

March 11, 2021

S.B. 2: Regards criminal case competency and enters Ohio into PSYPACT

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member LeLand, and members of The Ohio House of Representatives Criminal Justice Committee, I am Dr. Brad Potts, a Psychologist and Chair of the Ohio Psychological Association's Advocacy Committee speaking in support Senate Bill 2: on Ohio entering into PSYPACT.

PSYPACT is an interstate compact that would allow Psychologists to practice telepsychology and conduct temporary face-to-face practice of psychology across state boundaries, without requiring the provider to become licensed in every state to practice. To qualify to provide services under PSYPACT, an individual must be a Doctoral level Psychologist, licensed in their home state, with no adverse actions on their license and no criminal history. Providers who meet these criteria can participate in PSYPACT by obtaining either an E-Passport to provide Telepsychology or a Interjurisdictional Practice Certificate to allow for temporary face-to-face practice in another compact state for 30 days.

Passing PSYPACT would allow for import and export of psychological service, creating a regulatory bridge between compacting states to protect the public. Under PSYPACT those providing services to Ohioans are required to follow Ohio laws and regulations to ensure Ohio retains control over the provision of those services. Ohio will have access to a real-time database about where and in what capacity providers are practicing in the state under PSYPACT.

Due to the pandemic, Psychologist in Cincinnati, Toledo, and Youngstown have been cutoff from their clients living across state lines, just as Ohioans in rural areas

have been cutoff from provider in Fort Wayne, Richmond, Wheeling, Parkersburg and Huntington.

College student counseling centers, once quieter operations, have become busy mental health centers. This is not because more college students are developing mental illness, but rather more people of with mental illness are able to become college students, due to improvements in mental health care. However, during the pandemic out-of-state college students and those students returning to Ohio from other states, have been cut off from their Psychologist.

- A Green county colleague contacted me frustrated, she is unable to legally continue to provide care to an out-of-state student who was sent home because of COVID, with significant emotional issues.

And there are the non-COVID inquires OPA has received situations, such as:

- A Findlay Psychologist is trying to figure out how to provide care for a client while they work out of state, or for another who seasonally lives in Arizona.
- Psychologist treating a military family member through Tricare, and trying to ensure continuity of care for a child with anxiety, after their Military Parent receives orders moving them out-of-state.

Passing PSYPACT will allow greater access to care for the families of men and women in our armed forces, those with specialize needs or language barriers, college students and those traveling seasonally or temporarily working out of state.

As of March 1th, PSYPACT had passed in 15 states (including neighboring

Pennsylvania), and is pending in 15 states (including neighboring Indiana and Kentucky). By the end of 2021, we could realistically see several of our neighboring states pass PSYPACT.

I ask you to join them in passing this important piece of legislation.