

Audiology Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Q. What should I consider when starting a private practice?

A. Many resources are available to assist you with ideas and guidelines.

- ASHA's web page www.asha.org has an article, "Guide to a successful private practice in speech/language pathology" ASHA publications, 1996.
- Dr. Robert Glaser's article about managing a business on [Speech Pathology.com](http://SpeechPathology.com).
- Patricia Fisher's article in OSLHA's newsletter *Communication Matters* (Vol. 40 No. 3)
 - You will need to consider:
 - Rent and utilities (electric, gas telephone)
 - Staff salaries (professional/support)
 - Lawyer/Accountant/Insurance (Liability, Health)
 - Taxes (local, state, federal)
 - Office/treatment supplies (Diagnostic tools, computers, copier)
 - Marketing (web, telephone book, letterhead, etc.)
 - Billing and credit card services
 - Continuing Education and Professional Affiliation Costs.
- The American Academy of Audiology (AAA) also offers valuable information to assist with starting a private practice. It is available at:
http://www.audiology.org/practice_management/resources/resources-and-tools.
 - Information included:
 - Updated best practice materials, marketing ideas, and information to start a private practice.

Q. Are there any organizations that provide business support for private practices?

A. Yes, national and state level organizations, like OSLHA or ASHA, provide support for private practitioners. Maintain your membership and contact your representatives when questions arise.

- There are also a number of mentorship websites available to small businesses:
 - www.score.org
 - www.sba.gov
 - www.toolkit.cch.com
- You should also check with the hearing aid manufacturer you are choosing to use. Often times, they will help by providing some marketing materials for your practice.

Q. Do I need to purchase liability insurance and where?

A. Speech Pathologists and Audiologists practicing in Ohio must have liability insurance. There are several options, including ASHA, OSLHA, AAA and Small Business Associations who offer liability insurance at reasonable rates.

Q. Where do I seek help for writing a business plan?

A. A good course is available at [Speech Pathology.com](http://SpeechPathology.com) - "Developing a Business Plan for Success" This course highlights what it takes to go into business. Strategic Practice Management Second Edition, by Robert G. Glaser, PhD, Robert M. Traynor, EdD, MBA also provides crucial information about writing business plans and best practices. You can also, check out these mentor sites for small businesses:

- www.score.org
- www.sba.gov
- www.toolkit.cch.com

Q. Where can I find answers to coding questions for billing?

- A.** The following were provided at the 2012 Caucus (Bernard Henri, PhD & Patricia Fisher, MA)
- ICD-9-CM Codes for SLPs: www.asha.org/practice/reimbursement/coding/icd9SLP.htm
 - Guidelines for Coding & Reporting ICD-9-CM: www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd9/icdguide.pdf
 - ICD Home Page: www.cdc.gov/nchs/icd9.htm
 - Questions: e-mail reimbursement@asha.org
 - CPT Codes for SLPs: www.asha.org/practice/reimbursement/coding/default.htm
 - Medicare Coding Rules for SLPs (adopted by many private payers): www.asha.org/practice/reimbursement/medicare/SLP_coding_rules.htm
 - Common billing pitfalls: www.audiology.org

Q. As a private practitioner, can I bill for Medicaid/Medicare patients?

A. Medicare and Medicaid have different rules when looking at how Audiologists bill. Audiologists are not allowed to “opt-out” of **Medicare**. If a patient requests that you bill Medicare, you are required to bill Medicare for services rendered. If you provide a service for free to one patient, Medicare requires you provide that free service to all patients.

Medicaid operates on a different billing standard. It is not mandatory for an audiologist to provide diagnostics for a patient with Medicaid, but any audiologist who does provide diagnostics, must also provide a hearing aid, if medically necessary. Medicaid operates under an “all-or-none” approach.

The answers to our FAQ's are heavily reliant on current laws and best practices in the state of Ohio and may be subject to change over time. Please consult the professional practice rep currently serving your work setting if you have questions or concerns about the accuracy of the content in this document.