

TESTIMONY OF AMY TIBERI
HB 1000 Prescription Privileges for Psychologists in PA

Good afternoon, Chairman Burns, Chairman Metzgar, and Members of the Licensure committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. My name is Amy Tiberi and I am speaking to you today as a Licensed Psychologist in the State of Pennsylvania, as well as a certified School Psychologist, through the PA Department of Education. I'm here today to express my support for HB 1000, which would give psychologists with additional training experiences the opportunity to prescribe a limited formulary of psychotropic agents in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

As a psychologist that works with populations that frequently face adversity with access to medical care, as well as mental health care, I see this bill as an exciting initiative. I've spent the majority of my career working with underserved groups that regularly navigate psychosocial stressors. In my practices, I believe that psychologists being trained and prepared to prescribe certain formularies could decrease healthcare disparities and increase access to mental health services in pediatric populations. I have had countless families express frustrations with the burden of care associated with caring for their children's chronic medical conditions, which often leads to mental health appointments, and psychiatric intakes for medication management, being overlooked or under prioritized.

I believe in the power of continuity in care, and the benefits that rapport and trusting connections allow with pediatric patients and their families, especially those who have experienced negative interactions with previous providers. Working to de-stigmatize mental health care, while collaborating with families to provide psychoeducation about therapy and medications can be challenging, but extremely rewarding. If HB 1000 were to be passed, I feel strongly that being able to prescribe psychotropic agents for patients that are already seen within my multidisciplinary clinic could expand mental health coverage substantially. It would reduce burden of care, number of doctors' appointments, optimize time spent in hospital based clinics, reduce costs of transportation and co-pays, and more.

Psychologists have substantial training in assessment and treatment of mental illness, as well as psychopharmacology. By allowing psychologists to pursue a master's degree in clinical psychopharmacology in order to obtain prescription privileges, psychologists would be fully educated to prescribe within their scope of practice, while reducing wait times and bridging the gap in services. Pediatric psychiatrists are hard to come by in this state; there are far fewer available than those who need services. If psychologists were allowed to prescribe psychotropic medications, more patients would be able to have access to mental health care in a timely fashion in order to most appropriately address needs.

Today I encourage you to consider how this bill would work to decrease disparities in the mental health care system. I am hopeful that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will seek to enact HB 1000 as a way to bridge services and increase mental health awareness and access to care for our generations to come.

Respectfully submitted by:

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