

# Some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the IPA Prescription Privileges Initiative

The following is a short version of a document that can be read in full on the IPA website's Prescriptive Authority Section ([www.illinoispsychology.org](http://www.illinoispsychology.org)). Please read the entire document.

## 1. Is the IPA RxP Initiative new or sudden in its process?

The RxP Subcommittee of the IPA Legislative Committee was established in 1991 with the express purpose of pursuing prescriptive authority for psychologists with APA approved specialized training in clinical psychopharmacology. IPA first introduced a prescriptive authority bill in 1998 with State Senator Carol Ronen as our chief sponsor. This RxP initiative has been routinely discussed in Association meetings or forums that are open to all members. Since 1991, prescription privileges, for psychologists in Illinois, has been discussed and designated as an active agenda item with the membership of IPA and publicly on numerous and regular occasions...

## 2. How has the IPA Council tried to balance competing opinions about RxP?

During the last five years of IPA Council Meetings, there have been several votes on RxP activities and all of these Council votes have included thorough discussions of this complex issue with consideration of minority and majority Council and member opinions. Each of these votes affirmed the IPA's engagement in RxP lobbying activities. During the last year, as noted above, RxP votes had been taken at the January 2011, September 2011, and January 2012 meetings. At every one of these votes, the RxP initiative had been confirmed, nearly unanimously with at times one abstention. There were no negative votes.

## 3. Have General IPA Membership Dues or Contributions been used in the IPA—RxP Initiative?

No. The IPA Executive Committee and Council have been sensitive to Council and Member wishes that the funding for the RxP Initiative come from separate funding sources rather than from the general legislative fund. This is done so that members may choose to fund or not to fund the RxP initiative. The source of funding for the RxP effort is from monies contributed solely for the purpose of the RxP legislative effort. The RxP funding is not coming from any general IPA membership revenue stream...

## 4. What are defamation and libel guidelines and sanctions for discussing any science/practice issue on the IPA Listserv?

There were over 200 emails on this issue in a three week period of time. This resulted in a disruption

of the listserv with several members resigning from the listserv. In addition, there has been a rancor expressed toward IPA staff members and volunteer officers of the Association. For example, there have been accusations of secrecy, officers' dishonest motives, and staff's and officers' unethical behavior. All of this besmirches people's reputations, integrity and credibility. This is potentially libelous and actionable behavior, which we do not want on our listserv...

## 5. What is the relationship between the IPA Listserv and IPA Policy?

Since the listserv is very public, we value it as a tool for encouraging civil and scientific debate. We do not make IPA policy on the listserv. Policy is made by the IPA governing structure that includes Area Code Representatives, Section Chairs, and IPA Executive Officers. IPA members are welcome to observe IPA Executive Committee and Council meetings (with at least 24 hours' notice to the President) and may speak on an issue if requested of the President (and granted by the President) at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. We encourage all members to take the time to attend and participate in Section Meetings, Regional Meetings, educational and social IPA events, and, of course, our annual Convention...

## 6. Is there a place that an IPA Member can go to Fact Check Listserv Postings?

Yes, using search engines like "Google" and "Bing" to learn about the history of an issue as well as the history of those advocating an opinion about an issue has become standard in this electronic communications era. Using the APA Website to research information, such as the APA training requirements and opportunities for a degree or certification in Clinical Psychopharmacology, is highly advised. Checking the IPA Website for postings of meetings, where the RxP issue, as well as other complex professional issues, may be discussed, is highly recommended...

## 7. Does the IPA only Support Activities in which all Psychologists Participate or wish to Participate or does it also Support Activities in which many Psychologists Participate or wish to Participate?

We are a professional, scientific association and, as such, we support professional activities, backed by empirically valid data, in which many of our members engage or wish to engage...

