

Empowering Yourself: Advocacy Strategies for Emerging SLPs and Audiologists

Speakers: Jordan Bowman, Carrie Kerr, Karen
Kockler, Heidi Ramrattan



Meet the Panelists!

- Jordan Bowman
- Carrie Kerr
- Karen Kockler
- Heidi Ramrattan





Jordan Bowman
M.A., CCC-SLP/L,
PNAP

- **Disclosures:** (Financial & Non-Financial)

Financial:

None

Non-Financial:

ASHA IL State Advocate for Medicare Policy (StAMP)

ISHA Past President, Billing and Reimbursement Committee, Telepractice Committee, and Medical Practice Issues Committee

- **About Jordan:** Passionate Speech-Language-Pathologist and Vice President of Business Development committed to ensuring older adults have access to opportunities to age in place. Primary practice settings: Skilled Nursing Facilities, Senior Living Communities, Home Health, and Outpatient. I love being outdoors and I love animals! I just rescued a sweet golden retriever in March.





Carrie Kerr
M.S., CCC-SLP/L

- **Disclosures:** (Financial & Non-Financial)

Financial:

None

Non-Financial:

ASHA IL State Advocate for Reimbursement (STAR)

ISHA Billing and Reimbursement Committee, Legislation & Regulation Committee, Leadership Development Program Committee. Employee of PRC-Salttillo

- **About Carrie:** Clinical focus on pediatrics, developmental disorders, and AAC. Certificate in Special Education Advocacy. Have supported multiple family members through recovery with swallowing disorders. Current role is as a Regional Manager for PRC-Salttillo. Love outdoor silent sports!





Karen Kockler
M.A., CCC-SLP-L

Disclosures: (Financial & Non-Financial)

Financial–

- None

Non-financial–

- ASHA, ISHA Member
- ASHA SEAL for IL
- ISHA Committees School Affairs, Legs & Regs, Billing & Reimbursement



About Karen:

- School-based SLP for over 24 years; Private Practice 2015-present
- As an educator and SLP, my particular interests have been to help children develop strong literacy, auditory processing, and social skills in order to be successful lifelong learners.
- Committed to advocating for my colleagues regarding workload, shortages of SSP, and on IEP paperwork redundancy.
- Love visiting my children and grandchildren, reading and music!



Heidi Ramrattan
Aud/SLP, CCC-A/SLP

● **Disclosures:** (Financial & Non-Financial)

Financial –

- None

Non-financial–

- AAA, ASHA, ISHA Member
- ISHA VP Audiology Committee



- About Heidi: Speech-Language Pathologist and Audiologist with a passion for serving diverse populations. Clinical expertise in auditory processing disorder and its overlap with language processing and literacy. Experienced in working with children and veterans, bringing a unique perspective as a veteran myself. Committed to providing high-quality services that promote communication success across all ages. I love spending time with my family and our dogs.

Objectives



- Identify Key Advocacy Strategies – Participants will learn practical advocacy techniques to effectively support themselves, their clients, and their professions in various professional settings.
- Develop Skills for Professional Growth – Participants will explore essential skills to navigate workplace challenges, enhance career development, and establish a strong professional identity.
- Apply Advocacy Principles in Practice – Participants will gain insights into real-world scenarios where advocacy plays a crucial role, enabling them to confidently advocate for positive change in their careers and communities.

Importance of Advocacy in SLP and Audiology



- Why Advocacy Matters
 - Principle III ASHA Code of Ethics: responsibility to advocate for the unmet communication and swallowing needs of the public.
 - Everyone Deserves a Voice
- Impact on Clients, Professionals, and the Field
 - [Communication Bill of Rights](#)
 - Our ability to practice and earn a living
 - [Bringing new professionals into the field](#)
- Personal and Professional Benefits of Advocacy
 - Growth of Leadership Skills and Networking Opportunities
 - Knowledge of how to advocate for systemic change
 - Ability to impact the sustainability of your profession

Key Advocacy Strategies



- Self-Advocacy: Communicating Needs and Boundaries
- Client Advocacy: Ensuring Access to Services and Rights
- Professional Advocacy: Promoting the Field and Advancing Policies

Effective Communication Skills



- [Clear and Confident Message](#)
- Active Listening
- Tailor Communication to you Audience

[ISHA's Leadership Program](#)

[ASHA's On Demand Leadership Courses](#)

Building a Professional Identity



- Establishing Credibility and Expertise
- Networking and Collaboration
- Engaging in Lifelong Learning

Navigating Workplace Challenges



- Addressing Workload/Caseload Concerns
- Managing Ethical Dilemmas
- Advocating for Resources and/or Support

Career Development Strategies



- Setting Professional Goals
- Seeking Mentorship and Supervision
- Pursuing Leadership Opportunities

