

HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OCCUPATIONS COMMITTEE

Bill: House Bill 0911 – Health Occupations – Psychologists – Doctoral Degrees

Position: Support with Sponsor Amendment

Hearing Date: February 24th, 2022

Dear Members of the Committee:

I am writing this letter on behalf of myself and number other residents of Maryland with Doctoral Degrees in Psychology that are not from “practice-oriented” programs, meaning clinical, counseling, or school psychology. We have been unable to meet licensure requirements in Maryland since we graduated after 2018 due to the discontinuation of the nationwide National Register Joint Designation program and equivalency assessments. Given the need to increase the mental health workforce, we strongly encourage you to **SUPPORT House Bill 0911 – Health Occupations – Psychologists – Doctoral Degrees, with the sponsor amendment.** It will allow those of us who desire to provide clinical services to the residents of Maryland, as licensed psychologists, to meet the educational requirements by adding another specialty on top of our current doctoral degree.

The CDC states that from 2020-2030 the need for clinical psychologists is approximately 13,400 clinical psychologists a year are needed. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), their accredited doctoral degree programs and internships will produce approximately 4,650 a year by 2023. This will only meet about 35% of yearly need. With the addition of doctoral respecialization programs, this number will be able to increase more rapidly to meet the need, because about half the doctoral degree graduates in psychology per year are from non “practice-oriented” programs. This would allow those individuals, like us, to pursue post-doctoral respecializations in “practice oriented” psychology. Moreover, the respecialization programs, as specified in this legislation, are already able to meet educational requirements for licensure in 40 other states and are accepted by the VA, Military, Defense Department, and other federal agencies as meeting educational requirements for clinical psychologist positions.

The post-doctoral respecialization programs that this bill would allow to meet the education requirements for licensure as a psychologist in Maryland are a significant undertaking, involving the completion of an additional 3-5 years of education and training. And, the only post-doctoral respecialization certificates that would meet this bill’s criteria are offered by the same departments who have a doctoral degree program that is “practice oriented” and holds accreditation by the American Psychological Association or Canadian Psychological Association. This requirement ensures that those who seek a respecialization meet the same standards as those who graduated from doctoral degree programs that were accredited by the American Psychological Association or Canadian Psychological Association. Moreover, as of 2019, American Psychological Association’s policy is to encourage respecialization programs that meet the criteria outlined in this legislation.

For these reasons, we ask the committee to **favorably report on House Bill 0911 – Health Occupations – Psychologists – Doctoral Degrees, with the sponsor amendment.**

Sincerely,

Mark Trullinger, PhD, BCN, QEEG-D, Registered Psychology Associate