



House Bill 3355

This bill will allow for specially trained and certified psychologists to prescribe mental health drugs from a limited formulary in a medical setting.

Background

Oregon faces a critical shortage of well-trained professionals who can diagnose and effectively treat mental illness - 48% of Oregonians do not have access to a psychiatric prescriber and the need is increasing.

Strategies to accommodate for this shortage – including telemedicine and psychiatric extenders in the community - are insufficient. Communities need in-person, professionally trained psychiatric prescribers who can develop relationships with patients and facilitate prescribing and treatment.

Louisiana, New Mexico, Illinois, Guam and Iowa have extended prescribing to psychologists and safely increased access to quality mental health services, especially to underserved rural areas and populations.

Prescribing psychologists are committed to providing the highest quality care. Informed by frequent meetings with their patients, they utilize non-pharmacological therapeutic interventions and are better able to monitor psychopharmacological medications.

Key provisions of HB 3355

An oversight committee made up of licensed medical professionals, including psychiatrists, will review and approve psychologists that are certified with prescriptive authority. Requirements for a prescribing psychologist include:

- A doctorate in psychology, Oregon Licensure, obtain a master's degree in psychopharmacology from an accredited institution and pass a national competency exam
- 24 month clinical residency supervised by a physician - this requirement will be beneficial to state and community mental health care delivery systems
- Prescribing psychologists must practice in a medical setting with other providers—like a patient centered primary care home, obstetrics clinic or pediatrician's office.

Significance

- Recognition that properly trained prescribing psychologists add more capacity and increase access to address Oregon's mental health needs.
- A step toward greater integration of physical and mental health care by requiring close consultation between prescribing psychologists and primary care providers.
- A model for cross-discipline collaboration in the medical field.

80% of the prescriptions for mental health drugs are written in primary care—where many prescribing psychologists plan to be.

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Ensuring competence, quality and safety:

Advanced education, training and oversight

Formal education

Currently Oregon requires that ALL psychologists:

- Complete a 4-5 year doctoral degree with clinical training throughout
- Complete a clinical internship and a post-degree clinical residency
- Extensive training in assessment, diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders

Advanced formal education

Certification for psychologists to prescribe in Oregon would require:

- An additional post-doctoral master's degree in psychopharmacology, with two years of coursework
- Masters degree in Clinical Psychopharmacology must be from an accredited institute of higher learning that meets American Psychological Association standards. Examples of course work: anatomy and physiology, microbiology, psychopharmacology, neurochemistry, and physical assessment.

Two-year Board approved residency

MD/DO supervised clinical experience in general medical setting required for minimum of one year, the additional year of MD/DO supervised clinical experience may be in general or speciality setting(s)

- Specific targeted training must be obtained to treat specialized populations
- All prescriptions reviewed and approved by supervising MD/DO during residency.

Practice parameters

- The practice of prescribing psychologists would be provided in a medical setting with required collaboration with Primary Care Provider overseeing patient's medical care.

Oversight

Regulated by Oregon Board of Psychologist Examiners with recommendations from the OBPE's Committee of Prescribing Psychologists

- Committee includes psychologists, physicians, a psychiatrist and a child specialist
- Establishes and reviews limited formulary for psychologists with prescribing certificate annually
- Investigates consumer complaints against prescribing psychologists
- Disciplines prescribing psychologists for violation of statutes and rules