



Tennessee Association of
Audiologists
and
Speech-Language Pathologists

NEWSLETTER

A Message from the President

For many of us, fall means that we have geared up for a new school year, either for us as professionals, or for our own children. Football games, sweater weather, and bond fires loom in the short distance.

You may be asking, "What has TAASLP been doing this year and what are our plans in the coming months?" Legislatively, we have been working toward eradicating the professional privilege tax, which has been an ongoing battle. We have also been working with a range of professionals on proposing a new Autism Bill. I hope that you are asking yourself, "How can I help?" The New Year brings our legislators back to their offices, and we need to make sure they haven't forgotten us. Now is the time to contact your legislators while they are in their hometowns serving their communities in their usual capacity. Don't let them forget about us and our need to get rid of the PPT. Call and set up those coffee chats or lunch discussions. I know there have been many in our profession across the state who have been doing this, but now is not the time to lay low. Now is the time to make sure they know we will not be forgotten. We are busy? Yes!! We are all busy, even those of us on the Executive Council, who serve TAASLP while working our regular jobs.

We have also been preparing for our favorite time of year...Convention 2017! We have an informative and exciting lineup of speakers, thanks to those who have worked very hard to plan. Every year the convention gets better and better, and this year is no exception. A huge thanks to everyone involved in this capacity.

If you would like to be more involved with TAASLP, we would love to have some extra help. We have open positions on the Executive Council that need to be filled. We always need help with legislative actions, convention, and other activities. Please contact any member of the Executive Council for more information or email us at info@taaslp.org.

We are looking forward to seeing you in November!

Alyssa Conger, M.S. CCC-SLP

President

TAASLP

Convention



Calling all Speech-Language Pathologists, Audiologists, and students! The **25th Annual Joint Convention of the Tennessee Association of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists (TAASLP) and the Tennessee Academy of** Thursday, November 2nd & Friday, November 3rd. Convention will be held at the Crowne Plaza in the vibrant city of Knoxville, TN, where you'll find diverse culinary cuisine, live music, eclectic shopping, and a fun, energetic downtown, all within walking distance. There is certainly something in town for everyone as you plan your post-Convention activities.

Your two days at Convention will be filled with diverse and thought-provoking **breakout and featured speaker sessions**, and boundless opportunities to network, visit our vendors, and catch up with friends and colleagues. We will continue traditions of the **Exhibitor's Reception** where you can enjoy hors d'oeuvres and meet old and new friends, as well as place winning bids on the **silent auction** items. We are excited to have EBS Healthcare host our **Spirit Competition and College Bowl Challenge**, so don't forget to wear your school colors and come cheer on the next generation Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists as student teams from across the state battle it out for ultimate academic bragging rights!

REGISTRATION INFO

- Early registration ends October 5th, 2017
- A block of rooms have been reserved at the Crowne Plaza for Wednesday and Thursday night at \$118/ night. This number is limited, so reserve your room now!

FULL REGISTRATION (TH/FRI)

	EARLY RATE	AFTER 10/05
TAASLP/TAA MEMBER	\$275	\$315
NON-MEMBER	\$385	\$425
STUDENT	\$85	\$85
GUEST	\$105	\$105

ONE DAY (CHOOSE TH OR FRI)

	EARLY RATE	AFTER 10/05
TAASLP/TAA MEMBER	\$190	\$230
NON-MEMBER	\$275	\$340
STUDENT	\$65	\$65
GUEST	\$85	\$85

We look forward to seeing YOU in November!



Questions?

Contact: Convention@taaslp.org

Meet Our Featured Speakers

**Adult/ Medical Track:
Debra M. Suiter, PhD, CCC-SLP, BCS-S**



Debra M. Suiter, PhD, CCC-SLP, BCS-S is Director of the Voice and Swallow Clinic and Associate Professor in the Division of Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Kentucky. Her clinical and research interests focus on the assessment and treatment of adults with swallowing disorders. Dr. Suiter has over 24 years of clinical experience across a number of treatment settings, including acute care, rehabilitation, and long-term care. Dr. Suiter has published her work in a number of peer-reviewed journals, and she has presented her work nationally and internationally. She is a Board Certified Specialist in Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders and a Fellow of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

**Preschool/School Age Track:
Patrick Rydell, PhD**

Founder and Director of the Rocky Mountain Autism Center, Inc. and Autism On Call, LLC, in Lone Tree, Colorado; Co-author of the SCERTS Model (Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent & Rydell, 2006) and author of the Learning Style Profile for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Rydell, 2012).



