

Testimony of the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology

**Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Friday, March 21, 2025
9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 229 and Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
G.M. 706, SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION
TO THE BOARD OF SPEECH PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY,
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, DR. BRIAN CHEN,
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2029**

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Christopher Fernandez, and I am the Executive Officer of the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology (Board). The Board supports the reappointment of Brian Chen, M.D., to the Board as a public member.

Dr. Chen has been licensed as a physician in this state since August 13, 2018, and his license is current, valid, and in good standing. Dr. Chen is highly qualified to serve on the Board, having completed his clinical fellowship for neurotology and skull base surgery at the House Ear Clinic in Los Angeles, California, and his otolaryngology and head and neck surgery residency at Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Washington. Dr. Chen is currently a major in the Medical Corps of the United States Army and is stationed at the Tripler Army Medical Center (Tripler). He has undertaken several roles at Tripler, including Assistant Chief of Otolaryngology, Medical Director of Audiology Services, and Director of the Cochlear Implant Program. Previously, Dr. Chen served in various otolaryngology positions at the William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso, Texas. His education and professional experience across the country offer a diverse and meaningful perspective to the Board.

Dr. Chen has served on the Board since 2020, attending all meetings as the sole public member on the Board. His professional history of working closely with audiologists, as well as Speech Pathologists, continues to make him a collaborative and supportive member of the Board. In addition, his desire to continue serving on the Board and commitment to actively participate in board meetings will greatly enhance the Board's effectiveness.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

9 April 2025
Denby K. F. Rall



Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Denby K. F. Rall, and I am the Chief of Audiology at Tripler Army Medical Center as well as the Vice Chair of the The Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology. I support the confirmation of Dr. Brian Chen's continued appointment to the Board as a licensed member.

I have had the pleasure of working with Dr. Chen at Tripler Army Medical Center, where he works as a board certified Otolaryngologist, Neurotologist. Dr. Chen has served as the chief of Otolaryngology as well as the director for the residency program. Dr. Chen's knowledge of the education standards of training, the practice of Otolaryngology in private, and the breadth of his experience working with speech pathologist, and audiologists will contribute to a well-rounded perspective for the Board.

In his current appointment on the Board, Dr. Chen has had the opportunity to provide crucial insights to Board dealings, including but not limited to the review of complex applications for licensure, support developing administrative rule amendments and legislative testimony. In addition, his desire to serve on the Board and commitment to actively participate in board meetings enhances the Board's effectiveness and has greatly served the public and increased the accountability and reliability of the Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Thank you & best wishes,

Denby K. F. Rall

Vice Chair, Speech Pathology and Audiology Board
Chief, Audiology, TAMC

LATE

April 9th 2025

To: Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

Hearing Date/Time: 4/11/25 9:30A

RE: GM 706 – Letter of Support for Dr. Brian S. Chen’s Continued Appointment to the Hawai’i State Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology

Dear Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to offer my strongest support for Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Brian S. Chen, MD, in his continued appointment to the Hawai’i State Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology under GM 706.

Dr. Chen brings an extraordinary depth of clinical expertise, leadership, and public service to the Board. He currently serves as the Program Director for the Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery Residency Program at Tripler Army Medical Center, where he is also the Medical Director of the Audiology Service, which includes Speech Pathology. Previously, he served as the Chief of Otolaryngology at both Tripler and William Beaumont Army Medical Centers, where he founded the first cochlear implant program in El Paso, Texas.

His extensive training, including a fellowship in Neurotology at the renowned House Ear Clinic in Los Angeles, along with dual board certifications in General Otolaryngology and Neurotology, uniquely positions him to contribute to the regulation and advancement of speech and hearing health in Hawai’i. He is a published academic with more than 20 peer-reviewed publications, an Assistant Professor of Surgery at the Uniformed Services University, and a respected lecturer at national forums.

Beyond his professional qualifications, Dr. Chen is a decorated Army officer and West Point graduate who embodies service, integrity, and excellence. His deep understanding of both the civilian and military health systems provides a valuable and diverse perspective on the Board.

Dr. Chen's continued presence on the Hawai’i State Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology would ensure the Board benefits from both his clinical acumen and his steadfast commitment to public health. I urge your favorable consideration of his reappointment under GM 706.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information.

With appreciation for your leadership,

Warmest regards,



SUNNY CHEN, MBA, RN, IBCLC | Executive Director



April 9, 2025
Erin Firmin

LATE

Re: Testimony for the Confirmation of the Appointment of Dr. Brian Chen for The Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Erin Firmin, and I am the Speech-Language Pathologist V in the Leilehua-Mililani-Waialua Complex Area of the State of Hawaii Department of Education and the current Chair of The Speech Pathology and Audiology Board. I support the confirmation of Dr. Brian Chen's appointment to the Board as a licensed, public member.

Dr. Chen currently practices as a board-certified and licensed Otorhinolaryngologist, Neurotologist at Tripler Army Medical Center. He is the attending Neurotologist for the Tripler Otolaryngology Resident program as well as the Neurotologist for the Hawaii Ear Clinic, Hawaii Permanente Medical Group, and Southwest Ear Nose and Throat Consultants. Additionally he provides services as an Otolaryngologist at the Queen's Medical Center Emergency ENT and Trauma team. He contributes to his professional field by conducting research, teaching residents, and reviewing journal articles.

I have had the pleasure of serving on The Speech Pathology and Audiology Board with Dr. Chen for the past few years. His experience and knowledge have provided crucial insights to the Board's agenda items, including but not limited to, the establishment of provisional licensure process for speech pathologists, reviewing complex licensure applications, and drafting legislative testimony on a variety of bills. His desire to volunteer his time to serve on the Board and his commitment to actively participate in the Board's meetings strengthens the Board's effectiveness.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Erin Firmin, MS. CCC-SLP, BCBA, LBA