

AN ACT concerning regulation.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,  
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Hearing Instrument Consumer Protection Act is amended by changing Sections 1, 3, 6, 6.1, 8, 9.5, 16, and 17 as follows:

(225 ILCS 50/1) (from Ch. 111, par. 7401)

(Section scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2016)

Sec. 1. Purpose. The purpose of this Act is to protect the deaf or hard of hearing ~~hearing-impaired~~ public from the practice of dispensing ~~incompetent and dishonest dispensers of~~ hearing instruments that ~~who~~ could endanger the health, safety and welfare of the People of this State. The Federal Food and Drug Administration has recommended that State legislation is necessary in order to establish standards of competency and to impose stringent penalties for those who violate the public trust in this field of health care.

(Source: P.A. 89-72, eff. 12-31-95.)

(225 ILCS 50/3) (from Ch. 111, par. 7403)

(Section scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2016)

Sec. 3. Definitions. As used in this Act, except as the context requires otherwise:

"Department" means the Department of Public Health.

"Director" means the Director of the Department of Public Health.

"License" means a license issued by the State under this Act to a hearing instrument dispenser.

"Licensed Audiologist" means a person licensed as an audiologist under the Illinois Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Practice Act.

"National Board Certified Hearing Instrument Specialist" means a person who has had at least 2 years in practice as a licensed hearing instrument dispenser and has been certified after qualification by examination by the National Board for Certification in Hearing Instruments Sciences.

"Licensed physician" or "physician" means a physician licensed in Illinois to practice medicine in all of its branches pursuant to the Medical Practice Act of 1987.

"Trainee" means a person who is licensed to perform the functions of a hearing instrument dispenser in accordance with the Department rules and only under the direct supervision of a hearing instrument dispenser or audiologist who is licensed in the State.

"Board" means the Hearing Instrument Consumer Protection Board.

"Hearing instrument" or "hearing aid" means any wearable instrument or device designed for or offered for the purpose of aiding or compensating for impaired human hearing and that can

provide more than 15 dB full on gain via a 2cc coupler at any single frequency from 200 through 6000 cycles per second, and any parts, attachments, or accessories, including ear molds. "Hearing instrument" or "hearing aid" do not include batteries, cords, or group auditory training devices and any instrument or device used by a public utility in providing telephone or other communication services are excluded.

"Practice of fitting, dispensing, or servicing of hearing instruments" means the measurement of human hearing with an audiometer, calibrated to the current American National Standard Institute standards, for the purpose of making selections, recommendations, adaptations, services, or sales of hearing instruments including the making of earmolds as a part of the hearing instrument.

"Sell" or "sale" means any transfer of title or of the right to use by lease, bailment, or any other contract, excluding wholesale transactions with distributors or dealers.

"Hearing instrument dispenser" means a person who is a hearing care professional that engages in the selling, practice of fitting, selecting, recommending, dispensing, or servicing of hearing instruments or the testing for means of hearing instrument selection or who advertises or displays a sign or represents himself or herself as a person who practices the testing, fitting, selecting, servicing, dispensing, or selling of hearing instruments.

"Fund" means the Hearing Instrument Dispenser Examining

and Disciplinary Fund.

"Hearing Care Professional" means a person who is a licensed audiologist, a licensed hearing instrument dispenser, or a licensed physician.

(Source: P.A. 98-362, eff. 8-16-13.)

(225 ILCS 50/6) (from Ch. 111, par. 7406)

(Section scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2016)

Sec. 6. Mail order and Internet sales. Nothing in this Act shall prohibit a corporation, partnership, trust, association, or other organization, maintaining an established business address, from engaging in the business of selling or offering for sale hearing instruments at retail by mail or by Internet to persons 18 years of age or older who have not been examined by a licensed physician or tested by a licensed hearing instrument dispenser provided that:

(a) The organization is registered by the Department prior to engaging in business in this State and has paid the fee set forth in this Act.

