

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL 171
Health Care Committee Substitute Adopted 4/2/25

Short Title: Modernize Reg/Master's Level Psychologists.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 26, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO REDUCE THE UNNECESSARY REGULATORY BURDEN ON MASTER'S
LEVEL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND TO INCREASE ACCESS TO QUALITY MENTAL
HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR NORTH CAROLINIANS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 90-270.139 reads as rewritten:

"§ 90-270.139. Application; examination; supervision; provisional and temporary licenses.

...

(e) Except as provided in subsection (e1) of this section:

(1) A licensed psychological associate shall be supervised by a qualified licensed psychologist, or ~~other qualified professionals, licensed psychological associate~~ in accordance with Board rules specifying the format, setting, content, time frame, amounts of supervision, qualifications of supervisors, disclosure of supervisory relationships, the organization of the supervised experience, and the nature of the responsibility assumed by the supervisor.

(2) A licensed psychological associate who provides health services shall be supervised, ~~for those activities requiring supervision, supervised by a~~ qualified licensed psychologist holding health services provider certification or by ~~other a qualified professionals licensed psychological associate~~ under the overall direction of a qualified licensed psychologist holding health services provider certification, in accordance with Board rules.

(3) ~~Except as provided below, supervision, Supervision, including the supervision of health services, is required only when a licensed psychological associate engages in: assessment of personality functioning; neuropsychological evaluation; psychotherapy, counseling, and other interventions with clinical populations for the purpose of preventing or eliminating symptomatic, maladaptive, or undesired behavior; and, the use of intrusive, punitive, or experimental procedures, techniques, or measures. The Board shall adopt rules implementing and defining this provision, and as the practice of psychology evolves, may identify additional activities requiring supervision in order to maintain acceptable standards of practice in the practice of psychology in accordance with Board rules.~~

(e1) The Board shall approve any licensed psychological associate to engage in independent practice, without supervision by a qualified licensed psychologist or qualified licensed psychological associate, if the licensed psychological associate meets all of the following requirements:



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- (1) Has 4,000 hours of post-licensure experience in the delivery of psychological services under the supervision of one or more qualified licensed psychologists or qualified licensed psychological associates within a time period of at least 24 consecutive months and less than 60 consecutive months.
- (2) Documents that all performance ratings for the 4,000 hours of post-licensure experience required by subdivision (1) of this subsection have been average or above average.
- (3) Submits an application for independent practice with proof of the 4,000 hours of post-licensure experience required by subdivision (1) of this subsection.

...."

SECTION 2. G.S. 90-270.145 reads as rewritten:

"§ 90-270.145. Licensure; examination; foreign graduates.

...

(b) Licensed Psychological Associate. –

...

- (3) No licensed psychological associate shall engage in the practice of neuropsychology or forensic psychology without first demonstrating specialized education and training to practice in those areas as the Board may determine by rule. In considering whether the licensed psychological associate has sufficient specialized education and training to engage in the practice of neuropsychology or forensic psychology, the Board may consider the licensed psychological associate's graduate level course work, continuing education, supervised training experience, or any other factors the Board deems appropriate. For purposes of this subdivision, "neuropsychology" is defined as "the branch of science that studies the physiological processes of the nervous system and relates them to behavior and cognition" and "forensic psychology" is defined as "the application of psychological principles and techniques to situations that are involved in the civil and criminal legal systems, including, but not limited to, psychological assessments and expert testimony."

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SECTION 3. G.S. 90-270.153 reads as rewritten:

"§ 90-270.153. Provision of health services; certification as health services provider.

(a) Health services, as defined in G.S. 90-270.136(4) and G.S. 90-270.136(8), may be provided by qualified licensed psychological associates, qualified licensed psychologists holding provisional, temporary, or permanent licenses, or qualified applicants. ~~Qualified~~ Except as provided in subsection (h) of this section, qualified licensed psychological associates, qualified licensed psychologists holding provisional or temporary licenses, or qualified applicants may provide health services only under supervision as specified in the duly adopted rules of the Board.

...

(h) A licensed psychological associate who possesses a certification as a health services provider psychological associate in accordance with subsection (c) of this section may provide health services without supervision upon meeting the requirements in G.S. 90-270.139(e1).

(i) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (h) of this section, a licensed psychological associate who was licensed before June 30, 2013, who can demonstrate, in accordance with Board rules, that he or she has been engaged in the provision of health services psychology under supervision for 4,000 hours within a time period of at least 24 consecutive months and less than 60 consecutive months shall meet the requirements for certification as a health services provider psychological associate."

SECTION 4. G.S. 90-270.140 reads as rewritten:

"§ 90-270.140. Psychology Board; appointment; term of office; composition.

1 For the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Article, there is created a North Carolina
2 Psychology Board, which shall consist of seven members appointed by the Governor. At all times
3 three members shall be licensed psychologists, two members shall be licensed psychological
4 associates, and two members shall be members of the public who are not licensed under this
5 Article. The Governor shall give due consideration to the adequate representation of the various
6 fields and areas of practice of psychology and to adequate representation from various geographic
7 regions in the State. Terms of office shall be three years. All terms of service on the Board expire
8 June 30 in appropriate years. As the term of a psychologist member expires, or as a vacancy of a
9 psychologist member occurs for any other reason, the Board, the North Carolina Psychological
10 Association, or its successor, shall, and the North Carolina Association of Professional
11 Psychologists, or its successor, shall form a nominating committee and, having sought the advice
12 of the chairs of the graduate departments of psychology in the State, nominees from licensees
13 for each vacancy, shall submit to the Governor a list of the names of three eligible persons. From
14 this list the Governor shall make the appointment for a full term, or for the remainder of the
15 unexpired term, if any. Each Board member shall serve until his or her successor has been
16 appointed. As the term of a member expires, or if one should become vacant for any reason, the
17 Governor shall appoint a new member within 60 days of the vacancy's occurring. No member,
18 either public or licensed under this Article, shall serve more than three complete consecutive
19 terms."

20 **SECTION 5.** This act is effective October 1, 2025.