

# HB 3355: In Support

## Education and Training – Prescribing Psychologists

### BACKGROUND

Twenty-six years ago, the Department of Defense (DoD) determined the need for more psychotropic prescribers and initiated a program designed to train doctoral-level psychologists to prescribe psychotropic medications. The program was originally designed with coursework delivered at the medical school model with clinical training through the department of psychology and psychiatry at two military medical centers. yet it was determined that it was not necessary to deliver this training within the medical centers.

The training evolved from a standard medical school, basic sciences sequence to a tailored program designed specifically to meet the goal of training psychologists to become proficient in the independent use of psychopharmacological agents. Today the prescribing psychologists in the military train at one of the civilian based American Psychological Association’s designated programs.

Eight years ago, Oregon HB 2702 was passed and set up a professionally mediated work group consisting of two psychiatrists, one family physician, one clinical pharmacist, and three psychologists to:

- Develop recommendations for an accredited training program to allow psychologists to safely prescribe medications for the treatment of mental illness
- Evaluate the training necessary to allow a prescribing psychologist to work with special populations, including but not limited to children, persons with addictions, persons with comorbid medical illness and person who are elderly.
- Develop recommendations for legislation to change current statute to accommodate prescribing psychologists.
- Develop recommendations for oversight of prescribing psychologists.
- Evaluate the costs of implementing the training program.

Many hours and months of discussion and review of documents were dedicated and consensus on draft language was reached. “The workgroup fully addressed the training and education requirements they believe are needed to support licensed psychologists being able to safely prescribe medications for certain mental illnesses in Oregon.”

The education and training vetted by this workgroup, included the curriculum offered by the APA designated post-doctoral masters of science or DOD programs, are the same as those listed in HB 3355. Please note that the -1 amendments are to correct the term “accredited” to “designated” The APA “accredits” doctoral programs and “designates” post-doctoral programs.

### POST-DOCTORAL EDUCATION

The science-oriented curriculum of the post-doctoral masters of science in clinical psychopharmacology from all four of the American Psychological Association designated programs includes in-depth course work conducted over two to two-and-a half years, with curriculum tailored to the needed additions to previously completed doctoral work and clinical training.

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The location for the delivery of healthcare and educational services has progressed with technology. Ex. Alliant International University - California Professional School of Psychology has educated many of the Oregon psychologists who have completed the post-doctoral Master of Science in Clinical Psychopharmacology. The first cohort of students flew to the California Bay Area for in-classroom education. The next cohorts of students went to a site outside of Portland for live interactive classroom participation. The current cohort of students participates in a live interactive classroom directly from their home or work computers. in the same way that tele-medicine is currently delivered.

**Faculty:** The faculty who teaches the biochemistry course for Alliant International University is *Dr. Matthew Phillipot (PhD)* who is faculty at Oregon State University and specializes in viruses and oncology. Other faculty include physicians, pharmacologists and a few specialty psychologists.

Tailored to active practitioners, the Clinical Psychopharmacology MS is fully accessible and delivered anywhere a qualified student has an active Internet connection and is willing and able to dedicate the time and finances to pursuing specialized education. This meets the needs for training licensed Psychologists throughout Oregon who are actively practicing and may live away from an accredited University and designated post-doctoral program.

When a psychologist is ready to pursue the post-doctoral Master of Science degree in Clinical Psychopharmacology they will have completed 4 or more years of undergraduate work, five or more years of graduate work and an additional 1-2 years of post-doctoral residency training. Upon completion of the academic portion of the 2-1/2 year post-doctoral program an attendee is 30 years of age or older. At that time a person may be settled in a community with professional and personal ties and is less likely to uproot themselves, and any family they have, for further education. Also, because of the program's specialization the number of attendees at any one time may not be sufficient for a single on-campus program. This academic model is ideal for the experienced clinical learner with an established practice.

Content and communication is delivered in a standardized format through two platforms:

• **Classes are delivered** bringing students and instructor together in **real time** using video and audio capabilities.

• **Additional educational information**, an e-Education platform on which course materials such as presentation slides, instructors' class notes, exam study guides, take-home exams and readings are posted for access before, during and after each class.

