

# Tennessee Council for Hearing Instrument Specialists



## Newsletter



2016

A Regulatory Agency of the State of Tennessee

Fall

665 Mainstream Drive, Nashville, TN 37243 <http://tn.gov/health> (615) 741-7535 or 1-800-778-4123  
Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Central Time (except state and federal holidays) Fax: (615) 532-5369

In conjunction with the purpose and goals of the Department of Health, the Mission of the Bureau of Health Licensure and Regulation is to: Monitor, access and enforce health care laws and regulations; Protect, promote and enhance quality health care for all citizens; Continuously strive to meet the needs of our customers in a respectful and caring manner; Provide quality work-life necessary to attract and retain competent, caring employees; Empower our employees to become entrepreneurs in their jobs; Increase awareness and public confidence in our services; and, Utilize our resources efficiently and cost effectively.

### 2017 Board Meeting Dates

January 20, 2017  
9 a.m. CT, Poplar Room

May 12, 2017  
9 a.m. CT, Poplar Room

September 22, 2017  
9 a.m. CT, Poplar Room



**All board meetings will be held at 665 Mainstream Drive, Nashville TN, unless otherwise noted.**

### Live Streaming Video

If you would like to see your board “in action” but can’t attend a meeting in person, you can now watch the board meeting on your computer through live streaming video. The link is:

<https://web.nowuseeit.tn.gov/Mediasite/Catalog/Full/98fe21d561e9489487745f0c7da678b221>. After you access the page, go to the board meeting you wish to view and click on that particular link.

### Practical Exam Updates

The Council has contracted with the International Hearing Society to provide the practical test to apprentices and new applicants. The exam has been given twice as of this writing. Both examinees and proctors are complimentary of the new process. Please contact Charles Custer, the Board Administrator, for more information.

### Proctors Needed

If you are interested in proctoring one of the practical exams, please contact Charles Custer, the Board Administrator. Requirements are: hold a valid unencumbered license in the State of Tennessee and hold NBC/HIS certification.

### Statistical Information

Profession	Total Number	Last 12 Months
Hearing Instrument Specialists	140	29
Apprentices	24	N/A

## BOARD DISCIPLINARY ACTION AVAILABLE ONLINE

The Tennessee Department of Health issues a monthly media release listing all disciplinary actions taken by the health related boards during the prior month. All action taken by the Board of Medical Examiners is viewable online at:  
<http://health.state.tn.us/Boards/disciplinary.htm>

## RULE AMENDMENTS



There have been no amendments to the rules in 2016. There are several rules amendments being considered, so check the board webpage for updates on rulemaking hearings.

## LAWS you need to KNOW Legislative Updates - 2016

### Public Chapter 763

Permits licensees whose licenses from a health-related board have expired due to non-payment to obtain reinstatement on the payment of the renewal fee as well as the late payment fee which shall not exceed twice the renewal fee, instead of the current requirement of payment of all past due fees before reinstatement. This act will take effect on July 1, 2016.

### Public Chapter 990

This legislation requires an insurer to reimburse and provide coverage for telehealth services provided by a practitioner licensed in Tennessee, regardless of the patient's location. This act will take effect on January 1, 2017.

### Public Chapter 612

Extends the Council for Licensing of Hearing Instrument Specialists six years to June 30, 2022. It also establishes a minimum attendance requirement for the committee members and requires removal of members who miss more than fifty percent (50%) of the scheduled meetings in a calendar year. This act was effective upon the Governor's signature on March 22, 2016.

### Public Chapter 811

This legislation specifies that the national board for certification of hearing instrument sciences (NBC-HIS) is no longer the accepted examination for licensure, and that the council may contract with other testing organizations for

equivalent examinations. It also makes changes relative to applicants applying for an apprentice license. Applicants, that meet the age and education requirements, are no longer required to pass a state written and practical proficiency test. This act was effective upon the Governor's signature on April 14, 2016.

## Council Operations Fee

Please remember to pay the Council Operations Fee, a non-refundable fee to be paid by each hearing instrument specialist which is still in effect. This fee shall be paid by the last day in the licensee's birth month in the non-renewal year. **This fee shall expire at midnight on December 31, 2016.**

## Council for Hearing Instrument Specialists Website

You may download a copy of the rules, applications and forms, board member list, board meeting schedule, policy statements, and other pertinent information at the board's web site: <http://tn.gov/health/topic/HIS-board>



## Have you moved/changed your name?

Must be reported in writing or by e-mail to the board's office within 30 days! Please include the following:

- your name and license number;
- your profession;
- your old address and phone number;
- your new address and phone number, e-mail address, and/or your fax number; and your signature!
- If your name has changed due to marriage or divorce, you must send a copy of the document that made the change in status.

