

HCS HB 536 -- PRESCRIBING PSYCHOLOGISTS

SPONSOR: Wasson (Dixon)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Professional Registration and Licensing by a vote of 9 to 5.

This substitute authorizes the licensure of prescribing psychologists under the State Committee of Psychologists in the Division of Professional Registration within the Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration. Persons licensed as prescribing psychologists will be authorized to prescribe certain Schedule II stimulants and Schedule IV tranquilizers or any other psychological treatment or laboratory test as it relates to the practice of psychology, excluding electrical convulsive therapy. A licensed prescribing psychologist cannot purchase, administer, or dispense medication.

Prescribing psychologist licenses will only be issued to licensed psychologists who meet certain criteria established in the substitute. These requirements include completing 400 hours of didactic educational training recommended by the American Psychological Association or completing a post-doctoral master degree in psychopharmacology; completing a one-year fellowship, with weekly supervision by a physician and maintaining a full-time caseload of patients during the year with duties of medication management, psychological evaluations, and therapeutic services; and passing a national examination testing competency to engage in the practice of prescriptive authority. The division may establish rules creating additional requirements based on current educational guidelines stated in the American Psychological Association's publication of Recommended Postdoctoral Training in Psychopharmacology for Prescription Privileges.

After receiving his or her license to prescribe, a psychologist must enter into a collaborative practice agreement with a licensed physician. The State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts and the State Committee of Psychologists are required to establish joint rules to govern the use of collaborate practice arrangements, but the rules must be limited to specifying geographic areas to be covered and the methods of treatment but not mandate particular requirements for the review of the services.

A psychologist holding prescribing authorization is required to maintain appropriate medical liability insurance and complete at least 20 hours of psychopharmacology continuing education credit within the two-year period preceding a license renewal in addition to the general 40-hour continuing education requirement.

Pharmacists are authorized to fill prescriptions written by licensed prescribing psychologists.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue Fund of Unknown less than \$100,000 in FY 2010, Unknown less than \$35,000 in FY 2011, and Unknown greater than \$35,000 in FY 2012. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2010, FY 2011, and FY 2012.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that adequate mental health care should not be a luxury. There is a severe problem with access to mental health services in Missouri, especially in the rural areas. It is becoming more and more difficult for people to see psychiatrists, and many people are using the emergency room for mental health services. By allowing psychologists to prescribe, persons with mental illnesses will receive the care and treatment they need.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Dixon; Roy Holand, M.D.; Donna McArthur; Danny Moore; Dr. Deborah Onkan; and John Howell.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say the standard of care is lowered by allowing psychologists to prescribe. The bill will allow psychologists to practice medicine. The majority of psychologists are practicing in the metropolitan areas, and they will continue to do so. The bill will not provide better access to care in the rural communities.

Testifying against the bill were Dr. Jo Ellen Ryall; Dr. John Collins; Dr. Justin Puckett; Dr. Lawernce Kuhn; Dr. Jack Croughan; Dr. Paul Simon; Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons; and Eastern Missouri Psychiatric Society.