Health Care – from ASHA website

Can I bill for services provided by a graduate student clinician?

In the ASHA Issues in Ethics statement on Fees for Clinical Services Provided by Students and Clinical Fellows, it states that "Principle of Ethics II, Rule A of the Code of Ethics recognizes the professional acceptability of appropriately supervised clinical practice by student clinicians and clinical fellows in training." Therefore, billing for such services is allowable, provided those services meet or exceed professional standards of supervision.

Payers differ in their regulations regarding paying for services provided by student clinicians. Medicare coverage of student clinicians differs depending on setting and whether the person is a Part A or Part B beneficiary. To find out the requirements for private payers, it is best to contact them directly as each will differ and may or may not follow Medicare's regulations.

Do I need to supervise the student more for swallowing cases than other disorders?

Supervision requirements do not differ based on disorder or patient population. The amount of supervision provided should meet or exceed minimum requirements and should be based on the individual needs of the student and the welfare of the client/patient being treated. Many student clinicians will come to the facility with minimal experience in swallowing, simply because swallowing disorders are not commonly seen in the university clinic setting. These student clinicians may require additional supervision to develop competencies in this area.

Are criminal background checks required for student clinicians?

The need to conduct a criminal background check depends on state law and the facility's policy. Part of this decision is whether or not the state law specifies student clinicians as a category of personnel who are required to
have a background check. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations expects background checks to be done in accordance with such laws.

**Under HIPAA, can I share personal health information with a student or do I need to get authorization from the patient or family?**

HIPAA regulations were designed so as not to impede the provision of normal health care operations. "Health care operations", as defined in regulation, includes "conducting training programs in which students, trainees, or practitioners in areas of health care learn under supervision to practice or improve their skills as health care providers." (retrieved from http://www.hhs.gov/hipaafaq/limited/209.html on June 18, 2007).

Student clinicians will need to learn about HIPAA regulations and should be introduced to the facility's HIPAA policies and procedures. Facilities may require that student clinicians receive HIPAA training as part of their orientation. Student clinicians are expected to abide by the privacy rule regulations just as any employee in the facility.

**Do I need to have the patient or family sign a consent form to allow the student to work with them?**

Most health care facilities that allow for student trainees include a statement in their consent forms that services may be provided by a student clinician under the supervision of a qualified professional. The inclusion and wording of such statements will be influenced by relevant state laws and facility policies.

The ASHA Code of Ethics stipulates that the clinician "shall not misrepresent their credentials, competence, education, training, or experience (Principle of Ethics III, Rule A)." Student clinicians and supervisors should identify themselves appropriately to patients and families at all times. For more
information, see the Issues in Ethics statement "Fees for Clinical Services Provided by Students and Clinical Fellows", for more information.)

**How do I convince my administration to allow me to supervise student clinicians? What are the cost benefits of supervising student clinicians?**

ASHA developed Frequently Asked Questions on What Administrators Need to Know [PDF] that can be used to frame discussions with health care administrators about supervising student clinicians.

The main issues have to do with personnel shortages and staff development. If a student is exposed to speech-language pathology services in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, home care, or private practice, they may become part of the pool of appropriately-trained, qualified professionals from which facilities can recruit when they have open positions. In 2007, ASHA conducted a focus group with SLPs on the topic of externship supervision. Participants generally agreed that externships influenced a student's thinking about job choice and that graduate education programs can be used as a recruiting tool.

Supervising student clinicians also benefits the supervising SLP in a number of ways, including:

- Keeping up with current information in the field
- Sharpening clinical skills by teaching others
- Stronger relationships with university programs
- A sense of "giving back" to the profession

In speech-language pathology, as in any field, it is as important to keep good employees as it is to find new ones. While there may be some impact on the SLP's productivity and the facility's bottom line for speech services when the SLP supervises a graduate student clinician, it is unlikely that the impact will cost as much as recruiting and hiring new staff. Estimates on the cost of personnel turnover run as high as 1/3 of a new hire's annual salary to replace an employee ([U.S. Department of Labor](https://www.dol.gov), retrieved June 18, 2007).
Happy employees tend to stay with an employer. Giving SLPs the opportunity to grow professionally and personally by supervising a student clinician is one way of improving morale and ultimately retaining that SLP.