

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City Metro Manila
FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
SECOND REGULAR SESSION
HOUSE BILL NO. 5907



Introduced by Honorable Janette L. Garin, M.D.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The promotion of health and general physical well-being, insofar as healthy hearing is concerned, is greatly neglected in our country. This is evidenced by the dearth of qualified audiologists and their non-recognition as a profession, leading to overseas migration of the few locally-trained audiologists to other countries where they are properly recognized. This is also paralleled by the proliferation of non-qualified and untrained persons performing audiological services detrimental to the health and well-being of our citizenry.

In other countries, audiology is a well-established and recognized profession, with numerous educational and training programs in leading institutions. Only two formal training programs exist in the Philippines, with relatively low enrollment figures. Moreover, many graduates of these programs find employment overseas, where they gain the recognition they deserve. Unfortunately, unlike optometry in the field of vision, audiology is not recognized as a profession in the Philippines.

This bill seeks to professionalize the practice of audiology in the Philippines, and create for this purpose a professional regulatory board of audiology. It also seeks to upgrade audiologic education and integrate audiologists and audiometricians in order to safeguard and enhance healthy hearing as a regular component of the primary health care system. Such a development will translate to better hearing for all, as the promotion of healthy hearing and diagnosis, treatment, habilitation and prevention of hearing impairment are holistically and professionally addressed.


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**AN ACT PROFESSIONALIZING THE PRACTICE OF AUDIOLOGY AND
CREATING FOR THIS PURPOSE A PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD OF
AUDIOLOGY, APPROPRIATING FUNDES THEREFOR, UPGRADING
AUDIOLOGIC EDUCATION, INTEGRATING AUDIOLOGISTS, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES.**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress
assembled:*

ARTICLE I

TITLE, DECLARATION OF POLICY, DEFINITION OF TERMS

Section 1. Title. — This Act shall be known and cited as the "*Audiology Act of 2012*."

Sec. 2. Declaration of State Policy. — The State recognizes the essential role of audiology as a profession in safeguarding and enhancing the health and general physical well-being of the citizenry. Audiologic services shall therefore be promoted as a regular component of the primary health care system.

Sec. 3. Definition of Terms. — As used in this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

(a) "**Audiology**" — The science and art of hearing, whether normal or disordered, as a fundamental component of human communicatory behavior; the development and application of effective strategies leading to optimal use of sensory and oral expressive skills in hearing-impaired children and adults; analyzing and evaluating the auditory function through behavioral and physiologic tests; selecting, prescribing and dispensing hearing aids, auditory assistive devices and their accessories and solutions, and similar appliances and devices; using educational techniques to enhance visual perception of speech (speech reading) and to improve auditory discrimination; developing and maintaining optimal speech and voice skills; counseling regarding educational, social or vocational concerns that may occur as a consequence of hearing impairment; and implementation of programs for hearing conservation, and for the prevention of reduced auditory function; and other preventive or corrective measures or procedures for the aid, correction, habilitation, rehabilitation or relief

of human hearing, or to attain optimum audition and comfort.

(b) **"Audiometry"** — The measurement of hearing, including many procedures and tests used to define the type, degree, and communicative consequences of hearing loss; utilizing clinical hearing tests to evaluate sensitivity and discrimination (acuity) aspects of audition; including, but not limited to tone and speech audiometry based on behavioral responses, electrophysiologic procedures, acoustic-immittance measures, loudness recruitment, loudness adaptation, and tests of central auditory dysfunction.

(c) **"Audiologist"** — A natural person who, having satisfactorily completed an academic program leading to at least a bachelor's degree in audiology or its equivalent or higher degree, inclusive of at least 300 hours of supervised clinical experience, followed by the equivalent of six months full-time professional experience under the supervision of a certified audiologist, has passed the national Board Examination in Audiology administered by the Board of Audiology, and has been granted a Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) in audiology and registered with the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) as being qualified to practice Audiology in the Philippines.

(d) **"Audiologist in good standing"** — A registered audiologist who is authorized to practice the profession in the Philippines by virtue of a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional license issued by the PRC for the purpose.

