EXHIBIT 7
DATE 3/11/13
SB 230

Lucy Hart Paulson, EdD, CCC-SLP
5283 Haugan Drive
Missoula, MT 59803

March 11, 2013

Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of SB 230 a bill which would allow for another service delivery option for clients who experience speech, language and hearing difficulties. My name is Lucy Hart Paulson, EdD, CCC-SLP. I have been a licensed and certified speech language pathologist for more than 30 years working in school, private practice, clinic and university settings in Montana.

Communication is the heart and soul of who we are. A communication impairment or disorder can significantly and negatively impact school and life success and day to day functioning. Our profession has evidence-based techniques and strategies to help those experiencing communication challenges across the age span. We provide these services in a wide range of settings and with a variety of service delivery methods. However, these services are only effective if someone has access to them.

Advances in technology have expanded the intervention strategies we use as well as access to services for clients or patients. Telepractice is a service delivery option with empirical research support that provides access. We all know the rural nature of our state and the distances traveled by both clients and service providers. Passage of SB 230 would expand the opportunity for Montana citizens to have better access to services.

The American Speech Language and Hearing Association (ASHA), the national professional and certification organization for speech language pathologists and audiologists, endorses the use of telepractice and has general regulations that describe this method of service delivery (see attached). ASHA and the Montana Board of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists both require professionals to uphold the principles described in the Code of Ethics "to hold paramount the welfare of the persons they serve."

Telepractice is another tool that will enhance the service delivery options for speech language pathologists and audiologists in providing better access for clients in Montana. Everyone deserves a "voice." Thank you for the considering this written testimony in support of SB 230.

Respectfully,

Lucy Hart Paulson, EdD, CCC-SLP
Speech Language Pathologist

AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

SECTION TELEPRACTICE SERVICE DELIVERY GENERAL REGULATIONS

.01 Definitions

A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated unless the context otherwise requires:

B. Terms Defined:

1. "Board" means the State Board of Examiners for Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology.
2. "Patient" or "client" means a consumer of telepractice services.
3. "Telepractitioner" means an audiologist or speech-language pathologist who provides telepractice services.
4. "Telepractice Service" means the application of telecommunication technology to deliver speech-language pathology and/or audiology services at a distance for assessment, intervention and/or consultation.
5. "Telepractice" means telehealth, telespeech, teleSLP or teleaudiology when used separately or together.
6. "Consultation" means collaborating with a primary service provider to assist with evaluation or management.
7. "Clinician Site" means the site at which the speech-language pathologist or audiologist delivering the service is located at the time the service is provided via telecommunications.
8. "Client/Patient Site" means the location of the patient or client at the time the service is being furnished via telecommunications.
9. "Facilitator" means the individual at the client site who facilitates the telepractice service delivery at the direction of the audiologist or speech-language pathologist.

.02 Guidelines for Use of Telepractice

A. Services delivered via telecommunication technology must be equivalent to the quality of services delivered face-to-face, i.e. in-person.

B. Telepractice services must conform to professional standards including, but not limited to: Code of Ethics, scope of practice, professional policy documents and other relevant federal, state and institutional policies and requirements.

C. Telepractitioners must have the knowledge and skills to competently deliver services via telecommunication technology by virtue of education, training and experience.
D. The use of technology, e.g. equipment, connectivity, software, hardware and network compatibility, must be appropriate for the service being delivered and be able to address the unique needs of each client.
E. Telepractice service delivery includes the responsibility for calibration of clinical instruments in accordance with standard operating procedures and the manufacturer's specifications.
F. The telepractitioner is responsible for assessing the client's candidacy for telepractice including behavioral, physical and cognitive abilities to participate in services provided via telecommunications.
G. At a minimum, notification of telepractice services should be provided to the client, the guardian, the caregiver and the multi-disciplinary team, if appropriate. The notification could include but not be limited to: the right to refuse telepractice services, options for service delivery, and instructions on filing and resolving complaints.
H. Telepractitioners shall comply with all laws, rules and regulations governing the maintenance of client records, including client confidentiality requirements, regardless of the state where the records of any client within this state are maintained.

.03 Limitations of Telepractice Services

A. Telepractice services may not be provided by correspondence only, e.g. mail, email, faxes, although they may be adjuncts to telepractice.
B. Interstate and intrastate telepractice may be limited by the state, state licensure boards, federal or reimbursement laws and policies.
C. Audio and video quality should be sufficient to deliver services that are equivalent to in-person.

.04 Personnel Requirements

A. A provider of telespeech or teleaudiology should be actively licensed or certified to practice without restriction in the state from which the speech language pathologist or audiologist provides telepractice services.
B. Telepractitioners located out-of-state may provide services to persons in this state, providing they meet the requirements of Section ___, Interstate Practice of Telespeech and Teleaudiology.