(b) The organization files with the Department, prior to registration and annually thereafter, a Disclosure Statement containing the following:

(1) the name under which the organization is doing or intends to do business and the name of any affiliated company which the organization recommends or will recommend to persons as a supplier of goods or services or

in connection with other business transactions of the organization;

(2) the organization's principal business address and the name and address of its agent in this State authorized to receive service of process;

(3) the business form of the organization, whether corporate, partnership, or otherwise and the state or other sovereign power under which the organization is organized;

(4) the names of the directors or persons performing similar functions and names and addresses of the chief executive officer, and the financial, accounting, sales, and other principal executive officers, if the organization is a corporation, association, or other similar entity; of all general partners, if the organization is a partnership; and of the owner, if the organization is a sole proprietorship, together with a statement of the business background during the past 5 years for each such person;

(5) a statement as to whether the organization or any person identified in the disclosure statement:

(i) has during the 5 year period immediately preceding the date of the disclosure statement been convicted of a felony, pleaded nolo contendere to a felony charge, or been held liable in a civil action by final judgment, if such felony or civil action involved fraud, embezzlement, or misappropriation of property,

and a description thereof; or

(ii) is subject to any currently effective injunctive or restrictive order as a result of a proceeding or pending action brought by any government agency or department, and a description thereof; or

(iii) is a defendant in any pending criminal or material civil action relating to fraud, embezzlement, misappropriation of property or violations of the antitrust or trade regulation laws of the United States or any state, and a description thereof; or

(iv) has during the 5 year period immediately preceding the date of the disclosure statement had entered against such person or organization a final judgment in any material civil proceeding, and a description thereof; or

(v) has during the 5 year period immediately preceding the date of the disclosure statement been adjudicated a bankrupt or reorganized due to insolvency or was a principal executive officer or general partner of any company that has been adjudicated a bankrupt or reorganized due to insolvency during such 5 year period, and a description thereof;

(6) the length of time the organization and any predecessor of the organization has conducted a business dealing with hearing instrument goods or services;

(7) a financial statement of the organization as of the close of the most recent fiscal year of the organization. If the financial statement is filed later than 120 days following the close of the fiscal year of the organization it must be accompanied by a statement of the organization of any material changes in the financial condition of the organization;

(8) a general description of the business, including without limitation a description of the goods, training programs, supervision, advertising, promotion and other services provided by the organization;

(9) a statement of any compensation or other benefit given or promised to a public figure arising, in whole or in part, from (i) the use of the public figure in the name or symbol of the organization or (ii) the endorsement or recommendation of the organization by the public figure in advertisements;

(10) a statement setting forth such additional information and such comments and explanations relative to the information contained in the disclosure statement as the organization may desire to present.

(b-5) If a device being sold does not meet the definition of a hearing instrument or hearing device as stated in this Act, the organization shall include a disclaimer in all written or electronic promotions. The disclaimer shall include the following language:

"This is not a hearing instrument or hearing aid as defined in the Hearing Instrument Consumer Protection Act, but a personal amplifier and not intended to replace a properly fitted and calibrated hearing instrument."

(c) The organization files with the Department prior to registration and annually thereafter a statement that it complies with the Act, the rules issued pursuant to it, and the regulations of the Federal Food and Drug Administration and the Federal Trade Commission insofar as they are applicable.

(d) The organization files with the Department at the time of registration an irrevocable consent to service of process authorizing the Department and any of its successors to be served any notice, process, or pleading in any action or proceeding against the organization arising out of or in connection with any violation of this Act. Such service shall have the effect of conferring personal jurisdiction over such organization in any court of competent jurisdiction.

(e) Before dispensing a hearing instrument to a resident of this State, the organization informs the prospective users that they need the following for proper fitting of a hearing instrument:

(1) the results of an audiogram performed within the past 6 months by a licensed audiologist or a licensed hearing instrument dispenser; and

(2) an earmold impression obtained from the prospective user and taken by a licensed hearing instrument



dispenser or licensed audiologist.

(f) The prospective user receives a medical evaluation or the organization affords the prospective user an opportunity to waive the medical evaluation requirement of Section 4 of this Act and the testing requirement of subsection (z) of Section 18, provided that the organization:

(1) informs the prospective user that the exercise of the waiver is not in the user's best health interest;

(2) does not in any way actively encourage the prospective user to waive the medical evaluation or test; and

(3) affords the prospective user the option to sign the following statement:

"I have been advised by ..... (hearing instrument dispenser's name) that the Food and Drug Administration and the State of Illinois have determined that my best interest would be served if I had a medical evaluation by a licensed physician, preferably a physician who specialized in diseases of the ear, before purchasing a hearing instrument; or a test by a licensed audiologist or licensed hearing instrument dispenser utilizing established procedures and instrumentation in the fitting of hearing instruments. I do not wish either a medical evaluation or test before purchasing a hearing instrument."

