

Julie Gombieski

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing as Family Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner and I had previously posted a testimony to the Public Health Committee Testimony in 3/20/2013. At that time I had started a private practice and had many failed attempts at obtaining a collaborating psychiatrist. The CT Psychiatric Society had put in a testimony that they would offer APRN's assistance in finding one but in the end it did not lead me to the collaborating psychiatrist that I have now. In fact, when I called, the woman who answered the phone had NO idea what I was talking about, eventually gave me 3 referrals in which only one phone number was correct and the person seemed annoyed and frustrated that they were getting cold called for a collaborative agreement! It was not a fruitful or pleasant experience. More importantly, I get at least 3 phone calls a week from both adults and parents of children who are looking for mental health treatment. Over and over again, I hear stories about how hard it has been for them to find services or that I am the only who who actually called them back! There is a shortage of providers in the psychiatric field and removing a barrier to access to healthcare services is important for the people of this state. I do believe in the importance of good supervision and personally attend multiple supervision groups as well as individual meetings with my collaborating psychiatrist. The truth of the matter is that APRN's are very good at seeking out support and continuing education when our patients health status does not improve and we will continue to do so without this collaborative agreement. If this is truly a PUBLIC HEALTH committee then I would really urge the state to provide an alternative setting for ongoing collaboration for established treatment providers in the community. For example, an interdisciplinary monthly meeting where community providers could come for guidance around complex cases. I think this would also help increase community ties between all disciplines which may further help the populations we serve. These could even be done via message boards or online support systems. I'm just throwing the idea out there again because the idea of ongoing collaboration with a diverse group of professionals and experts is exciting!

Thank you for your time and consideration, Julie Gombieski APRN, MSN Family Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Child & Adolescent Psychiatric-Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist