

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action: Do Pass With Amendments to the A-Engrossed Measure and Be Printed B-Engrossed

Vote: 5 - 0 - 0

Yeas: Bates, Kruse, Morrisette, Morse, Monnes Anderson

Nays: 0

Exc.: 0

Prepared By: Robert Shook, Administrator

Meeting Dates: 5/19, 5/26, 5/28

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Creates a Work Group on Prescriptive Authority for Licensed Psychologists, establishes membership, directs the activities of the work group, and designates January 31, 2010 as date the work group shall submit a report, including recommendations for legislation to the Legislative Assembly. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Training requirements to allow psychologists to prescribe medications
- Oversight of prescribing psychologists
- Need for mental health prescribers, especially in rural areas
- Patient safety issues
- Membership of work group
- Specific duties and role of the work group
- Scope of practice provisions

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Replaces the original measure.

BACKGROUND: To become licensed, psychologists must have a doctoral degree in psychology which generally requires from five to seven years of graduate coursework in the social and behavioral sciences. Psychologists must also complete a one-year internship and pass a state licensure exam. Patients with mental illness often require psychotropic medications as part of their treatment; such drugs are typically prescribed by a licensed physician. Psychologists cannot prescribe medications to their patients. Proposals have been made in 17 states to authorize specially trained psychologists to prescribe psychotropic medications. To date, two states, New Mexico and Louisiana, have passed such legislation.

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Psychopharmacology Demonstration Project was a Congressionally-mandated pilot demonstration project funded by Congress in 1991 to train military clinical psychologists in the safe and effective prescription of psychotropic medication under certain circumstances to eligible beneficiaries of the military health system. The first participants (licensed psychologists) completed the program in 1994. Since 1991, when the program began, through 1994, 13 psychologists have participated, with 10 having completed the training.

In 1997 Congress released a report concluding that while DoD met the mandate to train psychologists to prescribe drugs, and that psychologists demonstrated they can provide this service with the military health services system, there was no reason to reinstate the demonstration project.

House Bill 2702-B establishes a work group responsible for development of recommendations for legislation that would allow clinical psychologists to be granted prescriptive authority.

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This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.