

HB 5521

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and Members of the Public Health Committee:

As a Licensed Psychologist in Connecticut, I am writing in strong opposition to HB 5521.

There is no such thing as a "master's level psychologist". The term "psychologist" reflects doctoral level providers, not only in Connecticut but everywhere else in the US. It would be like allowing RNs or APRNs to be given the title of "doctor" or "physician" without earning a doctorate in graduate school or graduating from medical school. It would be like giving a legal assistant the title of "lawyer" or "esquire".

If your child were gravely ill would you want to bring him to a doctor for treatment only to find out that she never went to medical school and only has the equivalent of two years of training in her discipline? Would you want to have a complicated legal matter handled by someone who hung a shingle that said he was a lawyer only to find out that again, this person never went to law school or sat for the state bar exam?

Allowing licensure of master's level psychologists would similarly create public confusion regarding provider education and training. It seems clear that the public, as well as elected representatives, is already confused about the variety of mental health professionals in the field and want to treat them all as if each title represents equivalent levels of training. In fact, Connecticut's own healthcare exchange plan, Healthy CT, failed to differentiate between the variety of levels of training and education of mental health practitioners in their provider fee schedule, which is why I declined to join their network.

Master's level clinicians are already able to become licensed in Connecticut as "Licensed Professional Counselors" (LPC's). What could possibly be the need to add another category of master's level clinician? And then misname it "psychologist"?

For each of these reasons, I am urging you to oppose HB 5521.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Stephanie Schacher, PsyD

Licensed Clinical Psychologist with a doctorate in clinical psychology earned after over 6 years of study, training, and supervision.

Sent from my iPhone