(e) **"Audiometrician"** — A natural person who has not satisfactorily completed an academic program leading to a bachelor's degree in audiology or its equivalent; and has not passed the national Board Examination in Audiology administered by the Board of Audiology, but by virtue of accredited coursework and clinical experience has been accredited by the Board of Audiology for the limited practice of Audiometry in the Philippines under the supervision of an Audiologist in good standing.

(f) **"Audiometrician in good standing"** — A qualified audiometrician who by virtue of a valid certificate of accreditation in audiometry issued by the Board of Audiology for the purpose is authorized in the limited practice of audiometry in the Philippines under the supervision of an Audiologist in good standing.

(g) **"Certificate of registration"** — A document signed by the Chair of the PRC and by all members of the Board of Audiology and bearing its seal, issued to an applicant who has satisfied the requirements for the practice of audiology. It shall serve as proof that the registrant is qualified to practice the respective professions in the Philippines.

(h) **"Professional license"** — A renewable card, issued by the PRC to a registered audiologist, indicating that s/he is competent and authorized to practice audiology in the Philippines. Until the loss of its validity or its expiration, such license shall serve as evidence that its bearer is an audiologist or audiometrician in good standing.

(i) **"Certificate of Accreditation"** — A document signed by all members of the Board of Audiology and bearing its seal, issued to an applicant who has satisfied the requirements for the limited practice of audiometry in the Philippines under the supervision of an Audiologist

in good standing. It shall serve as proof that the person is accredited for the limited practice of audiometry in the Philippines under the supervision of an Audiologist in good standing.

(j) **"Code of professional ethics"** — A set of standards relating to the conduct, integrity and moral duties of audiologists, as prescribed by the Philippine Society of Audiology as the duly integrated and accredited national organization of audiologists, and adopted and promulgated by the Board of Audiology upon approval by the PRC.

ARTICLE II THE PRACTICE OF AUDIOLOGY

Sec. 4. Acts Constituting the Practice of Audiology. — Any of the following acts constitute the practice of Audiology:

(a) The analysis and evaluation of human auditory function through the employment of clinical subjective (behavioral) and objective (physiologic) procedures and tests to measure hearing and define the type, degree, and communicative consequences of hearing loss; including the use of specific instruments, tools, equipment, implements, aids, apparatuses, machines, exercises and related devices, for the purpose of determining the condition, sensitivity and discrimination (acuity) of human hearing to correct and improve the same when not medically or surgically treatable, in accordance with subsections (b), (c), and (d) hereof;

(b) The selection, prescription and dispensing of hearing aids, auditory assistive devices and their accessories and solutions, and supplies for the purpose of correcting and treating defects, deficiencies and abnormalities of audition that are not medically or surgically treatable;

(c) The use of educational techniques to enhance visual perception of speech (speech reading) and to improve auditory discrimination, developing and maintaining optimal speech and voice skills; conduct of auditory exercises and hearing habilitation and rehabilitation, the provision of other measures, devices and procedures to aid, correct, habilitate, rehabilitate or relieve abnormalities of human audition and attain optimum audition and comfort except those that should be medically or surgically provided;

(d) The counseling of patients regarding educational, social or vocational concerns that may occur as a consequence of hearing impairment; and implementation of programs for hearing conservation, and for the prevention of reduced auditory function;

(e) The establishment of offices, clinics, and similar places where audiologic services are offered; and

(f) The collection of professional fees for the performance of any of the acts mentioned in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (d) of this section.

