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## From the President

Dear MSHA Members,

As we move into the second quarter of 2026, I am writing to provide an update on the current state of our association. This past year has been one of significant transition and resilience.



MSHA has successfully navigated changes in staffing and financial resources by leaning into the dedication of our volunteer leadership. I am particularly grateful for the work of our past President, Ana Claudia Harten, and our conference co-chairs, Leslie DeNardis and Justine Walker, whose commitment ensured our continued growth.

Based on the success of our recent virtual format, the Professional Development Committee is hard at work planning the 2027 MSHA Annual Conference, which will be held online from March 18 - 19, 2027. We have carefully reviewed the feedback from our 2026 conference evaluations. While many members appreciated the convenience and quality of the virtual sessions, we heard clearly that the networking opportunities and fellowship inherent to in-person events were deeply missed. Some were concerned that the price for the conference was the same as the in-person conference. By utilizing a virtual platform, we were able to offer an increased number of continuing education credits and enhance the value for our members' investment. We are dedicated to maintaining the conference's value for the 2027 conference and are actively exploring creative ways to improve and expand networking possibilities.

I am pleased to report that our shift to a virtual model has significantly stabilized MSHA's financial position. By reducing the high overhead costs associated with physical venues, we have been able to generate a healthy margin to fund our advocacy efforts and member services. While it is our desire to return to an in-person conference, our priority is to maintain the stability of the organization. As we operate without a paid staff, your involvement is more vital than ever. We are currently seeking volunteers on a variety of committees. Serving on an MSHA committee is an excellent way to reconnect with colleagues and fulfill the desire for fellowship, while also offering an opportunity to directly support and advance the profession.

Thank you for your continued support and for the vital work you do every day for your clients and students across Michigan.

*Sarah Killinger, M.A., CCC-SLP, BCBA*  
MSHA President

## Advocacy Updates

### National Updates

Click the links for important information and resources from ASHA:

- [Executive Orders Impacting Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology](#)
- View other updates: [Advocacy News](#)

### Eliminate Unfair Penalty That Lowers Medicare Provider Payments and Limits Access to Speech-Language Pathology Services

- **ASHA:** Medicare's flawed Multiple Procedure Payment Reduction (MPPR) policy arbitrarily and inappropriately reduces payment for essential speech-language pathology services. MPPR applies a 50% reduction to the practice expense of the second and any subsequent therapy services provided to a patient on the same day, even when a patient is receiving care from multiple therapy disciplines. This jeopardizes patient access to care.
- Take action now. Please complete the [form](#) to contact your members of Congress and urge them to cosponsor the RECOVER Act.



### Update on Proposed Definition of "Professional Degree" Programs

- **ASHA Update April 30, 2026:** The Department of Education released a draft of its [final rule](#) related to student loans. Thanks to advocacy efforts from ASHA and its members, the Department affirmed that audiologists and SLPs are professionals in the sense that they are licensed providers practicing in their respective fields and meet the program's operative criteria. But despite that, the Department still won't include them—or any other fields, including nursing—as "professional degree" programs for the purpose of this initiative. Undersecretary Nicholas Kent said that's because the Department is focused on bringing down tuition costs. "We need [these professions] in our society, but we value them so much that we do not want them taking on unmanageable debt that they're not able to repay," Kent said.
- ASHA Advocacy appreciates the Department's intent but also believes that audiology and speech-language pathology should be categorized as professional degrees. ASHA will continue lobbying efforts at the federal level. Multiple bills have been introduced in Congress to ensure audiology and/or speech-language pathology degrees qualify for the higher loan limits. [Take action today and tell Congress to pass these bills now.](#)
- The new loan limits will go into effect in July. Graduate students will be able to borrow up to \$100,000 in federal student loans total, while professional students can borrow up to \$200,000. Check for updates on this issue [here](#).

**Contact your legislators to voice your opinion on the policy changes that impact your profession**

[Click here](#) to visit the Michigan Senate website.

Enter your home address to find your Senator.

[Click here](#) to visit the Michigan House of Representatives website.

Enter your home address to find your Representative.

## Virtual Healthcare Conference 2026

2026

VIRTUAL HEALTHCARE  
CONFERENCE**Topic:**

Ethics of Dysphagia Management

**Speaker:**

Dr. Paula Leslie

**Pricing:**

\$35.00 members; \$40.00 non-members; \$15.00 students

**Registration:**

Coming soon! Registration information and additional conference details will be posted on the MSHA website and shared on MSHA social media.

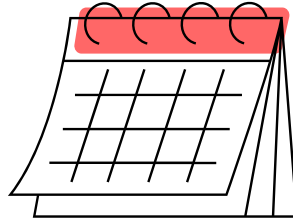


SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 9-10:30AM

## Save the Date: MSHA 2027 Virtual Conference

The MSHA 2027 Virtual Conference will be held March 18th-19th, 2027.

Stay tuned for more information!



## MSHA 2027 Outstanding Clinician Award Nominations



Nominations for the **MSHA 2027 Outstanding Healthcare Clinician Award** are now being accepted!

Deadline: November 8, 2026

[Submit an Outstanding Healthcare Clinician Award Nomination](#)



Nominations for the **MSHA 2027 Outstanding School Clinician Award** are now being accepted!

Deadline: November 8, 2026

[Submit an Outstanding School Clinician Award Nomination](#)

For additional awards visit: [Awards/Honors - Michigan Speech Language Hearing Association](#)

## Support Our Mission

Your donation helps us connect, empower, and advance our community through meaningful programs, advocacy, and resources. Every gift makes a difference - thank you for supporting our work!

To make a donation via credit card, please scan the QR code or click [here](#).

Check donations can be sent to:

MSHA  
P.O. Box 45,  
Buchanan, MI 49107-9998



*The Michigan Speech-Language-Hearing Association (MSHA) is a tax-exempt 501(c)(6) organization, EIN 23-7179613. Contributions to MSHA are not tax-deductible. No goods or services will be provided in exchange for the contribution.*

## Therapy Provider Liaison Meeting

Therapy Provider Liaison meetings are an opportunity to review Medicaid policy updates and FFS procedural changes or provider concerns in an open forum.

Please join the Medicaid ListServ to subscribe for additional details--either the The Pro\_Prov, Clinics, or Inst\_Prov would receive the official Medicaid L-Letter Meeting notice.

To make your selections visit:

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIDHHS/subscriber/new>



## Volunteer

MSHA is made possible by people like you! Volunteer today with the following MSHA committees to help us continue our work.

Professional Development & Education  
Public Schools  
Finance  
Advocacy  
Membership  
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion  
Healthcare  
Public Relations  
Student & University Affairs

Click [here](#) to complete the volunteer interest form.

## Dues Reminder

To maintain uninterrupted access to member benefits, please submit your annual member dues:



Individual Membership - \$80  
Student Membership - \$40

To renew your membership, log into your [account](#) and follow the instructions. If you are a new member, you can click [here](#) to register.



Your support is crucial for MSHA to continue efforts to support professionals and individuals served by the field of speech, language, and hearing sciences!

## Contact Us

P.O. Box 45, Buchanan, MI 49107-9998

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Executive Board & Advisory Assembly

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