



October 23, 2014

Bulletin

Issuing and Receiving Orders

This bulletin provides information for Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists who are asked about the need to give or receive orders for their services.

Different definitions of “orders”

In regulations under the *Health Professions Act*, the term "order" means an instruction or authorization given by any method by a health professional, for a registrant to provide a service that includes the performance of an activity described in that profession's regulation. Orders under the HPA can therefore be described as “authorizations”. But if the term “order” is used in other contexts may mean a request or a referral for a service. These differences will become clearer below.

Do Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists need orders to provide any of their services?

No. There are no circumstances in the Speech and Hearing Health Professions Regulation which require that Speech-Language Pathologists or Audiologists receive an order (authorization) to provide their services. Requests or referrals from physicians and other health care professionals can be received and registrants are then free to decide whether or not to perform the requested services that are described in our scope of practice under the Speech and Hearing Health Professionals Regulation.

Can Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists give orders for specific services or interventions?

No. Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists have not been mandated in regulations under the *Health Professions Act* to give orders (authorizations) to other professionals that they require to then provide services. However, registrants can make recommendations and referrals to other health care providers or request that they provide a service which those professionals are authorized to perform under their regulations.

Specific questions about giving and receiving orders:

1. Can Speech-Language Pathologists order specific diets for dysphagic clients?

Speech-Language Pathologists are able to request that a patient be put on a particular diet or be provided with a particular service. It is within the scope of Speech-Language Pathology to request, compound or feed patients alternative diets, with the exception of designing, compounding or dispensing nutrition that is administered through enteral or parenteral means. But Speech-Language



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Pathologists and Audiologists do not have legal authority to give an order that would then authorize another health care provider to provide nutrition that is administered through enteral or parenteral means.

2. Do Speech-Language Pathologists require an order to participate in a videofluoroscopic swallowing study?

No. The Speech and Hearing Health Professions Regulation does not require an order to authorize a Speech-Language Pathologist to participate in the videofluoroscopic swallowing studies. These studies are within the scope of Speech-Language Pathology and the Speech-Language Pathologist can participate in a study so long as he or she holds a current advanced competency certificate. The administration of barium is part of this study and is part of the advanced certification program that Speech-Language Pathologists must obtain to perform this study.

3. Who needs an order for a videofluoroscopic swallowing study?

Health care providers in Medical Imaging require a physician's order (requisition) for a videofluoroscopic swallowing study because they are applying the energy source in the form of the x-ray to the patient.

4. Can Speech-Language Pathologists give an order for a videofluoroscopic swallowing study?

No. Speech-Language Pathologists do not have the legal authority to give any orders, including ones that require application of an energy source. But Speech-Language Pathologists can ask the physician to give such an order.

5. If Audiologists do not require or give orders, does that in any way negate the necessity of getting medical clearance when a red flag is noted?

No. Obtaining medical clearance is part of our best practice protocol and should be adhered to regardless of the need (or lack of need) for receiving or giving a specific order.

6. Can Speech-Language Pathologists or Audiologists accept an order to administer oral medications?



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If the medications are listed on Schedule I or II of the Pharmacists, Pharmacy Operations and Drug Scheduling Act, then neither Speech-Language Pathologists or Audiologists are legally allowed to administer them. Before these registrants can do so, the Speech and Hearing Health Professions Regulation would have to be amended to give registrants that authority.

Closing comment

As can be seen from the above, it is important to know what definition of “order” is being used in your employment setting. In some cases (such as in the development of the electronic health record) it may be that the designers are classifying all requests, directives, authorizations and recommendations as “orders”, which is not the current definition used in regulations under the *Health Professions Act*. If the definition being used in a particular setting is broader than the legal definition of “order” (authorization), then the application of that definition of order to Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists may differ from the narrower, legal definition. Registrants are encouraged to ask their employer to clarify how the employer is defining and using the term order at their workplace and what implications that may have in the practice of regulated health professionals.

If you have any questions or require further background information please contact:

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