Sec. 5. Prohibition Against the Unauthorized Practice of Audiology. — No person shall practice audiology as defined in Section 3 of this Act nor perform any of the acts constituting the practice of audiology as set forth in Section 4 hereof, without having been first admitted to the practice of this profession under the provisions of this Act and its implementing rules and regulations: *Provided*, That this prohibition shall not apply to regularly licensed and duly

registered physicians who have received post-graduate training in the diagnosis and treatment of hearing disorders and ear diseases; *Provided, however*, That the examination of the human ear and auditory apparatus by duly registered physicians in connection with the physical examination of patients shall not be considered as practice of audiology; *Provided, further*, That the evaluation and management of speech and voice functions and dysfunctions by speech pathologists, therapists and phoniatrists shall not be considered as the practice of audiology; *Provided, further*, That public health workers and health care providers trained and involved in the government's "universal newborn hearing screening program for the prevention, early diagnosis and intervention of hearing loss" or Republic Act No. 9709 and other hearing conservation programs may conduct only specific hearing acuity tests and hearing screening; *Provided, further*, That audiometricians in good standing may only perform their limited duties and services under supervision of an audiologist in good standing.

Sec. 6. Disclosure of Authority to Practice. — An audiologist shall be required to indicate his or her professional license number and the date of its expiration in the documents he or she issues or signs in connection with the practice of his or her profession. S/he shall also display his or her certificate of registration in a conspicuous area of his or her clinic or office.

ARTICLE III THE PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD OF AUDIOLOGY

Sec. 7. The Professional Regulatory Board of Audiology. — There is hereby created a Professional Regulatory Board of Audiology, hereinafter referred to as the Board, composed of five (5) members who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines, upon the recommendation of the PRC, from a list of ten (10) nominees submitted by the duly integrated and accredited national organization of audiologists, the Philippine Society of Audiology.

Sec. 8. Minimum Qualifications of Board Members. — Only persons possessed with the following qualifications may be nominated and appointed to the Board:

- (a) A natural-born citizen of the Philippines;
- (b) A duly registered audiologist in good standing holding a valid Certificate of Registration; *Provided*, That in the case of the first members of the Board of Audiology, they shall be issued Certificates of Registration as Audiologists without prior examination;
- (c) At least thirty-five (35) years of age at the time of his or her appointment;
- (d) Of good moral character; and
- (e) In active practice of the profession for at least ten (10) years prior to his or her appointment: *Provided*, That for purposes of creating the initial Board, active practice of the profession for at least five (5) years prior to his or her appointment will suffice: *Provided, also*, That a person who is a member of the faculty, whether full time, part time or lecturer of any school, college or university where a regular course in audiology is taught, or who has any pecuniary interest, directly or indirectly, in such an institution must forego his or her membership in said faculty or relinquish his or her interests in said institution before or upon taking his or her oath as a member of the Board: *Provided, further*, That an incumbent officer

of the Philippine Society of Audiology or any audiologic association is disqualified from concurrently being appointed to or serving in the Board.

Sec. 9. Term of Office. — The members of the Board shall hold office for a non-renewable term of five (5) years, starting on the date of appointment and until their successors shall have been appointed: *Provided, however,* That the first appointees to the Board shall hold office as follows: the chairperson for five (5) years and the four (4) other members for fixed terms of four (4), three (3), two (2), and one (1) year/s, such that the term of one member shall be due to expire every year. Thereafter, one member shall be appointed for the full term every year and such member, in the last year of his or her term, shall automatically become the chairperson of the Board. Vacancies brought about by reasons other than expiration of term shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term only.

Sec. 10. Removal or Suspension of Board Members. — Any member of the Board, after having been given the opportunity to defend himself or herself in a proper administrative investigation conducted by the PRC, may be removed by the President of the Philippines for neglect of duty, incompetence, malpractice, or unprofessional, unethical, immoral or dishonorable conduct. During the process of investigation, the President of the Philippines may suspend such member under investigation for a period of not more than sixty (60) days and appoint a temporary member in his place.

Sec. 11. Compensation of Board Members. — The members of the Board shall each receive compensation in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Professional Regulatory Commission.

