

ASK YOUR LEGISLATOR TO CO-SPONSOR REP. BOYD'S LEGISLATION TO CREATE A PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATE LICENSE FOR PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS/TRAINEES

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Billing for services provided by trainees is often not allowed by Medicaid and private insurance companies. This presents a significant challenge to training programs that offer needed services to the public, yet must find other ways to support the costs associated with running a quality training program. This is a key issue for health service psychology in the context of efforts to mitigate the psychology internship imbalance.

One way to alleviate this burden is to provide associate-level licensure to doctoral psychology students while they are earning their supervised clinical hours. That's why Representative Heather Boyd plans to introduce legislation that would create the Psychological Associate license, which would enhance access to mental health services by increasing employment opportunities for doctoral-level psychology students. These doctoral-level students have already completed their educational requirements and are working under direct clinical supervision toward meeting their internship and post-doctoral hours.





Currently, at least 3,000 hours of clinical experience are needed before these doctoral students are licensed as psychologists. A similar bill was passed into law (Act 4 of 2024) to create an associate professional counselor, and associate marriage and family therapist licenses.

WHY DO WE NEED THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATE PSYCHOLOGY LICENSE?

The purpose of this license is to allow reimbursement for services provided by an intern or postdoctoral student. Thus, allowing for more training sites, as postdoctoral students and interns have a hard time finding placements to accumulate their postdoctoral hours.

WHO CAN APPLY FOR THIS LICENSE?

Students who have completed all their coursework and are starting either their internship or postdoctoral experience can apply to become a psychological associate.

WHAT TYPE OF LICENSE IS THIS?

It is a limited license only for those who are getting training to be a licensed psychologist, and it can only be renewed for three licensure renewal periods. It does not allow the psychological associate to practice independently. The structure is similar to a medical intern: The student would be providing the services under the supervision of a licensed psychologist. The psychologist would still be responsible for the services provided.

IS THIS CREATING MASTER'S LICENSURE IN PENNSYLVANIA?

No. This is separate from the master's licensure issue. It would not be creating independent practice for master's-level professionals.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LICENSE?

The student would pay an application fee of $75.00.

HOW WOULD THE SERVICES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATE BE REIMBURSED BY INSURANCE COMPANIES?

If the insurer chooses to reimburse for services provided by a psychological associate, the supervising psychologist would bill for the services and enumerate that the service was provided by the psychological associate.

In sum, licensing these practitioners will ensure patients have access to quality care. Not only would psychological associate licensees have oversight by the State Board of Psychology, but holding a license may enable them to obtain insurance reimbursement for the services they provide while working toward their full license.

If you have any questions about the psychological associate license, please feel free to reach out to Rachael Baturin at rachael@papsy.org.

If you would like to assist in our advocacy efforts, please reach out to your representative and ask him or her to contact Representative Boyd's office and ask to be added as a co-sponsor to this important piece of legislation.



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