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**8. Will there be other opportunities to discuss IPA's RxP Initiative?**

Elected IPA leadership does its best to communicate to the membership through specific processes. Items for discussion and action are first discussed in committee meetings, which anyone can attend. Committees then present any actionable items to Council, where issues are discussed, debated and ultimately put to vote at quarterly Council meetings. The results of such votes and approved action items are then communicated to the entire membership in the member newsletter...

**9. How will successful RxP legislation affect our current psychology license?**

The passage of legislation authorizing psychologists, who have specialized training in clinical psychopharmacology, to prescribe medications, would expand our licensing act. Thus, licensed psychologists who have 460 hours of specialized, didactic training in clinical psychopharmacology; 80 hours of physical assessment training; who have made recommendations for medication for 100 patients under close supervision from a prescribing health provider; who have passed the APA Psychopharmacology Exam for Psychologists (PEP); and have been approved by the Psychology Licensing Board in the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation; will receive an additional license by the Psychology Licensing Board to prescribe medication.

**10. How will successful RxP legislation affect reimbursement practices by insurance carriers?**

In New Mexico and Louisiana, states in which psychologists prescribe, the reimbursement practices by insurance carriers, for non-prescribing psychologists, have not been affected by the presence of prescribing psychologists...

**11. How will successful RxP legislation affect liability insurance premiums?**

In New Mexico and Louisiana, liability insurance premiums have been raised 15% for just those psychologists with licenses to prescribe who are insured by the APA Insurance Trust. To date no complaints have been filed with The Trust against any prescribing psychologist. Non-prescribing psychologists saw no increase in their rates...

**12. How will successful RxP legislation affect attacks against our license from the medical community?**

The medical community does not attack our existing license. The medical community generally aims to prevent psychologists from expanding their scope of practice and has, in the past, unsuccessfully lobbied against our seeking licensure (over "registration"),

unsuccessfully lobbied against our receiving insurance reimbursement; successfully lobbied against our using the word "diagnosis" instead of "classification" in our language; successfully lobbied against our having hospital admitting privileges...

**13. How is our legislative initiative for prescriptive authority similar to the legislative initiative of social workers and licensed professional counselors for authority to conduct psychological testing and authority to seek insurance reimbursement for independent practice?**

Our legislative initiative for prescriptive authority is very similar to the legislative initiative of other healthcare providers who are pushing to expand their scopes of practice. Scope of practice is dynamic. The world is changing and nothing stands still.

**14. Will members be informed of each step of the legislative process in Springfield, once an initiative, like RxP, has been thoroughly discussed and approved?**

We entrust our lobbyists, hired after careful due diligence by the IPA Executive Committee and IPA Council, to help us pursue policy, established by the IPA. Legislative meetings, hearings, and any other legislative action may or may not be announced publicly. The IPA leadership and the IPA lobbyists will make strategic decisions about appropriate times for public announcements... ■

**Summary**

In summary, the issue of prescription privileges has been discussed at open monthly Legislative Committee meetings as posted in the quarterly newsletter sent to all IPA members. The results of the Committee meetings are brought to Council for discussion and vote. Elected IPA officers then pursue Council objectives based upon the results of any votes...

**Beth N. Rom-Rymer, Ph.D.**, IPA President  
**Bruce E. Bonecutter, Ph.D.**, Past IPA President  
**Steven Rothke, Ph.D., ABPP**, Past IPA President  
**Terrence Koller, Ph.D., ABPP**, IPA Executive Director

And in consultation with the following IPA officers:  
**Armand Cerbone, Ph.D.**, IPA Past President, IPA Representative to APA Council  
**Randy Georgemiller, Ph.D.**, IPA Past President, IPA Representative to APA Council  
**Blaine Lesnik, Psy.D.**, IPA Membership Chair  
**Patricia Pimental, Psy.D.**, ABPN, IPA Past President, Chair, IPA Legislative Committee  
**Bob Rinaldi, Ph.D.**, Chair, IPA RxP Subcommittee  
**Gregory Sarlo, Ph.D.**, IPA Immediate Past President  
**Joseph Troiani, Ph.D.**, IPA Treasurer