Sec. 12. Functions and Powers of the Board. — The Board is hereby vested with authority to:

- (a) Promulgate the rules and regulations for the practice of audiology, subject to the approval of the PRC and in accordance with the provisions of this Act;
- (b) Administer and enforce the rules and regulations specified in the preceding sections;
- (c) Determine, prepare, adopt, issue or amend the syllabi and contents of, and questions for licensure examinations, adopt measures to ensure the integrity thereof, correct and rate the examination papers and submit the results thereof to the PRC;
- (d) Formulate and oversee, in consultation and coordination with the PRC, guidelines for the proper conduct of licensure examinations and the registration of audiologists as well as the accreditation of audiometricians;
- (e) Issue, suspend, revoke and reissue certificates of registration of qualified audiologists and renew their professional licenses and issue, suspend, revoke and reissue certificates of accreditation of audiometricians;
- (f) Impose reasonable requirements and conditions, such as attendance in continuing education activities and programs, for the renewal of an audiologist's license to practice and for the purpose of upgrading the professional competence of audiologists and audiometricians;

- (g) Maintain a registry of audiologists and audiometricians in good standing;
- (h) Adopt, promulgate and disseminate the Code of Ethics for the practice of audiology in the Philippines;
- (i) Administer oaths in connection with the implementation of this Act;
- (j) Conduct hearings and investigations to resolve complaints against practitioners of audiology for malpractice, unethical and unprofessional conduct, and violations of this Act or its implementing rules and regulations, and in connection therewith, issue subpoena ad testificandum and subpoena duces tecum and punish with contempt persons obstructing, impeding and/or otherwise interfering with the conduct of such proceedings;
- (k) Conduct ocular inspections of establishments and/or premises where audiologic services are offered to ascertain that professional standards are complied with;
- (l) Upon application, to issue an order enjoining or abating the illegal practice of audiology by unqualified persons;
- (m) Impose fines and penalties, after due process and in accordance with the provision of this Act, for causes provided for by law or by the rules and regulations promulgated therefor;
- (n) Evaluate periodically the status of audiologic education and recommend and/or adopt measures to upgrade and maintain its high standards; and
- (p) Study the conditions affecting the practice of audiology in all parts of the Philippines, and, whenever necessary, adopt such measures as may be deemed proper for the maintenance of good ethics and high professional standards of audiologic practice.

Sec. 13. Quorum in Board Meetings. — The attendance of three (3) members shall constitute a quorum for the Board to officially transact business.

Sec. 14. Votes Required in Administrative Cases. — To render a decision in an administrative case for unethical practice, malpractice, immorality, dishonesty, and related charges affecting the professional fitness and integrity of an audiologist or audiometrician, the vote of three (3) members must be obtained: *Provided*, That in case members are disqualified to vote by virtue of their relation to or interest in any of the parties or voluntarily inhibits themselves from participating in the proceedings, the Board shall designate, with the approval of the Commission, an audiologist in good standing who is respected in the audiologic community for their probity and integrity to sit in the Board, participate in the proceedings and vote on the case.

Sec. 15. Supervision of the Board and Custody of its Records. — The members of the Board shall be under the general supervision of the PRC. All records, including examination papers, examination results, minutes of deliberations, records of administrative cases and investigation of the Board shall be kept by the said Commission.

Sec. 16. Annual Report. — The Board shall, at the end of each calendar year, submit to the Commission an annual report of its activities and proceedings during the year. Other

information or data may be requested by the Commission as often as may be necessary and practicable.

SECTION IV THE AUDIOLOGY BOARD EXAMINATIONS

Sec. 17. Licensure Examination. — Every applicant seeking to be registered as an audiologist shall undergo an examination as provided in this Act. Examinations for the practice of audiology or limited practice of audiometry in the Philippines shall be given by the Board at least once every year in such places and dates as the PRC may designate.

Sec. 18. Scope of Examination. — The Board of Audiology shall prescribe the scope and prepare the contents of the licensure examinations. In the discharge of this function, the Board shall take into account recent developments in audiology and audiometry as well as the academic standards imposed by the Commission on Higher Education on educational institutions which offer a course in audiology.