Keeping the board's administrative staff up to date on your location facilitates the timely notification to you of important information such as your application for licensure renewal and important statutory and rule changes.

A form for the change of address/name can be found at:

<http://tn.gov/health/article/HIS-applications>

You may fax your change to the board's administrative office at (615) 532-5369 or by mail at: 665 Mainstream Drive, Nashville, TN 37243.

## Continuing Education Requirements

### Basic Requirements:

#### Continuing Education

1. Each licensee registered with the Council is required to successfully complete twenty (20) hours of continuing education during the two (2) calendar years (January 1 - December 31) that precede the licensure renewal year.

2. Two (2) hours of the twenty (20) hour requirement shall pertain to Tennessee statutes and rules concerning hearing instrument specialists.

(b) Calibration Certificates - Each licensee registered with the Council is required to retain calibration of equipment certificates for each audiometer used at his/her place of business during the calendar year.

(c) Bills of Sale - Each licensee registered with the Council is required to retain copies of bills of sale for each hearing aid sold at his/her place of business during the calendar year.

## Policy Statements

### Continuing Education

The Tennessee Council for Licensing Hearing Instrument Specialists requires each licensee to successfully complete twenty (20) hours of continuing education during the two (2) calendar years (January 1 – December 31) that precede the licensure renewal year. Two (2) of the twenty (20) hour requirement shall pertain to Tennessee statutes and rules concerning hearing instrument specialists.

In the event a licensee is found to be deficient in the number of required continuing education (CE) hours for a particular year, that person will be required to pay a one-time civil penalty of Fifty Dollars (\$50.00) for each hour deficient and make up the deficient hours.

The civil penalty must be paid, and all deficient CE hours must be taken and documented by the Board, within ninety (90) days after Department staff mails the licensee a notice of deficiency.

Notice of discipline for CE deficiency will be assessed by the Department via Agreed Citation, which will detail the licensee's rights and obligations under the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, T.C.A. §§ 4-5-301, et seq. The discipline assessed in accordance with this continuing education policy constitutes formal discipline against a practitioner's license and as such will be reported to the disciplinary data bank and will be noted on the practitioner's licensure profile.

If such licensee fails to pay the civil penalty and demonstrate that he or she has cured the CE deficiency within the calendar year in which he receives notification, the Department will file a licensure complaint and the licensee will be prosecuted in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, T.C.A. §§ 4-5-301, et seq.

## Lapsed License - NEW

The Tennessee Council for Licensing Hearing Instrument Specialists (Council) recognizes that an individual may inadvertently allow his/her license to expire. However, applicable law prohibits an individual from working unless he/she has an active license. While the Council does not condone an individual working on an expired license, the Council recognizes that these inadvertent lapses can occur. As such, the Council has adopted the following procedures for reinstatement of an expired license.

1. Immediately upon recognition that his/her license has expired, the individual must cease practicing and contact the Council's administrative office to request a reinstatement application.

2. Upon receipt of the reinstatement application, the individual is to complete the application in its entirety, providing a detailed work history since the license expiration date. The application is to be signed, notarized, and returned to the Council's administrative office along with any additional information and all fees specified in the instructions.

3. Upon receipt of a completed reinstatement application, supporting documentation (including any required proof of continuing education), and the applicant's payment of all fees, the Council's administrator may reinstate a license which has been in an expired status for less than thirty (30) calendar days immediately. Although the Council and administrative staff recognize the applicant's urgent interest in having his or her license reinstated, preferential treatment will not be given to these applicants. All applications are reviewed in the order in which they are received.

4. If the work history reflects that the individual has practiced in excess of thirty (30) calendar days, but less than six (6) months on an expired license, the Council will present to the licensee, an Agreed Citation which specifies payment of a fine in the amount of \$100.00 per month for every month in which the individual has worked at least one day beyond the thirty (30) calendar day grace period. The individual's license will not be reinstated unless and until the Agreed Citation is executed by the licensee and payment of the fine remitted to the Council's administrative office.

A. The licensee shall be notified that all Agreed Citations prepared in accordance with this policy shall be reportable on the Department of Health's website, its

disciplinary action report issued in the month the action is taken and to all appropriate federal databanks including the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB).

