

HB 1041 - Creating a new credential for a Prescribing Psychologist

A smart & sensible approach to increasing access to comprehensive behavioral health services while protecting patient safety

Why do we need Prescribing Psychologists?

Washington lacks enough prescribers comfortable with prescribing psychiatric medications to support the behavioral health needs of the state. **Creating a new credential for a Prescribing Psychologist helps meet the need for those prescribers while protecting patient safety.**

What is a Prescribing Psychologist?

A Prescribing Psychologist is a fully independent, licensed psychologist who has completed specific training and been credentialed to prescribe psychotropic medication.

✔ Targeted Education and Training

Qualified psychologists must complete a post-doctoral Masters in clinical psychopharmacology from an accredited program, pass a national exam, and complete 400 hours of supervised practice.

The combined total is comparable in education and training to other non-physician prescribers.

✔ Maintains Patient Safety

It is estimated that Prescribing Psychologists have written over 1 million prescriptions and have practiced safely in other jurisdictions for over 25 years.

Prescribing Psychologists are required to collaborate with primary care to ensure overall patient wellbeing is maintained and to increase access to integrated care.

✔ Increased Access

Washington does not have enough prescribers to meet the current need.

This new credential will increase the total number of prescribers, making it easier for consumers to find care.

✔ Behavioral Health Integration

Prescribing Psychologists will be able to combine traditional talk therapies and medication. This will result in more integrated care, and a patient will need fewer appointments because one provider provides both therapy and medication management, reducing out of pocket expenses for consumers.

✔ Proven Success in other States

Five other states have credentialed Prescribing Psychologists: New Mexico, Louisiana, Illinois Iowa, and Idaho.

Research from the Center for Growth and Opportunity at Utah State University found a 5 to 7 percent decrease in suicide rates in states that expanded prescribing authority to psychologists.

Additionally three Federal Agencies allow this credential: Department of Defense, US Public Health Service Corp, and the Indian Health Service.

✔ Maximizes our Workforce

Creating safe and sustainable career pathways for Washington's behavioral health workforce will maximize the skills of the workforce we have.

Adding a pathway for psychologists to obtain prescribing authority is a proven pathway other states used to improve access.

Over 1000 psychologists across the country have the necessary education. WA is primed to recruit these psychologists for immediate results.

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Frequently Asked Questions:

How does the training compare to other licensed prescribers educated outside medical school?

Prescribing Psychologists are required to have a PhD in Psychology and a Masters in psychopharmacology. The education is substantially similar to a psychiatric nurse practitioner.

	Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner	Prescribing Psychologists
Admission Test for Graduate Studies (GRE)	Required	Required for most PhD level Psychology Programs
Basic and Advanced Science Prerequisites for Program	Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anatomy Physiology Microbiology Chemistry 	Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anatomy Physiology Microbiology Chemistry
Courses	Required: 25 Quarter Hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pathophysiology - 5 hours Pharmacology - 5 hours Advanced Pathophysiology - 4 hours Advanced Pharmacology - 7 Hours Psychopharmacology - 4 hours 	Required: 25 Quarter Hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pathophysiology - 5 hours Pharmacology - 5 hours Advanced Pathophysiology - 5 hours Advanced Pharmacology - None Needed due to limited formulary Psychopharmacology - 10 hours
Supervised Practice	Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner requires 1000 supervision hours including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 500 hours in direct patient care 150 hours advanced clinical practice for prescribing 	Prescribing Psychology requires a total of 3,880 Supervision Hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychology license requires 3300 supervision hours Supervision for prescribing authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80 hours physical Assessment 500 hours prescribing with at least 100 patients

How do we know Prescribing Psychology is Safe?

Other jurisdictions including the Department of Defense have allowed for this credential for almost 30 years and malpractice insurance rates for prescribing psychologists remain low, evidence of safe practice.

How many practicing Prescribing Psychologists are in the United States?

Currently there are approximately 225 licensed and practicing Prescribing Psychologists, and another 1100 have completed the required education.

How many programs currently teach the required Masters of Psychopharmacology?

There are currently 5 accredited programs that teach the required Masters of Psychopharmacology, and Antioch University in Seattle is beginning a program in 2023.

How many Washington Psychologists are expected to become Prescribing Psychologists?

Based on other states experiences we estimate approximately 10% Washington Psychologists will pursue this credential, or around 350 psychologists.