Sec. 19. Requirements for Examination of Applicants. — To be eligible to take the licensure examination in audiology, the applicant must be:

(a) A Filipino citizen;

(b) Of good moral character;

(c) A holder of at least the degree of Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Audiology or its equivalent or higher degree (such as Master in Clinical Audiology, M.Clin.Aud.; Master of Audiology, M.Aud.; Doctor of Audiology, Au.D.; Doctor of Philosophy in Audiology, PhD; or Doctor of Science in Audiology, D.Sc.) obtained from a school, college, university or institution duly accredited or recognized by the government, with coursework inclusive of the following minimum basic subject areas: mathematics; human biology; chemistry; biochemistry; physics; psychology; sociology; history, English and Filipino; and the following Audiology Major Subject areas: anatomy and physiology of speech and hearing; basic acoustics for speech and hearing; introduction to disorders of speech and hearing processes (pathophysiology); introduction to audiology, hearing loss and audiometry; normal speech and language acquisition and development; introduction to language and communication disorders; psychology of language; clinical methods in audiology; aural habilitation, rehabilitation and amplification; Philippine sign language; audiology ethics and jurisprudence; audiology economics and practice management; environmental and public health audiology; pediatric audiology; audiology practicum one and two and audiology research methods.

Sec. 20. Minimum Passing Level. — In order that the candidate may be considered to have successfully passed the examination, he or she must have obtained a general average of at least seventy-five percent (75%) in all subjects, with no rating below fifty percent (50%) in any subject.

Sec. 21. Report of the Result of the Examination. — The Board shall report the ratings obtained by each candidate to the PRC within sixty (60) days after the last examination day,

unless extended by the Commission. The PRC shall cause the publication of the names of successful candidates in alphabetical order, without the ratings obtained by each, within sixty (60) days of the date the Commission receives the aforementioned report from the Board.

Sec. 22. Additional Requirement for Reexamination. — Any applicant who, for the third time, fails to pass the board examination shall not be allowed to take the next succeeding examination without submitting to the Board proof that he or she has taken a refresher course in a duly accredited institute.

SECTION V REGISTRATION AND LICENSURE OF AUDIOLOGISTS

Sec. 23. Oath of Audiologists. — All successful examinees shall be required to take their oath before the Board or before any person authorized to administer oaths prior to the issuance of the certificate of registration: *Provided, however,* That the applicant is not disqualified under any of the provisions of Section 24 hereof.

Sec. 24. Disqualification. — The following applicants shall not be allowed to take their oath as audiologists nor issued certificates of registration:

- (a) Those who do not possess the qualifications set forth in Section 19 of this Act;
- (b) Those who fail to pass the Audiology Board licensure examination;
- (c) Those who have been convicted by final judgment of any crime involving moral turpitude by any court;
- (d) Those who have been found guilty by the Board of immoral or dishonorable conduct; and
- (e) Those who have been declared to be of unsound mind.

Such fact of disqualification shall be communicated by the Board to the applicant by written statement, which statement shall form part of the records of the Board.

Sec. 25. Registration. — The PRC shall register successful examinees who have taken their oath and thereafter grant them professional licenses to practice audiology. The certificate of registration shall be considered as evidence that the registrant is qualified to practice audiology in the Philippines.

Sec. 26. Registration Without Taking Licensure Examination. A person who possesses the pertinent qualifications listed below pursuant to the provisions of this act may be registered without examination:

- (a) Was a doctoral, masters or bachelors degree holder in Audiology from a recognized institution with at least three (3) years of teaching Audiology courses and/or audiology practice in the Philippines for the same period; or
- (b) Was a PRC duly-registered Doctor of Medicine in the Philippines and fully certified Diplomate of the Philippine Board of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery with at least five (5) years clinical experience in the practice of audiology in the Philippines; or

(c) Had passed at least eighteen (18) units of tertiary level (doctoral, masteral or baccalaureate) courses in Audiology and had at least seven (7) years of clinical experience in audiology.

Provided, That the applicant files with the Board within three (3) years after its creation, an application for registration, issuance of a Certificate of Registration and Professional Identification Card by submitting credentials showing that the applicant was a member of good standing in the Philippine Society of Audiology for three years before the effectivity of this Act

Sec. 27. Accreditation. — The Board of Audiology shall grant certificates of accreditation for the limited practice audiometry to successful examinees. It shall serve as proof that the person is accredited for the limited practice of audiometry in the Philippines under the supervision of an Audiologist in good standing.

