

# **Speech-Language Pathologists**

## **Role and Expertise**

Speech-Language Pathologists evaluate, treat, examine, and test language and speech disorders. They may treat people who have difficulty expressing thoughts and understanding what is being said or written.

Speech-Language Pathologists may also treat people having difficulty with speech control, such as slurring; difficulty with remembering words or trouble with eating and swallowing.

People can develop speech and language problems because of hearing loss, stroke or aphasia, brain injury or deterioration, and other diseases (i.e. Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis).

Speech-Language Pathologists, working as part of a team of health professionals, will develop an individualized plan of care for each person. Speech-Language Pathologists can help people deal with the stress and misunderstanding that often accompany speech-language conditions. They can also be good resources for families wanting to learn techniques that can help at home in managing a speech-language problem.

## **Training and Credentials**

Speech-Language Pathologists complete a master's or doctoral degree from an institution accredited by [The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association \(ASHA\)](#). They receive Virginia State licensure either by (1) Holding a Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP) or (2) Holding a master's or doctoral degree from an institution accredited by ASHA and passing a qualifying examination approved by the [Virginia Board of Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology](#).

In Virginia, the Department of Health Professions-Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology licenses Speech-Language Pathologists. Their licenses are

renewed every two years. If you would like to learn the status of a Speech-Language Pathologists medical license, visit the [Virginia Department of Health Professions online license lookup](#)

## **Costs and Coverage**

Medicare Part B will usually cover 80 percent of outpatient Speech-Language Pathology services. The patient is responsible for the remaining 20% of the approved amount of the bill after the annual deductible has been satisfied. If you have a Medicare supplemental policy (Medigap), that will usually cover this amount. Medicare Part A covers Speech-Language Services included under home health care services and skilled nursing facility care services.

Medicaid covers outpatient Speech-Language Pathology services offered in acute and rehabilitation hospitals, and rehabilitation agencies. Individuals with a co-pay responsibility may have a co-pay for outpatient visits.

## **Assistance with Medical Costs**

The Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) program helps qualified individuals help pay for Medicare premiums or out-of-pocket expenses. For more information about Medigap policies or Medicare-related coverage programs, contact Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or visit the website at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

## **Consumer Tips**

When selecting a Speech-Language Pathologist, consider the following questions:

- Does the provider have experience working with older adults?
- Is the provider CCC-SLP (Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology) certified and/or licensed in Virginia?
- Which particular speech, language, or hearing disorders does the provider treat?
- Is there a waiting list for treatment? If so, how long is it?
- How long does the provider expect treatment to last and what percentage of recovery is expected?
- Does the provider dispense/sell hearing aids? If not, can they help you find one from another source?

- Does the provider offer auditory training, lip/speech reading and/or hearing aid orientation for the new hearing aid user?

Additional information about Speech-Language Pathologists:

[ASHA Action Center](#)

1-800-638-TALK (1-800-638-8255)

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