**Luncheon Speaker:
Melissa Jakubowitz, CCC-SLP,
BCS-CL, ASHA Fellow**

Melissa Jakubowitz is currently developing a Clinical Telepractice Program at Florida State University. She owns eLiveNow which provides telepractice services and consulting to schools and private practices. She is a Board Certified Specialist in Child Language. She was the VP of Clinical Services at a large telepractice company, leading the clinical team. In addition, she owned a successful multi-office private practice. Currently she serves on the SIG 18 Coordinating Committee.

**Audiology Track:
Dr. Melissa E. Heche**



Dr. Melissa E. Heche is the Doctor of Audiology and Clinical Voice and Swallowing Pathologist of New York Speech and Hearing. She is dually certified in audiology and speech pathology; she has a unique background in music, performance, and sound engineering. Her background allows for a distinctive view on sound interpretation and its impact on communication. Dr. Heche specializes in the assessment and treatment of hearing/ auditory disorders, tinnitus, and voice/ vocal fold and swallowing disorders.



SAVE THE DATE
2018 TAASLP & TAA Conference
Oct. 18th & Oct. 19th
Embassy Suites by Hilton, Nashville SE-Murfreesboro, TN

ADVOCACY UPDATE

Autism Speaks Legislation Causes Concern for Speech Pathologists

By John Williams, TAASLP Lobbyist

Autism Speaks is a well-funded national organization that promotes state and federal legislation for persons diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. For more than 10 years, they have been seeking to convince state legislatures to pass bills which mandate insurance coverage of the services needed by persons (especially children) with autism.

Their track record is very good. 47 of the 50 states now have laws that require insurance coverage of services such as those provided by speech language pathologists.

Autism Speaks has developed a “model” bill they are promoting throughout the country. Many of the state laws adopted in recent years have incorporated the Autism Speaks model language.

Tennessee’s law was passed in 2006. It is referred to as the Autism Equity Act because it characterizes autism as a neurological disorder and requires insurers to cover the same services which are covered for other neurological disorders. It has been interpreted by most insurers to cover the services of speech language pathologists.

The “model” bill developed by Autism Speaks characterizes autism as a mental health disorder rather than a neurological disorder. The treatment mandated under this “model” bill includes behavioral health care, pharmacy care, psychiatric care, psychological care, and therapeutic care. The latter term is defined to include the services of speech, occupational, and physical therapists.

Autism Speaks has been trying for several years to persuade the Tennessee legislature to repeal the 2006 Autism Equity Act and replace it with the Autism Speaks

“model” bill. In 2017 Senate Bill 792/House Bill 1137 was introduced for this purpose.

During consideration of that bill, the fiscal analysts for the State determined that inclusion of “therapeutic services” would create an additional cost to the State Employees Health Insurance program because habilitative services are not currently covered. Hoping to avoid a “fiscal note” on their bill, Autism Speaks asked the legislators sponsoring the bill to remove “therapeutic services” from the bill. The only committee which considered the bill in 2017 passed it without “therapeutic services” included. Fortunately, the bill did not progress any further in 2017.

You may be thinking, why would Autism Speaks do this? The short answer is that they consider behavioral services provided by BCBA’s to be the most important services needed by children with autism. Most commercial insurance policies do not interpret the Autism Equity Act to require coverage of behavioral services, and Autism Speaks is willing to do whatever it takes to change the law so that behavioral services will be covered.

Fortunately, TAASLP has been working with state officials, the Tennessee Disability Coalition, and other advocacy groups to ensure that therapeutic services will continue to be covered if the Autism Equity Act is modified. Very recently, we have been told that the State Health Insurance Committee has decided to add habilitative services to the list of benefits available to children covered by the State Employees health insurance plan.

Please let us know your thoughts about this issue, and stay tuned for further developments.

Program Spotlight



THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER™

The University of Tennessee (Knoxville, TN)

By: Kelly Fussman, TAASLP Student Representative

(Contact: student@taaslp.org)

Located on the campus of the University of Tennessee-Knoxville (UTK), the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology is affiliated with the University of Tennessee Health Science Center's College of Health Professions. The department offers undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral education in audiology and speech-language pathology. UT's first M.S. degrees in audiology and speech pathology were awarded in 1963, and the first Ph.D. degrees in hearing and speech science in 1970. In 2003, the Au.D. program in audiology was successfully launched.

