

Ohio Speech and Hearing Governmental Affairs Coalition  
(OSHGAC):

What is it, and what role does OSLHA play in the coalition?

The Ohio Speech and Hearing Governmental Affairs Coalition (OSHGAC) is a coalition consisting of the Ohio Speech-Language-Hearing Association (OSLHA), the Ohio Academy of Audiology (OAA), the Ohio School Speech Pathology & Educational Audiology Coalition (OSSPEAC) and the Ohio Council of Speech and Hearing Administrators (OCSHA). Its purpose is to monitor and provide timely input to legislative, regulatory, and governmental activity impacting our professions.

OSHGAC provides exceptional lobbying and informational services thanks to employment of a lobbying group, Governmental Policy Group (GPG). GPG assists OSHGAC in implementing their goals through services provided by lead contact, Kelly O'Reilly. Ms. O'Reilly works diligently to identify key issues, outlines upcoming legislation and the impact it will have, and develops and facilitates action plans and contact with the state legislature and oversight entities. She provides further support working to promote passage of bills or amendments as directed by OSHGAC.

Conversely, she works to identify and oppose legislation that is expected to be detrimental to the interests of the OSHGAC member associations. OSHGAC is also willing to schedule training and resources for lobbying and political action for OSHGAC member organizations.

OSHGAC meets monthly in Columbus and receives a report from the lobbyists concerning their promotion of the legislative agenda set forth by OSHGAC and informs OSHGAC members of progress of legislative activity.

OSHGAC has remained effective through the following recent efforts:

- Reviewed and facilitated Speech Generating Devices Rule testimony at open hearings before JCARR.
- Reviewed and facilitated a successful Medicare Therapy Cap Rule Repeal.
- Relayed progress on a successful process extending the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).
- Reviewed and collected rules feedback regarding Medicaid Rule Reviews for Skilled Therapy.
- Monitored and facilitated the progress of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) through development of a workgroup to address workforce shortages.
- Provided insight and collaborated with the Ohio Licensure Board on the successful transition to a new Speech & Hearing Professionals Board.
- And more...

OSHGAC hosts grassroots and public events that may be open to the public or to OSHGAC members. We encourage you to attend when invitations are made available. These opportunities often allow you to meet legislators and policymakers and to meet the leadership at OSHGAC and GPG. Because of legislative term limits, there are frequently new legislators and/or committees to educate concerning speech/language/hearing issues.

In addition to networking and collaborative events, OSHGAC has established a Political Action Committee (PAC) and PAC Fund to assist with the financial obligations required to support legislative lobbying efforts and to identify and educate legislators favorable to our position on key issues affecting our professions. OSHGAC member organizations host PAC fundraising efforts throughout the year and this is a great way to get involved if you are unable to attend live events. Your supportive, tax deductible financial contribution of any amount is welcome any time of year and can be sent directly to the PAC Treasurer. Contact the OSLHA business office for the current contact information. Any dollar amount is valuable and appreciated!

Support OSHGAC by providing your representatives on the OSLHA Legislative Council with legislative, governmental, and regulatory concerns that we can take forward to OSHGAC. Remember, we represent you and need to have your input and concerns to serve you better. The lobbying efforts of OSHGAC are but one of the ways OSLHA is working to promote and improve speech/language/hearing professionals. Let your voice be heard!