Sec. 28. Revocation of Certificates and Suspension of Professional Licenses. — The Board may, after giving proper notice and hearing to the party concerned, revoke an audiologist's certificate of registration or suspend his or her license to practice for any unprofessional or unethical conduct, malpractice, or violation of any of the provisions of this Act or its rules and regulations, or upon the conviction of the audiologist of a crime involving moral turpitude. The same applies to an audiometrician's certificate of accreditation.

Sec. 29. Appeals. — The revocation of a certificate or suspension of a professional license by the Board shall become final unless appealed to the PRC within fifteen (15) days from receipt of the decision.

Sec. 30. Reinstatement, Reissuance or Replacement of Certificates. — The Board may, upon application and for reasons deemed proper and sufficient, reinstate any suspended certificate of registration or accreditation, or issue another certificate in lieu of one previously revoked, and in so doing it may, in its discretion, exempt the applicant from taking another examination.

A new certificate to replace any certificate lost, destroyed or mutilated may be issued subject to the rules that may be implemented by the Board.

Sec. 31. Renewal of Professional Licenses. — All licenses shall be renewable every three (3) years and shall be considered renewed only upon satisfying the requirements imposed by the Board, such as attendance in continuing education programs and payment of the corresponding fees as may be fixed by the Board in accordance with the schedule of fees fixed by the PRC.

SECTION VI AUDIOLOGIC EDUCATION

Sec. 32. The Technical Panel on Audiologic Education. — To attain the objective of upgrading Audiologic education in the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education, pursuant to Section 12 of Republic Act No. 7722 shall, within sixty (60) days after the approval of this Act, convene and organize a technical panel on audiologic education. For this purpose, senior practitioners, specialists, academicians in the field of audiology and a

representative from the Philippine Society of Audiology as the accredited national organization of audiologists shall be appointed and tapped to assist in the following:

(a) Setting a minimum standard curriculum for the study of audiology to be implemented in all schools offering audiology as an undergraduate course and degree;

(b) Establishing teaching standards, including the qualifications of members of the faculty of schools and colleges of audiology.

(c) Monitoring the progress of the program on the study of audiology and undertaking measures or the attainment of a high quality of audiologic education in the country; and

(d) Evaluating periodically the performance of educational institutions offering audiologic education for the purpose of granting accreditation and incentives as well as for the imposition of sanctions when warranted.

SECTION VII PROHIBITED ACTS AND PENALTIES

Sec. 33. Prohibited Acts. — The following acts are prohibited:

(a) Giving false or forged evidence of any kind to the Board or to any member thereof for the purpose of obtaining a certification of registration or a professional license.

(b) Assumption, use or advertisement by a person, not holding a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional license in accordance with this Act, of a description, in connection with his name or title, tending to convey the impression that he or she is a duly registered audiologist.

(c) Any form of advertisement in media outlets giving information and impression to the public that the particular audiologist is better than the others, is collecting lower professional fees or selling cheaper hearing aids or devices;

(d) Engaging in unauthorized practice of audiology as defined in Section 5 of this Act; and

(g) Violation by any person, whether natural or juridical, of any of the provisions of this Act and the rules and regulations promulgated for its effective implementation.

Sec. 34. Penal Provisions. — The commission of any of the prohibited acts listed in the immediately preceding section shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than one (1) year but not more than eight (8) years, or a fine of not less than Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) but not more than One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the court.

In addition, the administrative penalties specified in Section 27 hereof shall be imposed whenever applicable. (Check does this refer to Section 28)

If the violation is committed by an association, partnership, corporation or any other institution, the managing officers and other persons responsible for its commission shall be liable for the penalties provided for in this Act.

