



# Ohio Board of Psychology

State Board of Psychology  
Testimony on the FY18-19 Biennial Operating Budget  
House Finance Subcommittee on State Government and Agency Review  
Representative Keith Faber, Chair

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Executive Director  
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Chairman Faber, Ranking Member Patterson, and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am Dr. Ronald Ross, Executive Director of the State Board of Psychology. I am a clinical psychologist and Certified Public Manager through DAS, and I'm entering my 17<sup>th</sup> year as director of the Psychology Board. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Psychology Board, a non-GRF-funded regulatory board authorized by the General Assembly in 1972.

## The State Board of Psychology's Role in Ohio

Thank you to Justin Pinsker at LSC for the Redbook summary of the Board and its role. I will briefly expand on how the Psychology Board has served a critical role within the healthcare regulatory system in service of the public welfare. The Psychology Board enforces ORC Chapters 4732 (psychologists and school psychologists) and 4783 (certified Ohio behavior analysts) and by doing so protects the well-being and safety of Ohioans who receive or seek psychological services and applied behavior analysis services. Among the Board's primary responsibilities are: setting standards for licensure and professional conduct; ensuring that license applicants meet statutory and regulatory requirements for licensure and certification; conducting in-person pre-licensure examinations by members of the Board totaling around 160 annually; initial licensing and biennial license renewal, which includes verification of continuing education compliance for 100% of license holders; registration, monitoring, and termination of supervised training and practice arrangements; monitoring for illegal practice; investigating complaints; conducting hearings; applying disciplinary actions in response to misconduct, mostly via negotiated consent agreements; and, rule and policy making.

The Psychology Board's 4,000 licensees are at the forefront of the healthcare system in Ohio, being found in private practices, hospitals, medical schools, mental health clinics, Veteran's Affairs medical centers, Autism treatment centers and private residences, university and college

counseling centers, schools, industries, courts, and prisons. The deeply human interactions that take place in our professionals' practices typically reflect a complicated combination of hope and despair. The Psychology Board has the responsibility for regulating behavior that typically occurs when patients are highly vulnerable in terms of their emotional condition, self-concept, and relationships. Ohio's consumers of psychological services expect from their psychologists and behavior analysts compassion, competence, trust, confidentiality, and a clearly defined role. The Psychology Board exists to ensure that Ohioans get these things.

The Board's primary means for assuring that Ohioans have access to safe and appropriate psychological services is through its customer service/consultation, licensing, and enforcement activities. The Board fields highly complicated complaints in the areas forensic psychology, clinical neuropsychology, and other specialty areas requiring expert investigation and study by specially trained investigators and members of the Board, who each carry a caseload of investigations. For example, as psychologists continue to offer services in the domestic relations courts, the Board regularly receives complaints relative to unsubstantiated opinions that can have substantial negative outcomes on children and families. These cases are typically highly emotional and convoluted and lodged by individuals with a keen eye on the Board's response to their distress. In addition, the Board continues to receive complaints regarding sexual boundary violations, including sexual misconduct with clients.

The Psychology Board is very proud of its track record of recognition as a model board by the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards and of our collegial partnerships with the Ohio Psychological Association, the Ohio School Psychologists Association, and the Ohio Association of Applied Behavior Analysts.

#### Operational Overview Summary

- The Psychology Board continually strives to improve upon the efficiency of our services and processes in order to align with the Governor's priorities of containing costs and striving for common sense regulation. Our staff is cross-trained and seasoned, but each employee serves a unique customer service niche.
- Last fall the Board was asked to set budget priorities that are essential for the health, safety, and welfare of Ohioans. In response, we submitted a flat-funded request for FY18 and requested an additional \$17,000 for FY19.

