

Prescribers Should be Trained in Medicine

Prescribing powerful psychotropic medications correctly takes years of biomedical training, education, and clinical experience. Psychiatrists HAVE THE TRAINING which Psychologists do not!

Prerequisites

There are NO prerequisites for psychologists to begin training. All physicians—which include psychiatrists—must have one year of each biology, physics, and calculus plus two years of chemistry.

Qualifying Exam

Psychologists only need to take the GRE (Graduate Record Exam) to be accepted into a psychology graduate program. All physicians are required to submit their MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test) scores, which must be high, to be accepted into medical school. The MCAT tests knowledge in **Physical Sciences**, Verbal Reasoning, and **Biological Sciences**, whereas the GRE ONLY tests knowledge in Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Analytic Writing.

Basic Training

Psychologists ARE NOT REQUIRED to perform clinical rotations through all major medical categories; in fact, clinical experiences for psychologists in medical settings are rare to non-existent and their education does not include any testing on medical skills or competencies. Psychiatrists, like all physicians, are required to have four years from an accredited medical school, including 225 hours with patients, and two years of full-time clinical rotations in each area of medicine.

Advanced Training

Psychologists, as proposed in the bill, would only need 6-12 months of didactic training which can be done online; 80 hours of “clinical medicine” which can be taught by fellow prescribing psychologists; and 400 hours of clinical work seeing a mere total of 100 patients. A certifying exam does not yet exist and, under the bill, is to be created by the Psychology Board which does not require its members to be trained in psychopharmacology. Psychiatrists, however, are required to complete four years of residency training, all of which are in clinical settings, and see upwards of 100 patients PER WEEK. Testing is required for a medical license and established National Boards are administered in psychiatry. (Note that some psychiatrists practice as board eligible and do not take the boards.)

Licensure

The licensure of proposed prescribing psychologists in Illinois would be overseen by the Psychology Board—NOT the Medical Board, whereas psychiatrists ARE licensed by an independent provider under the Medical Board.

Psychiatrists are physicians who specialize in in the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders. They are medical doctors who have the training and experience needed to effectively and safely prescribe psychotropic medications. The training path for clinical psychologists to prescribe medications, as outlined in the bill, is severely inadequate.

Patient Safety First!
Vote “No” to Psychologists Prescribing without Adequate Training.



Illinois Psychiatric Society
A District Branch of the American Psychiatric Association

