Advocating for Licensure at the Receipt of the Doctoral Degree

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Moving Forward: Overcoming Unnecessary Barriers to Licensure

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Initiating a Statewide Advocacy Effort to Update Licensure Requirements

Michael O. Ranney, MPA
Developing a Legislative and Political Strategy to Pass Licensure Laws

G. Andrew H. Benjamin, PhD, JD
So You Passed a New Licensure Law: Now What?
Moving Forward: Overcoming Unnecessary Barriers to Licensure

Tom DeMaio, PhD
Ruth Ullmann Paige, PhD
APA Convention
August 11, 2006
The American Psychological Association affirms the doctorate as the minimum educational requirement for entry into professional practice as a psychologist. The American Psychological Association recommends that for admission to licensure applicants demonstrate that they have completed a sequential, organized, supervised professional experience equivalent to two years of full-time training that can be completed prior or subsequent to the granting of the doctoral degree. For applicants preparing for practice in the health services domain of psychology, one of those two years of supervised professional experience shall be a predoctoral internship.

The American Psychological Association affirms that postdoctoral education and training remains an important part of the continuing professional development and credentialing process for professional psychologists. Postdoctoral education and training is a foundation for practice improvement, advanced competence, and inter-jurisdictional mobility.

In adopting the preceding policy statements, the Council supports further development of competency goals and assessment methods in the professional education and training of psychologists.
Overcoming Unnecessary Barriers to Licensure

- Requires understanding the context for the change
- Requires a solid rationale
- Understanding the impact on:
  - Students and ECPs
  - Practice
  - Public need
  - Education and training
Historical Context (1):

- When the 1987 Model Act was passed, the internship was primary clinical experience.
- Increased difficulties with the funding of post-doctoral supervision.
- Questions about the utility of the post-doctoral supervision (APA estimates one third in quality postdoctoral supervision).
- Increasing amounts of practicum supervision in most predoctoral training.
Historical Context (2):

- Our license sequence unlike those in medicine and competing mental health professions
- Students are graduating with an increased debt load
- Specialty training often skipped
APA Effort to Review the Sequence: the 2000 Commission

- 30 constituent groups
- License eligible after APA accredited doctoral degree and two years of supervised experience (one of which is internship)
- 10 recommendations with regard to education and training sequence
- Constituency groups to follow-up in their areas
Board of Directors Approves Work Group – 2/05

- Review the progress since Commission
- Address the recommendations of the Commission
- Smaller group – BEA, BPA, CAPP, ECP, APAGS, ASPPB, CESPTPA, CCOPP, CCTC, and BOD
Consequences of the recommended change:

impact in multiple areas
Impact on Early Career Psychologists

- Increased amounts of predoctoral supervision now counts toward licensure
- Less dependency on postdoctoral experience of variable quality and efficacy
- Increased opportunity for service reimbursement – and ability to get federal loan forgiveness
- Immediate ability to make a living
- Academic careers no longer delayed
Impact on Practice

- Reduced obstacles to a health profession - ability to practice upon graduation
- Policies now in step with other health care professions allowing practice with degree
- Improved appreciation for high level of education and training of psychologists
- Less trained providers no longer have advantage in marketplace
Impact on the Public

- Public facilities would have a better chance of funding for services, often utilizing young psychologists.
- Possibility of advanced training with underserved populations.
- Better protection of the public: same amount of supervised experience (2 years), improved training of psychologists.
Impact on Education and Training

- Improved quality of supervision and training at predoctoral level
- Graduate programs and internships now fully accountable for competence
- Support for competency assessment
- Improved boundary between entry level and advanced competency and improved chance for advanced competency training
- Postdoctoral program funding possibilities improved
Opportunity for Mobility

- Short-term solution for mobility in postdoctoral supervision (with license)
- Mobility available for those who choose postdoctoral advanced competency
- Long-term mobility problem resolved when enough Boards accept the changes
A Win for the Profession

- Reduced barriers
- Improved training
  
  Competency before graduation
  
  Clarity for specialty training
- Sequence in step with modern funding
- Mobility opportunities preserved
- The public protected
Tear Down This Wall: Strategies for Removing Unnecessary Barriers to Licensure

The Maryland Experience

Jeffrey E. Barnett, PsyD, ABPP
Latest APA/SPTPA Developments

- The APA Commission Report
- APA Council’s Recent Vote
- What’s Happening in the SPTPAs
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Making it Happen on the Local Level

- The Multi-year Project
- Educating SPTPA Leaders
- Building Support
- Educating the Membership
- Holding an Open Forum
- Creating a Formal SPTPA Policy
- Getting Board Members to Sign on the Dotted Line
Involving the Membership

- Educating the Membership
- Energizing the Membership on this Issue
- Making it Personal
- Getting them Invested and Involved
- Getting their Letters of Support
Developing a Strategy

- Working with the Licensure Board
- Building Support from Within
- Having the Licensure Board Take the Lead

- The SPTPA Taking the Lead with Licensure Board Support, With them Neutral, or With their Opposition
The MPA Website

- Using the MPA Website to Support this Initiative
- Using it to Educate Members, the Licensure Board, Legislators, and the Public

- Visit to the MPA Website
- Moving Forward
So Your Jurisdiction Passed a New Licensure Law - NOW WHAT?

