • OT • PT • Teletherapy

M (615) 516-1702 (preferred)  
310 Corporate Drive, Suite 101  
Knoxville, TN 37923

<http://www.mysidekicktherapy.com>

***TAASLP Website Upgrade!***

If you have trouble renewing your membership or receive an incorrect renewal reminder, please reach out to Amy Breedlove

**TAASLP Chapter Administrator**

Amy Breedlove

Phone: 629-255-0870

Address: 1483 N. Mt. Juliet Rd, # 175

Mt. Juliet, TN 37122

[info@taaslp.org](mailto:info@taaslp.org)

Need to join or renew your membership? Click [here to reach the membership portal.](#)

*Be sure to follow us on all social media platforms*

**Facebook**

**TAASLP (@taaslp)**

**<https://mobile.twitter.com/TAASLP>**