



Board of Examiners of Psychologists

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

Crystal L. Barksdale, Chair – Lorraine Smith, Executive Director
4201 Patterson Avenue, Baltimore MD 21215 Phone: 410-764-4786

February 24, 2022

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
121 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 911 - Health Occupations – Psychologists - Doctoral Degrees - Letter of Concern

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland Board of Examiners of Psychologists (the Board) is submitting this Letter of Concern on House Bill (HB) 911 - Health Occupations – Psychologists - Doctoral Degrees.

HB 911 appears to lower the requirements for licensure to practice as a clinical psychologist in Maryland by reducing the education, practicum experience, and supervision that is needed to provide the highest level of mental health services.

The Board supports the expansion of qualified psychologists. However, it is equally essential that the quality of mental health services provided to Marylanders is not compromised. HB 911 presents many variables that can lower the current standard of care and reduce the protection of the public:

- The admission requirements for re-specialization programs vary, leaving it up to the re-specialization programs to determine the requirements.
- Less clinical-based coursework and supervision than the "traditional" route.
- A certificate is received after completion, instead of a doctoral degree in psychology approved by the American Psychological Association.

Again, the Board supports the expansion of qualified mental health practitioners and will continue to examine this issue to determine what safeguards might be put in place to accomplish this goal. However, to ensure that the same or a higher level of mental health services are provided, the Board respectfully asks that you consider this information and agree that the risk of compromising the quality of mental health services may be greater than the intent of HB 911.

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Lorraine Smith, Executive Director at Lorraine.smith@maryland.gov or at 410-764-4786.

Sincerely,

Crystal L. Barksdale, Ph.D., MPH

Chair, MD Board of Examiners of Psychologists

cc: Delegate Bagnall

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.