SECTION VIII

PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

Sec. 35. Foreign Reciprocity. — No foreigner shall be admitted to the audiology board examinations unless he or she proves in the manner prescribed by the Rules of Court that by specific provision of law, the country of which s/he is a citizen, subject or national, either admits Filipino citizens to the practice of audiology without restriction, or allows them to practice audiology after an examination on terms of strict and absolute equality with citizens, subjects or nationals of said country, including the unconditional recognition of prerequisite degrees prescribed by the Commission on Higher Education: *Provided, however,* That the Board, upon approval by the PRC, may grant a special permit to a foreign audiologist to practice the profession in this country whether or not reciprocity exists between his or her country and the Philippines and under such conditions as may be determined by the Board, if such foreigner is internationally known to be an outstanding expert in the profession or a well-known specialist in any of its branches, and that his or her services will promote the advancement of the profession in the Philippines. The Board is also hereby authorized to prescribe, upon approval by the PRC, additional requirements or grant certain privileges to foreigners, seeking registration in the Philippines if the same privileges are granted to or some additional requirements are required of citizens of the Philippines in acquiring the same certificate in his country.

Sec. 36. Rules and Regulations. — The Board shall set professional standards for the practice of audiology in the Philippines and adopt such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act, subject to the approval of the PRC. Such standards, rules and regulations shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or any newspaper of general circulation.

Sec. 37. Integration of Audiologists. — In order for every audiologist to contribute to his or her profession and to bear his or her share of professional responsibilities, all audiologists shall be encouraged to join and be integrated into one national organization, the Philippine Society of Audiology, which shall be recognized by the Board and the PRC. Every audiologist, upon registration with the Board, may become a member of the integrated national organization. Those who have been registered with the Board before the effectivity of this Act may register as members of the integrated organization within three (3) years after said effectivity.

Sec. 38. Purposes. — The integrated national organization of Audiologists- Philippine Society of Audiology shall promulgate the Code of Ethics for the practice of the profession, define the professional responsibilities of its members, ensure adherence to said professional ethics and responsibilities, improve the standards of the profession and enable all audiologists to discharge their public responsibility more effectively.

Sec. 39. Membership Fees and Dues. — All members shall be subject to the payment of reasonable fees and dues for the effective discharge of the purposes of the integrated national organization, the Philippine Society of Audiology. An audiologist shall receive the benefits and privileges appurtenant to his or her membership only upon payment of the required membership fees and dues.

Sec. 40. Other Organizations. — The integration of audiologists into one national organization — the Philippine Society of Audiology, shall not prohibit the creation of other associations of audiologists organized by individual audiologists themselves.

Sec. 41. Code of Professional Ethics. — The Board shall adopt the Professional Code of Ethics promulgated by the integrated national organization of audiologists- the Philippine Society of Audiology; Provided, that such Code provides that it is the duty of an audiologist to:

- (a) Consider as his or her primary responsibility the auditory welfare of the public;
- (b) Promote the best possible standards of professional care;
- (c) Enhance continuously his or her theoretical and practical proficiency;
- (d) Render his or her services with equal diligence to all, regardless of race, creed or status;
- (e) Respect the confidential nature of information concerning those he or she serves; and
- (f) Refer for medical or other professional attention where the need is indicated.

The Board shall also distribute the Code of Ethics of the Audiologic Profession in the Philippines to all new audiologists during their oath-taking.

Any act or omission which violates this Code shall be considered as unethical conduct and shall be suspended or prohibited from the practice of audiology, in accordance with Section 27 of this Act. (Check does this refer to Section 28)

SECTION IX MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 42. Funding Provisions. - The Chairperson of the Commission shall include in the Commission's Programs the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 43. Assistance of Law Enforcement Agency. - Any law enforcement agency shall, upon call or request of the Commission or the Board, render assistance in enforcing this Act, including all the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder by prosecuting the violators thereof in accordance with law and the Rules of Court.

Sec. 44. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act,

Subject to the approval of the Commission, the Board shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations, in coordination with the integrated and accredited professional organization (the Philippine Society of Audiology), to implement the provisions of this Act, which shall be effective after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or two Philippine newspapers of general circulation.

Sec. 45. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act or the application of such provision to any person or circumstances is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or the application of such provisions to other persons or circumstance shall not be affected by such declaration.

Sec. 46. Repealing Clause. — This Act repeals and supersedes all other acts, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, which are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 47. Effectivity Clause. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,