Coursework (ex. Alliant):

- Introductory Psychopharmacology
- Clinical Biochemistry
- Anatomy/Physiology
- Clinical Medicine/ Pathophysiology
- Neuroscience: Neurophysiology
- Neuroscience: Neuroanatomy
- Neuroscience: Neuroanatomy/ Neuropathology
- Neuroscience: Neurochemistry
- Neurophysiology and Clinical Medicine/ Pathophysiology
- Pharmacology/ Clinical Pharmacology
- Practicum in Clinical Psychopharmacology
- Special Populations 1: Child, Geriatric, Chronic Pain, Chronic Medical Conditions, Trauma
- Special Populations 2: Gender, Ethnicity, Chemical Dependency
- Psychopharmacology
- Introduction to Molecular Nutrition and Its Place in Psychopharmacology
- Chemical Dependence
- Advanced Psychopharmacology and Molecular Nutrition
- Pharmacotherapeutics
- Physical Assessment
- Case Seminar

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## POST-DOCTORAL CLINICAL TRAINING

*For the record, there is a drafting error in Section 4: (c) A that states “two” months instead of “12” months. This is being addressed.*

As delineated in HB 3355, the clinical training and subsequent practice for a prescribing psychologist will occur only in medical settings. This is where most people present with symptoms that often affect both their mind and body and where the treatment team can often best address their condition.

The prescribing psychologist must practice for two years in direct collaboration with a prescribing physician and if the licensed psychologist intends to practice with a specialized population, at least three months of clinical experience must be spent in a specialized setting such as a general pediatric setting, a pain treatment setting, a general geriatric setting, an addiction treatment setting or a general neurology setting. This is aligned with the mandated charged to the previously mentioned workgroup to establish any special provisions for a prescribing psychologist to work with vulnerable populations.

Every Oregon psychologist is statutorily bound by the APA Ethics Rules and may not practice outside of their area of competence and expertise, unless subsequent specialty competence and expertise is obtained. This includes the specialized education and training required to become a psychologist with prescribing authority.

There are currently about a dozen psychologists in Oregon who have completed the post-doctoral Master of Science in clinical psychopharmacology. There are another half-dozen licensed Oregon psychologists who are actively enrolled in one of the APA designated post-doctoral MSCP programs. This expansion of the workforce can assist in addressing the unmet need for accurate diagnosis and treatment of Oregonians with a mental health condition with the added option to prescribe appropriate mental health medications if, and when, indicated. Timely access and treatment are essential in meeting the needs of our community to mitigate suffering and to minimize the costs of treatment for people, their families and our society.

**Please pass HB 3355.**

Thank you.

With current healthcare workforce shortages team-based care provides a platform for people to be treated in an optimized population-based model with access to be seen by an excellent clinician in a timely manner.

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*The medical professionals who spend the greatest time providing psychotherapy with mental health patients are psychologists. They receive extensive training in mental-health diagnosis and treatment and have a broad general knowledge of physical health conditions and treatments.*

*In comparison, medical doctors, including psychiatrists, have more specific training for prescribing medications, but they have less experience in mental health treatment – unless additional specialized training has occurred.*

*For example, Specialty trained psychologists will be required to earn an additional 432 non-practicum classroom hours compared to 240 hours for a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner.*

Education/ Specialty	Psychologists & Prescribing Psychologist	Physicians & Psychiatrists	Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
Bachelor's:	4 years (B.A or B.S.)	4 years (B.A. or B.S.)	4 years (Nursing)
Post-bachelor's:	At least 6 years of post-bachelor's study and experience to obtain a license (no prescription authority).	After medical school and a residency, an MD may prescribe a wide range of medications. MD's may or may not develop a specialty such as psychiatry.	PMH Nurse practitioners may prescribe medications after they have completed a two-year master's degree specializing in mental health.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Master's degree:</i></li> </ul>			2 years (mental health) (37 non-practicum semester hours)  (11 semester hours for practicum concurrent with education)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Doctoral:</i></li> </ul>	5 years (PhD or PsyD) including 1 full year of clinical internship	4 years (MD)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Post-doc Clinical Internship or residency:</i></li> </ul>	1 year (May have an additional year for specialty)	3 years (Ex: family medicine) 4-5 years (Ex. Psychiatry or Neurology)	<i>No doctoral training or program in diagnosis or treatment nor further practicum required</i>
Post-doctoral specialty: Certificate to allow limited formulary prescription writing for specially trained psychologists:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.5 years master of science in clinical psychopharmacology (30 semester units)</li> <li>• 2 years of supervised clinical experience with an MD/DO in a medical setting with no less than 3 months per specialty training in second year.</li> </ul>		

*Additional documents with a detailed comparison of syllabi for OHSU's PMHNP and one of the APA designated MSCP programs are available upon request.*