(g) Where a sale, lease, or rental of hearing instruments

is sold or contracted to be sold to a consumer by mail order, the consumer may void the contract or sale by notifying the seller within 45 business days following that day on which the hearing instruments were mailed by the seller to the consumer and by returning to the seller in its original condition any hearing instrument delivered to the consumer under the contract or sale. At the time the hearing instrument is mailed, the seller shall furnish the consumer with a fully completed receipt or copy of any contract pertaining to the sale that contains a "Notice of Cancellation" informing the consumer that he or she may cancel the sale at any time within 45 business days and disclosing the date of the mailing and the name, address, and telephone number of the seller. In immediate proximity to the space reserved in the contract for the signature of the consumer, or on the front page of the receipt if a contract is not used, and in bold face type of a minimum size of 10 points, there shall be a statement in substantially the following form:

"You, the buyer, may cancel this transaction at any time prior to midnight of the 45th business day after the date of this transaction. See the attached notice of cancellation form for an explanation of this right."

Attached to the receipt or contract shall be a completed form in duplicate, captioned "NOTICE OF CANCELLATION" which shall be easily detachable and which shall contain in at least 10 point bold face type the following information and

statements in the same language as that used in the contract:

"NOTICE OF CANCELLATION

enter date of transaction

.....

(DATE)

YOU MAY CANCEL THIS TRANSACTION, WITHOUT ANY PENALTY OR OBLIGATION, WITHIN 45 BUSINESS DAYS FROM THE ABOVE DATE.

IF YOU CANCEL, ANY PROPERTY TRADED IN, ANY PAYMENTS MADE BY YOU UNDER THE CONTRACT OR SALE LESS ANY NONREFUNDABLE RESTOCKING FEE, AND ANY NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENT EXECUTED BY YOU WILL BE RETURNED WITHIN 10 BUSINESS DAYS FOLLOWING RECEIPT BY THE SELLER OF YOUR CANCELLATION NOTICE AND ALL MERCHANDISE PERTAINING TO THIS TRANSACTION, AND ANY SECURITY INTEREST ARISING OUT OF THE TRANSACTION WILL BE CANCELLED.

IF YOU CANCEL, YOU MUST RETURN TO THE SELLER, IN SUBSTANTIALLY AS GOOD CONDITION AS WHEN RECEIVED, ANY GOODS DELIVERED TO YOU UNDER THIS CONTRACT OR SALE.

TO CANCEL THIS TRANSACTION, MAIL OR DELIVER A SIGNED AND DATED COPY OF THIS CANCELLATION NOTICE OR ANY OTHER WRITTEN NOTICE, OR SEND A TELEGRAM, TO (name of seller), AT (address of seller's place of business) AND (seller's telephone number) NO LATER THAN MIDNIGHT OF .....(date).

I HEREBY CANCEL THIS TRANSACTION.

(Date).....

.....

(Buyers Signature)"

The written "Notice of Cancellation" may be sent by the consumer to the seller to cancel the contract. The 45-day period does not commence until the consumer is furnished the Notice of Cancellation and the address and phone number at which such notice to the seller can be given.

If the conditions of this Section are met, the seller must return to the consumer the amount of any payment made or consideration given under the contract or for the merchandise less a nonrefundable restocking fee.

