

# Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5480

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF MENTAL HEALTH

**Title:** SERVICES.

**Vote Date:** 3/23/2022

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/21/2022

**File No.:** 285

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

The Public Health Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill will expand access to psychological services by allowing students enrolled in a psychology doctorate program at an in-state higher education institution and, under the supervision of a licensed psychologist, to provide psychological services in person or through telehealth.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **House Republican Office:**

This bill is an important first step in closing the gap for residents of our state who are suffering and need direct, one-on-one therapy, either in-person or through telehealth. This simple measure will reduce wait times, lower costs, and allow more choice of providers for patients. Additionally, this bill benefits doctoral students in clinical psychology by providing practical field experience during their education with direct supervision by a licensed psychologist.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **Marcy Russo, Legislative Chair, Connecticut Psychological Association:**

The opportunity provided in this bill that allows doctorate level students to deliver services under the supervision of a licensed practitioner is a valuable and important step toward increasing access to behavioral health services. Doctorate level students have traditionally been left out of the opportunity to deliver services at this level, despite the fact their colleagues enrolled in master's programs have been allowed this practice for many years.

**Margaret Watt, Policy Chair, National Alliance on Mental Illness-Connecticut Chapter, (NAMI CT):**

NAMI CT supports this bill, which would extend the mental health workforce by including doctoral students working under appropriate supervision.

**Thomas Burr, Community and Affiliates Relations Manager, NAMI Connecticut:**

Having more qualified people under the direct supervision of a licensed psychologist able to provide telehealth for people with mental health conditions is a good thing, as it will provide timely access for people needing such services.

**Dr. Melissa Santos, Division Head-Pediatric Psychology, CT Children's Medical Center:**

There are significant workforce shortages in nearly every professional discipline that makes up the pediatric behavioral health system, from medical assistants to child and adolescent psychiatrists. The state must invest in developing a robust behavioral health workforce pipeline to meet the needs of families across the state. This initiative will increase access to care for patients and help alleviate the shortage of psychologists in our state.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

No sources of opposition were provided for this bill.

**Reported by: Dallas Emerle**

**Date: 4/5/2022**