Students in all programs have access to unique educational opportunities, including departmental research meetings, the Sol Adler Memorial Lecture Series, the optional Aural Habilitation Concentration, and participation in the department's active research labs, including: Augmentative-Alternative Communication in Language & Literacy, Hearing Instrumentation, Human Auditory Physiology, Language Learning, Language and Literacy, Physiologic Acoustics, Psychoacoustics, Spatial & Binaural Hearing, Speech Production, Stuttering & Speech Science, and Voice & Speech Science.

In addition to a diverse curriculum and large scholarly faculty, the department boasts a wide variety of clinical practicum sites both on and off campus. On campus sites include the Hearing and Speech Center, the Pediatric Language Clinic, and Child Hearing Services. Founded in 1953, the Hearing and Speech Center provides diagnostic and treatment services for children, adolescents, and adults who have problems with communication skills. Areas addressed at the clinic include, but are not limited to, articulation, cognition, fluency, language, swallowing, voice disorders, hearing testing, hearing aid

evaluation, assistive listening devices, and cochlear implant evaluation, mapping, programming, and treatment. The clinical services are provided by students-in-training under the supervision of highly qualified clinical supervisors who hold certification awarded by ASHA. Nearby practicum facilities are also extensive and include rehabilitation centers, hospitals, physician's offices, private practice, Tennessee School for the Deaf, and skilled nursing facilities.

The department's student organizations are very active on campus and in the community. The UTK Chapter of the National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NSSLHA) is very active, both on campus in the greater Knoxville community. The group participates in the annual Autism Society of Nashville Trunk or Treat and holiday party. Every fall, the UTK NSSLHA chapter, as well as UTK's Student Academy of Audiology (SAA), sponsors free hearing screenings on campus for the Knoxville community. In the spring, the group sponsors voice screenings for World Voice Day. In addition to the chapter's philanthropic activities, they also host career fairs, specifically for the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology to create opportunities and relationships with not only practices and healthcare facilities in at the local, state, and regional levels.

*This is the fourth installment of the "Programs Series" that features one of Tennessee's fantastic Audiology and/or Speech-Language Pathology programs per issue. If you would like your school to be featured next, please contact comm@taaslp.org.



DOCTOR OF AUDIOLOGY STUDENTS



SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY CLINICAL FACULTY



DOCTOR OF AUDIOLOGY STUDENTS

TAASLP Membership

It's an exciting time as we prepare for the upcoming convention in Knoxville. If you are not currently a member of TAASLP, now is a great time to become one! Did you know that it's actually cheaper to become a TAASLP member and pay the member registration fee for convention than it is to attend convention as a non-member? You read that correctly! The non-member convention registration fee exceeds the cost of a TAASLP annual membership fee and early bird convention registration fee combined. That's just one of the benefits of becoming a TAASLP member. Some additional benefits include:

***Support of lobbying efforts towards legislative issues surrounding audiology and speech-language pathology**

***Platform to network with other professionals as well as to voice opinions, insight, and concerns**

***Access to helpful resources such as continuing education opportunities and job openings**

While several board members have been busy planning this year's convention, other board members have been looking to update the TAASLP website. By early 2018, TAASLP.org will have a fresh new look. The new site will be mobile-friendly and easy to navigate. Consumers, professionals, and students alike will be able to quickly find the information they need as well as updates on audiology and speech-language pathology services within our state. Another feature we hope to include on the website is a members-only blog. Serving as a platform to discuss any number of issues we in TN may be experiencing, only members will be able to access and participate in the blog.

As always, TAASLP is here to serve you, the Audiology and SLP professionals and students across Tennessee. If you have ideas for the new website or feel like something needs to be added/changed now on the current website, reach out to your TAASLP leaders at any time. We would love to hear from you.

TAASLP IN THE SCHOOLS

TAASLP is very pleased to have an interactive session during the convention dedicated to concerns and needs of Speech Pathologists practicing in the school setting. Last year a survey was provided to school SLPs during the convention. During this session the results will be discussed. Issues such as salary and caseload caps and methods of advocacy in these areas will be covered.

Tennessee eligibility standards for speech and language have been updated and changes to the evaluation process have been put in place. Many SLPs have questions concerning implementation of the new standards. We encourage everyone to come with questions and help brainstorm solutions to properly implement the standards.

This session will provide therapists an opportunity to voice concerns to TAASLP and guide TAASLP in addressing the needs of children and SLPs in the school setting. Please join us for the session Thursday at 8am. See you there!

SEE YOU IN NOVEMBER AT CONVENTION!

Thank you Sponsors!!

