

Department of Health Care Services  
Safety Net Financing Division

**Speech-Language Equivalency State Plan Amendment 05-010 Summary**

Schools play a critical role in providing health services to students, particularly those requiring special education services. Since the 1970s, schools have been mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to provide appropriate educational services to all children with disabilities.

Under the Local Educational Agency Medi-Cal Billing Option Program (LEA Program), California's school districts and County Offices of Education (COE) are reimbursed by the federal government for health services provided to Medi-Cal eligible students. School-based health services reimbursed by the LEA Program are primarily provided to students with disabilities receiving special education services through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). For several of these IEP/IFSP children, additional services, many of them health-related, are necessary to assist them in attaining their educational goals.

In an effort to enhance LEA Program benefits, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) initially submitted State Plan Amendment (SPA) 05-010 to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in September 2008 after the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and the California Speech-Language Hearing Association, with assistance from DHCS, established equivalency for a credentialed speech language pathologist as a "speech pathologist" under the federal standard. The SPA was then placed on hold because CMS required an equivalency ruling from the California Attorney General. The California Attorney General opinion in 2006 concluded that State credentialing requirements were equivalent to federal standards.

However, several claims processing issues within EDS, (now Hewlett Packard (HP) Enterprise Services), claiming system that erroneously denied reimbursement or provided incorrect reimbursement for LEA claims submitted since school fiscal year (SFY) 2006-07, inhibited DHCS to effectively meet the requirements of the current LEA SPA 03-024. Due to these unresolved claims processing issues, CMS returned SPA 05-010 to the department without review. CMS stated they would not consider any SPA changes for the LEA Program until DHCS could ensure compliance with SPA 03-024, including resolution of all claims processing issues, as well as LEA Cost and Reimbursement Comparison Schedule reconciliation.

Since SFY 2006-07, DHCS collaborated with HP to identify and resolve claims processing issues. All claims processing issues inhibiting LEA Program compliance with SPA

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03-024 have been corrected in the claims processing system and as of SFY 2009-10, and all Erroneous Payment Corrections (EPCs) were implemented to automatically reprocess LEA claims and adjust reimbursements to the appropriate payment amount. DHCS will continue to monitor the claims processing system to ensure that LEA claims are processing correctly.

When CMS has evidence that the LEA Program is fully SPA 03-024 compliant, DHCS will resubmit SPA 05-010 for CMS review. Once CMS reviews the California Attorney General's opinion and approves the SPA equivalency language, speech-language pathology practitioners with preliminary or professional clear services credentials in speech-language pathology will no longer require supervision when providing services to Medi-Cal eligible children. In addition, practitioners with professional clear services credentials in speech-language pathology will be qualified to provide supervision to other credentialed speech-language pathologists providing the same LEA services, the same as supervising speech-language pathologists with a California license are currently authorized to do. This equivalency will be implemented subject to the SPA and regulations approval process.

Credentialing requirements for speech-language pathology practitioners are defined in Education Code, Section 44265.3. A diagram of the speech-language pathologists' academic and personnel standards side by side assurances is included below.

<b>Certificate of Clinical Competence – American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA)</b>	<b>Commission on Teacher Credentialing SLP Professional Clear Credential*</b>	<b>Commission on Teacher Credentialing SLP Preliminary Credential*</b>
Masters degree in SLP (Accredited by ASHA's Council on Academic Accreditation)	Masters degree in SLP (Accredited by ASHA's Council on Academic Accreditation)	Masters degree in SLP (Accredited by ASHA's Council on Academic Accreditation)
National Praxis written exam in SLP achieving a passing score	National Praxis written exam in SLP achieving a passing score	In the progress of completing the National Praxis written exam in SLP achieving a passing score
36 week full time mentored clinical experience	36 week full time mentored clinical experience	In the progress of completing the 36 week full time mentored clinical experience

\*Deemed equivalent by the California Attorney General to Medicaid qualifications for speech language pathologists [42 CFR sec. 440.110]. CA AG Opinion #06-1011 dated 11/30/06