- In 2013 the Psychology Board began regulating the practice of Applied Behavior Analysis through enforcement of ORC 4783. The profession of Applied Behavior Analysis is expanding rapidly as individuals on the Autism Spectrum continue to demand expert programming and interventions. The Psychology Board has examined and licensed 325 Certified Ohio Behavior Analysts since 2014 without increased staffing or funding. Ohio families require these intensive behavior analysis services and expert regulatory oversight.
- Along with approximately 30 other boards and commissions, the Psychology Board receives consolidated administrative, fiscal, and HR support services from the Central Services Agency (CSA), a division of DAS, in the Riffe Center. We receive shared IT services from the DAS Office of Information Technology.
- The Board's website fosters numerous efficiencies, by providing the public, applicants, and licensees access to information and materials, including: license applications and instructions; meeting announcements and minutes; laws and rules; license verification; practice alerts; and disciplinary action documents.
- We do business from a customer service and consultation model. Those emailing or calling the Board almost always need something that we have, so we answer our phones in person and we are immediately responsive to licensees and the public. When you call the Psychology Board office, you get a personable staff member who knows the laws and rules, and will take the time to address your questions with accurate information that ultimately serves to educate and protect the public.
- Recent changes to our law and rules to foster access to care and decrease regulation include: Certification of 325 Certified Ohio Behavior Analysts, which is expected to increase by 60-80 annually; elimination of the post-doctoral year of training for accredited psychology program graduates to foster faster entry into the workforce; telepsychology practice standards to increase access to services; and, more flexible supervision rules for psychologists to make more services available through supervised extenders.

#### Fiscal Situation and Recent Revenue/Fee Increases

Overall, new and increased fees enacted by the General Assembly in HB83 (March 2014) is adding \$72,000 to average annual revenue. Our revenue projections continue to outpace our requested funding, allowing the Psychology Board to be self-funded by our regulated community without GRF dollars. The \$10 increase in the biennial license renewal fee added \$35,000 in revenue during license renewal in FY17. The addition of new behavior analyst applications is adding \$10,000 annually and new behavior analyst renewal revenue was approximately \$23,000 in FY17 and is

projected to be \$45,000 in FY19. HB83 also added new fees for verification of licensure (\$2,600 new annual revenue) and a \$150 fee for permission to temporarily practice in Ohio without a license (\$1,500 new annual revenue).

#### Challenges for the 2018-2019 Fiscal Biennium

Based on initial estimates from DAS, the Psychology Board's annual share of the eLicensing 3.0 database will increase from \$3,200 in FY18 to \$17,800 beginning FY19. Additional day-to-day challenges are present in the form of the Board's need to have sufficient payroll available to reimburse its staff and members, including contractual increases in payroll and healthcare premiums, and continue to meet the costs of doing business. For example, we fund access to DAS OIT Desktop Support Services. In addition, the Psychology Board is among over thirty boards and commissions that receive fiscal, payroll, and HR support from the staff of CSA. The service provided by CSA is outstanding, and the Board will need this requested funding to continue to pay for its share of consolidated business services. Our budget request also includes a request for funding to ensure that the State Board of Psychology is sufficiently funded to meet the requirement that we pay invoices from the Auditor of State, for our anticipated audit in FY18. Our invoices for the FY15-16 billing totaled approximately \$13,000.

#### Goals and objectives relative to this budget request

- Having sufficient funding to pay our share of the eLicensing database starting FY19
- Having resources available to conduct inherently complicated investigations and administrative hearings when responsible disciplinary outcomes cannot be negotiated
- Having sufficient funding to keep the staff stable at five (5) FTE and to have funding authority to pay expert Board members at \$19.55/hour for their investigation, examination, business meeting, and hearing activities, totaling approximately 800 hours annually
- Having stable funding available to meet the rising costs of day-to-day operations

The Board believes that this request reflects a responsible attempt to meet our responsibilities to the public, which includes our regulated community of professionals, who have come to rely on our unique ability to regulate a complicated set of professions in a fiscally responsible and expert manner.

Finally, if it is the will of the General Assembly to abolish the State Board of Psychology effective January 21, 2018 and combine the regulation of various health care, behavioral health care,

counseling, and social work professionals under a new board, then we will assist in any way possible to embrace the challenges inherent in collapsing occupational regulatory boards into a new structure.

Please accept my gratitude for your time and consideration.