



1925-2025
Legacy. Impact. Possibilities.

October 7, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Leaders Thune and Schumer and Speaker Johnson and Leader Jeffries:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), I am writing to implore you to restore the ability of audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) to provide covered telehealth services to Medicare beneficiaries.

ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 241,000 members, certificate holders, and affiliates who are audiologists; SLPs; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology assistants; and students. Audiologists specialize in preventing and assessing hearing and balance disorders as well as providing audiologic treatment, including hearing aids. SLPs identify, assess, and treat speech, language, swallowing, and cognitive-communication disorders. Data consistently proves the telehealth services provided by audiologists and SLPs is comparable in quality and outcomes to in-person care.

Since 2020, Congress has granted traditional Medicare beneficiaries access to critical audiology and speech-language pathology services through telehealth. This access has proven invaluable, particularly for patients in rural and underserved areas and those who face significant barriers to in-person care. Telehealth services are provided by these clinical specialties across the continuum of care—including private practices and skilled nursing—making the impact all the more significant. This authority lapsed, however, and became a casualty of unrelated policy disagreements when Congress failed to agree on a short-term funding bill last week. This disruption is leaving many patients without the necessary coverage for these vital services.

ASHA appreciates that the House included a provision (section 207(b)) in H.R. 5371, the Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2026, which extended Medicare telehealth authority for audiologists and SLPs through November 21, 2025. Although we support making this authority permanent, we believe the longest possible extension is crucial to ensure older Americans can access the essential services our members provide. ASHA urges the House and Senate to restore this authority immediately so that a policy that has bipartisan, bicameral support is not held hostage to partisan government funding disputes.

If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Jerry White, ASHA's senior director of federal and political affairs, at jwhite@asha.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. B. Mayfield-Clarke".

A. B. Mayfield-Clarke, PhD, CCC-SLP
2025 ASHA President