It is an unlawful practice for a seller to: (1) hold a consumer responsible for any liability or obligation under any mail order transaction if the consumer claims not to have received the merchandise unless the merchandise was sent by certified mail or other delivery method by which the seller is provided with proof of delivery; (2) fail, before furnishing copies of the "Notice of Cancellation" to the consumer, to complete both copies by entering the name of the seller, the address of the seller's place of business, the seller's telephone number, the date of the mailing, and the date, not earlier than the 45th business day following the date of the mailing, by which the consumer may give notice of cancellation; (3) include in any contract or receipt any confession of judgment or any waiver of any of the rights to which the consumer is entitled under this Section including specifically his right to cancel the sale in accordance with the provisions

of this Section; (4) misrepresent in any manner the consumer's right to cancel; (5) use any undue influence, coercion, or any other wilful act or representation to interfere with the consumer's exercise of his rights under this Section; (6) fail or refuse to honor any valid notice of cancellation and return of merchandise by a consumer and, within 10 business days after the receipt of such notice and merchandise pertaining to such transaction, to (i) refund payments made under the contract or sale, (ii) return any goods or property traded in, in substantially as good condition as when received by the person, (iii) cancel and return any negotiable instrument executed by the consumer in connection with the contract or sale and take any action necessary or appropriate to terminate promptly any security interest created in the transaction; (7) negotiate, transfer, sell, or assign any note or other evidence of indebtedness to a finance company or other third party prior to the 50th business day following the day of the mailing; or (8) fail to provide the consumer of a hearing instrument with written information stating the name, address, and telephone number of the Department and informing the consumer that complaints regarding hearing instrument goods or services may be made to the Department.

(h) The organization employs only licensed hearing instrument dispensers in the dispensing of hearing instruments and files with the Department, by January 1 of each year, a list of all licensed hearing instrument dispensers employed by

it.

(Source: P.A. 98-362, eff. 8-16-13.)

(225 ILCS 50/6.1)

(Section scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2016)

Sec. 6.1. Reciprocity. The Department shall issue a license to any hearing instrument dispenser who (i) has been certified by the National Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences and has been actively practicing for a minimum of 5 years or (ii) has a valid license as a hearing instrument dispenser, or its equivalent, from another state that has an examination that is comparable to the examination required under this Act or is provided by the International Hearing Society, (iii) ~~(ii)~~ has completed the specific academic and training requirements, or their equivalent, under this Act, (iv) ~~(iii)~~ has been actively practicing as a hearing instrument dispenser for at least 3 months or is certified by the National Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences, and (v) ~~(iv)~~ has paid the required fee.

(Source: P.A. 96-683, eff. 1-1-10.)

(225 ILCS 50/8) (from Ch. 111, par. 7408)

(Section scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2016)

Sec. 8. Applicant qualifications; examination.

(a) In order to protect persons who are deaf or hard of hearing ~~with hearing impairments~~, the Department shall

authorize or shall conduct an appropriate examination for persons who dispense, test, select, recommend, fit, or service hearing instruments. The frequency of holding these examinations shall be determined by the Department by rule. Those who successfully pass such an examination shall be issued a license as a hearing instrument dispenser, which shall be effective for a 2-year period.

(b) Applicants shall be:

- (1) at least 18 years of age;
- (2) of good moral character;
- (3) the holder of an associate's degree ~~a high school graduate~~ or the equivalent;
- (4) free of contagious or infectious disease; and
- (5) a citizen or person who has the status as a legal alien.

Felony convictions of the applicant and findings against the applicant involving matters set forth in Sections 17 and 18 shall be considered in determining moral character, but such a conviction or finding shall not make an applicant ineligible to register for examination.

(c) Prior to engaging in the practice of fitting, dispensing, or servicing hearing instruments, an applicant shall demonstrate, by means of written and practical examinations, that such person is qualified to practice the testing, selecting, recommending, fitting, selling, or servicing of hearing instruments as defined in this Act. An

applicant must ~~who fails to~~ obtain a license within 12 months after passing either ~~both~~ the written or ~~and~~ practical examination, whichever is passed first, or ~~examinations~~ must take and pass those examinations again in order to be eligible to receive a license.

The Department shall, by rule, determine the conditions under which an individual is examined.

(d) Proof of having met the minimum requirements of continuing education as determined by the Board shall be required of all license renewals. Pursuant to rule, the continuing education requirements may, upon petition to the Board, be waived in whole or in part if the hearing instrument dispenser can demonstrate that he or she served in the Coast Guard or Armed Forces, had an extreme hardship, or obtained his or her license by examination or endorsement within the preceding renewal period.