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Imagine all the people
living life in peace.
You may say I’m a dreamer.

John Lennon
In 2004, the Washington’s licensure statute was going to be opened by the Board of Health that runs our licensing board. WSPA seized the opportunity and created an education campaign for the WSPA Council and licensing board to define the scope of the problem.
There something happening here.

What it is ain’t exactly clear.

Buffalo Springfield
Scope of Problem

- Approximately 150 postdoctoral students and early career psychologists wrote to the Licensing Board.
I was bruised and battered;
I couldn’t tell what I felt;
I was unrecognizable
to myself.

Bruce Springsteen
ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF OUR YOUNG

- Postdoctoral Supervision sporadic at best
- Many worked 1500 postdoctoral hours without pay, and in fact, had to pay for supervision
- Opportunity costs ran $40,000-$80,000
Hey now, all you children, leave your lights on, better leave your lights on. Cause there’s a monster, living under my bed, whispering in my ear.

Santana//Everlast
Jurisdictions are not succeeding in attracting most of their early career psychologists to join their associations.
She said don’t give or sell your soul away, cause all that you have is your soul.

Tracy Chapman
Moving Forward

- Demonstrate care and connect with nascent potential members through this very personal lifeblood issue
- Bring them to the fight
Been
dazed and confused
for so long
its not true.

Led Zeppelin
Legislature and Rule Makers

- 3300 hours that are under the direction of the student and the student’s doctoral program
- Quality of the supervision will markedly increase
What you want? Baby I got it.

What you need?

Do you know that I got it?

All I’m asking is for respect …

Aretha Franklin
Public Hearings

- Number of clinical hours do not change
- Only Choices about sequencing change
- Quality of the supervision will markedly increase
I feel good.

I knew that I would now.

I feel good.

I knew that I would now, so good, so good …

James Brown
Engaging Students & ECPs in Licensure Advocacy

Michael B. Madson, Ph.D.
Chair, APAGS
Student/ECP
Advocacy to Date

- APAGS was highly involved from the beginning (The Commission)
  - 2 Voting members (APAGS Committee member & member from APAGS Taskforce on New Professionals issues – Now CECP)
- Always strong supporters of the change
- Involved in the BoD Follow Up Workgroup
- APAGS/CECP collaboration on advocacy letter
- APAGS created advocacy talking points
- APAGS & APAGS ACT advocated with CoR reps
- Attended CoR Caucus meetings & spoke at CoR
As expected very excited

- "I'm very excited to hear about the new policy! I'm contacting my state board about implementing these changes. Below is a letter I've drafted to send to my state board. I would like to share this letter (upon completion) to the listserv to encourage others to write to their state boards and use the letter as a template. I doubt that my state will make these changes without a HUGE push from students and post-docs."

- "I would also like to do this too. I also live in the state and perhaps we can do this together. Maybe, we can get the support of the state psych association as well. It's worth a shot."

From ECP Listserv 2-06
Bottom Line!

Students and ECPs have the knowledge, skills, and energy to become active allies in legislative advocacy on this and other issues!!
APAGS & CECP Efforts to Educate

- Using Listservs to “Get the correct word out.”
- APAGS developed advocacy talking points that students & ECPs can use
- Articles to be published in gradPSYCh
- Use the APAGS Advocacy Coordinating Team for grassroots education
APAGS ACT

- Subcommittee of APAGS
- Chair, 6 Regional Coordinators, 50 State Coordinators, 350+ Campus Representatives
- Major focus on legislative advocacy
- Coordinates grassroots advocacy efforts
- Can be an extremely valuable tool for state advocacy!!
Engage Students & ECPs On These Issues

- Develop a welcoming environment for student & ECP enthusiasm
  - Respond to student & ECP letters or requests on this issue
  - Offer to have discussions with students and ECPs
  - Invite them to your board meeting to discuss the issue
Reach out to your APAGS-ACT State Advocacy Coordinator
- All regional Coordinators are here to discuss how to connect with your state’s coordinator

Consider students as colleagues in training and ECPs as your new colleagues
- Ask them for their ideas
  - Many have good ones or alternative perspectives!
Engaging (Continued)

- Consider this an Association issue
  - Collaborate with vs. assign to students/ECPs
  - Be willing to offer association/member resources to assist

- Reach out!
  - Offer workshops or student/ECP specific programming
  - Send outreach letters to academic departments, formal postdocs, and internship sites
The Future

- Students and ECPs **ARE** the future of APA and SPTAs
- APA has made a direct statement of this by changing their policy
- It will be important for SPTAs to send a similar message through their inclusion and advocacy on this issue