Real-World Advocacy Audiology



Advocating for Equitable Access to Hearing Services

- **Scenario:** You noticed that lower-income students were often not being seen for hearing concerns due to transportation challenges and lack of parental availability. This created a gap in identifying and addressing hearing issues, which directly impacted students' academic success and social development.
- **What You Did:** You reached out to local school districts and the truancy office to discuss this issue and develop a collaborative solution. Together, you established a system where the truancy office would transport students to audiology appointments when parents were unable to do so. You also worked with school staff to identify students at risk and prioritize their access to hearing evaluations.
- **Outcome:** This partnership significantly increased the number of lower-income students receiving timely hearing assessments and interventions. Early identification of hearing concerns led to improved classroom performance and better social engagement. This initiative demonstrated a strong example of systemic advocacy, addressing barriers to care and promoting health equity within the community.

Real World Advocacy Speech Language Pathology



SCENARIO: You are a member of a team of school-based SLPs overwhelmed with large caseloads made up of many students with significant needs. You and your team find it extremely difficult to complete all required work during contractual hours.

WHAT SLPs DID:

1. Reviewed guiding principles (ASHA Code of Ethics, IL Educator Code of Ethics).
2. Learned about ILAC Section 226.735 Workload for Special Educators, and that ISHA has a FREE eligibility guide with workload analysis forms designed to uphold this Code.
3. Reviewed the language in the district's CBA.
4. Gathered colleagues and support from the Union, and created a committee to identify all significant impacts on students, staff and district.
5. Determined how/when they would implement workload analysis.
6. Established a schedule, problem-solved, and identified potential solutions.
7. The team presented their findings and potential solutions to administration.

OUTCOME: Administration agreed to work with the team to gather data and implement WL analysis. The SLPs also demonstrated how WL analysis helps minimize missed sessions and identify staffing needs for the following year(s).

Real World Advocacy Speech Language Pathology



Advocating for SLP Services for Older Adults on Medicare Benefit

- **Scenario:** You were informed by the Administrator at your Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) that a patient on Medicaid may only receive an SLP evaluation and not treatment when admitted to your SNF because the reimbursement is low for Medicaid patients in Illinois.
- **What You Did:** Collaborated with your Director of Rehabilitation and together provided the Administrator both evidence of the positive outcomes in therapy for patients receiving SLP services and the positive outcomes for SNF Quality Measures (QMs) which have positive impact on length of stay and reimbursement.
- **Outcome:** This partnership significantly improved care for this patient and for future patients on Medicaid benefit. When the Administrator left the SNF, the DOR and SLP approached the new Administrator with the positive outcomes of this approach.

Tools and Resources for Advocacy



1. Professional Agencies and Organizations
2. Legislative and Policy Resources
3. Continuing Education

Tools and Resources for Advocacy



1. Professional Agencies in IL

- a. IL Department of Financial and Professional Regulation ([IDFPR](#))
- b. IL State Board of Education ([ISBE](#))
- c. Healthcare & Family Services ([HFS](#))
- d. Provider Connections, Bureau of Early Intervention ([EI](#))

Professional Organizations

- a. [American Speech Hearing Association](#)
- b. [Illinois Speech-Language Hearing Association](#)
- c. [American Academy of Audiologists](#)
- d. [IL Academy of Audiologists](#)

Tools and Resources for Advocacy



2. Legislative and Policy Resources

- a. [US Dept of Ed, IDEA, OSERS, OSEP, Laws & Policy](#)
- b. [IL General Assembly](#)**
- c. Joint Committee on Administrative Rules ([JCAR](#))
 - o The [FLINN Report](#) (weekly JCAR updates)
- d. IL Dept. of Financial and Professional Regulation ([IDFPR](#))**
- e. IL Dept. of Healthcare and Family Services ([HFS](#))**
[Medical Providers Home](#) (all settings); [Handbooks](#); IMPACT, Managed Care, Medicaid, etc.
 - a. [Provider Connections](#) (Early Intervention)
 - b. Illinois State Board of Education ([ISBE](#))
 - c. ISHA's [Legislative & Regulatory Affairs Committee](#)**

**Relevant to ALL Service Providers

Tools and Resources for Advocacy



3. CE Resources and/or Specialized Trainings

- a. Annual ASHA Convention (late fall), Schools Connect (summer), Learning Pass/Webinars; Podcasts
- b. Annual ISHA Convention (February), Webinars; Representative Council (area groups);
- c. ASHA/ISHA Leadership Development Program (LDP);
- d. American Academy of Audiologists ("Triple A");
- e. Various websites, AAC Providers, Regional providers of trainings (Rep Council), etc.

MAKE SURE COURSE IS APPROVED FOR CEUs.

CEU Registry is worth the fee!

Q & A



- Questions
- Key Takeaways
- Contact Information