



Speech and Hearing Center Outlines Services for Community

6/3/2020

JONESBORO – The Arkansas State University Speech and Hearing Center (ASUSHC) may be one of the institution's best-kept secrets. But, not for much longer.

The center, a part of A-State's College of Nursing and Health Professions, is growing steadily as proven by a recently released productivity report outlining the success and all of the services offered to the community free of charge.

"Our students provide the therapy and are supervised by licensed speech-language pathologists (SLPs)," said Dr. Amy Shollenbarger, chair, Department of Communication Disorders. "The purpose of the ASUSHC is to train our students to become competent SLPs and to provide a service to the community. Keeping that in mind, we try to recruit clients with various communication disorders so our students get experience treating them."

The Speech and Hearing Center is a clinical laboratory where speech-language pathology students gain practicum experience through the supervised delivery of speech, language and hearing services to individuals with communication disorders. The center also contracts with schools and agencies to provide services away from the campus.

During 2019, students and faculty spent more than 4,200 hours providing speech, language and hearing aid to the community, including 1,213 students in private and public schools. In addition, services were provided during the first Special Olympics health screening and student clinicians partnered with Hispanic Community Services in after school programs, placing emphasis on the English language and focusing on improving reading, speaking, writing and spelling in English.

Assisting clients on both a regular basis and for short-term rehabilitation, work by the center's students and faculty increased significantly during the last two years. The center participates in the Healthy Ager project that facilitates hearing health literacy, screening and evaluation to a new group of patrons. The College of Nursing and Health Professions works in conjunction with the Center on Aging-Northeast on this endeavor.

Each Health Ager (adults 65 years and over) is matched with an interdisciplinary team that includes students in physical therapy, nursing, clinical lab science, social work, communication disorders and nutrition. The ASUSHC also runs a literacy intervention program through which evidence-based interventions to improve reading, writing, and spelling are provided to individuals at risk for reading failure.

In all, the ASUSHC conducted more than 3,900 therapy sessions, a 32 percent increase from 2018.

The ASUSHC also established an extended external clinical list in 2019 that included 55 clinical supervisors providing students with instruction and oversight in many clinical settings. New settings added in 2019 included the school districts of Mountain View, Hot Springs, West Plains, Mo., Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, N.Y., National Park Hospital in Hot Springs, and Cox Health in Springfield, Mo.

Initially, ASUSHC closed its doors when the university put all courses online and closed its academic buildings due to COVID-19. Student clinicians gaining experience treating speech, language and swallowing disorders in the on-campus clinic had to abruptly inform their patients that they would not be able to finish the semester. Following a two week period of planning and retooling, the ASUSHC reopened by delivering services through telepractice. Graduate students and their faculty supervisors work together with their patients using a HIPAA-secure video chat format.

Students rely on the A-State on-campus clinic for practical experiences as they learn to become speech-language pathologists. Patients of the clinic receive treatment from graduate student clinicians, free of charge, under the direction of certified speech-language pathologists. The telepractice model will ensure that students make progress toward their degree with the goal of an on-time graduation, in spite of clinical opportunities being difficult to manage during the pandemic. Arianne Pait, director of the clinic, is looking for new client referrals. No special equipment other than a laptop or smartphone is required.

To obtain more information about A-State's Speech and Hearing Center services and treatment, one may contact Shollenbarger, ashollenbarger@AState.edu, or Pait, director of clinical services, apait@AState.edu. The office number is (870) 972-3106.

###

This and other news releases also available at: AState.edu/news

University Communications
Arkansas State University
news@AState.edu

"Arkansas State University educates leaders, enhances intellectual growth and enriches lives."