- B. This remedy is only available to those licensees who have practiced on a lapsed license for less than six (6) months from the date the license went into expired status.
5. If the licensee refuses to execute the Agreed Citation and/or remit the civil penalty described therein within sixty (60) days of the date the Agreed Citation is sent to the licensee, or if the licensee practiced on a lapsed license for six (6) months or longer, the licensee shall be referred to the Office of Investigations and Office of General Counsel for formal disciplinary action. Upon a proven violation, the minimum disciplinary action for this violation shall be:
  - A. A formal and reportable Reprimand on the license;
  - B. Assessment of civil penalties in an amount to exceed \$100.00 per month for every month in which the individual has worked at least one day beyond the thirty (30) calendar day grace period;
  - C. Assessment of costs associated with investigating and prosecuting the matter; and
  - D. Any and all other remedies the Council deems appropriate.
6. In the event the matter is referred to the Office of Investigations and Office of General Counsel for formal disciplinary action, the Council's administrative office shall be permitted to reinstate those applicants for whom they have received a completed reinstatement application, supporting documentation (including any required proof of continuing education), and the applicant's payment of all fees, subject to further action on the license as described in paragraph five (5) above. Though the Council's administrator may reinstate such a license upon approval from the Council's consultant, preferential treatment will not be given to these applicants. These applications will be reviewed in the order in which they are received. For those applicants who have declined an Agreed Citation, their application will be deemed received sixty (60) days from the date the Agreed Citation was sent.

**Discipline for lapsed licenses will now be reportable to the national databanks as well as the Department's Disciplinary Action report and will be noted on the practitioner's licensure profile.**

## Electronic Notification for Licensed Health Professionals

On January 1, 2013, a new law became effective requiring all Tennessee health professional boards to provide electronic notices to healthcare professionals they license. The law gives healthcare professionals the option of being notified

electronically of the following: (1) Renewals of license, certification or registration; (2) Any fee increases; (3) Any changes in state law that impact the license holder; and (4) Any board meeting where changes in rules or fees are on the agenda. If a healthcare professional "opts in", the Department of Health will also be able to alert him or her of critical public health matters impacting Tennessee. Please visit [apps.tn.gov/hhrs/begin.jsp](https://apps.tn.gov/hhrs/begin.jsp) and complete the registration process to opt in. Upon receipt of a current email address, those who opt in will begin to receive ALL notices electronically rather than through the United States mail. Please note opting in means license renewal notification will be delivered electronically approximately 45 days in advance of the expiration date. The electronic notice will direct the licensee to the appropriate Web page to renew. For professions that do not permit licensees to renew their licenses online, a paper renewal will continue to be provided. For more information, contact the Health Professional Boards office at 615-741-5735 or toll-free at 1-800-778-4123.

## Renew Your License Online



Whether you receive a paper renewal form or not, you can still renew your license online. This is faster, more convenient, and you can use a credit card to pay the renewal fees. Just go to <https://apps.tn.gov/hhrs/> to renew your license. You may renew up to 70 days prior to the expiration date.

Click the "Licensing Renewal" link where you can renew your license and update your professional license information. *Licensees are responsible for renewing their licenses on time and keeping the Board apprised of current information. It is a violation of the law and of the Board's rules to practice on an expired license.*

**-Step 1: Login** - Select our board and your profession and enter your license number.

**-Step 2: Update your Information** - Change your home and/or office address.

**-Step 3: Enter your renewal information** - Answer all necessary questions, as if you were completing your hard-copy form.

**-Step 4: Payment** - Enter your credit card information through the secure site and choose "submit".

If you have met all of the criteria necessary, your renewal certificate will be mailed to you in approximately one week.

Updated license information will be available on the department's web site within two business days.

## Retirement of License

If you are not practicing in Tennessee and do not wish to renew your license, it is suggested you retire your license rather than have it fall into failed to renew status. A retirement form may be obtained at our website at:

<http://tn.gov/health/article/HIS-applications>

If you do not have access to the internet, you may request a retirement form be mailed to you. **Note: you cannot retire an expired license.**

## OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS



The Office of Investigations is responsible for receiving and processing all complaints for the licensure boards. To file a complaint, please contact the Office of Investigations at 1-800-852-2187 or visit our website at <http://tn.gov/health/article/filing-complaints-against-health-care-professionals> where you may download and print out the complaint form.

## To Contact This Council Call:

(615) 741-5735 local or (800) 778-4123 nationwide  
or write to:

Tennessee Council for Hearing Instrument Specialists  
665 Mainstream Drive  
Nashville, TN 37243

### BOARD MEMBERS

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