(e) Persons applying for an initial license must demonstrate having earned, at a minimum, an associate degree or its equivalent from an accredited institution of higher education that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or that meets the U.S. Department of Education equivalency as determined through a National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) member, and meet the other requirements of this Section. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate the successful completion of 12 semester hours or 18 quarter hours of academic undergraduate course work in an



accredited institution consisting of 3 semester hours of anatomy and physiology of the speech and hearing mechanism, 3 semester hours of hearing science, 3 semester hours of introduction to audiology, and 3 semester hours of aural rehabilitation, or the quarter hour equivalent. Persons licensed before January 1, 2003 who have a valid license on that date may have their license renewed without meeting the requirements of this subsection.

(Source: P.A. 96-683, eff. 1-1-10.)

(225 ILCS 50/9.5)

(Section scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2016)

Sec. 9.5. Trainees.

(a) In order to receive a trainee license, a person must apply to the Department and provide acceptable evidence of his or her completion of the required courses pursuant to subsection (e) of Section 8 of this Act, or its equivalent as determined by the Department. A trainee license expires 12 ~~6~~ months from the date of issue and is non-renewable.

(b) A trainee shall perform the functions of a hearing instrument dispenser in accordance with the Department rules and only under the direct supervision of a hearing instrument dispenser or audiologist who is licensed in the State. For the purposes of this Section, "direct supervision" means that the licensed hearing instrument dispenser or audiologist shall give final approval to all work performed by the trainee and

shall be physically present anytime the trainee has contact with the client. The licensed hearing instrument dispenser or audiologist is responsible for all of the work that is performed by the trainee.

(c) The Department may limit the number of trainees that may be under the direct supervision of the same licensed hearing instrument dispenser or licensed audiologist.

(d) The Department may establish a trainee licensing fee by rule.

(Source: P.A. 96-846, eff. 6-1-10.)

(225 ILCS 50/16) (from Ch. 111, par. 7416)

(Section scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2016)

Sec. 16. Hearing Instrument Consumer Protection Board. There shall be established a Hearing Instrument Consumer Protection Board which shall assist, advise and make recommendations to the Department.

The Board shall consist of 6 members who shall be residents of Illinois. One shall be a licensed physician who specializes in otology or otolaryngology; one shall be a member of a consumer-oriented organization concerned with the deaf or hard of hearing ~~hearing-impaired~~; one shall be from the general public, preferably a senior citizen; 2 shall be licensed hearing instrument dispensers who are National Board Certified Hearing Instrument Specialists; and one shall be a licensed audiologist. If a vote of the Board results in a tie, the

Director shall cast the deciding vote.

Members of the Board shall be appointed by the Director after consultation with appropriate professional organizations and consumer groups. The term of office of each shall be 4 years. Before a member's term expires, the Director shall appoint a successor to assume member's duties at the expiration of his or her predecessor's term. A vacancy shall be filled by appointment for the unexpired term. The members shall annually designate one member as chairman. No member of the Board who has served 2 successive, full terms may be reappointed. The Director may remove members for good cause.

Members of the Board shall receive reimbursement for actual and necessary travel and for other expenses, not to exceed the limit established by the Department.

(Source: P.A. 91-932, eff. 1-1-01; 91-949, eff. 2-9-01.)

(225 ILCS 50/17) (from Ch. 111, par. 7417)

(Section scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2016)

Sec. 17. Duties of the Board. The Board shall advise the Department in all matters relating to this Act and shall assist as requested by the Director.

The Board shall respond to issues and problems relating to the improvement of services to the deaf or hard of hearing ~~hearing-impaired~~ and shall make such recommendations as it considers advisable. It shall file an annual report with the Director and shall meet at least twice a year. The Board may

meet at any time at the call of the chair.

The Board shall recommend specialized education programs for persons wishing to become licensed as hearing instrument dispensers and shall, by rule, establish minimum standards of continuing education required for license renewal. No more than 5 hours of continuing education credit per year, however, can be obtained through programs sponsored by hearing instrument manufacturers.

The Board shall hear charges brought by any person against hearing instrument dispensers and shall recommend disciplinary action to the Director.

Members of the Board are immune from liability in any action based upon a licensing proceeding or other act performed in good faith as a member of the Board.

(Source: P.A. 93-525, eff. 8-12-03.)