

Update on Prescriptive Authority for Psychologists

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On March 6th, 2012, IPA's bill for prescriptive authority [see IPA website for a draft of our bill] passed out of the Illinois State Senate Public Health Committee with a 7-5 vote. This was the first time in Illinois history that the IPA's RxP bill had passed out of a legislative committee.

On May 1st, the IPA, together with its lobbying and public relations teams, initiated an extensive statewide grassroots campaign to garner broad-based support for RxP. Over 350 psychologists, from around the state of Illinois, have been meeting with legislators and the broader mental healthcare community to educate them on the legislation that would give prescriptive authority for psychotropic medications to psychologists with advanced, specialized training in clinical psychopharmacology. Several Illinois-based graduate professional schools and Universities (including The Chicago School of Professional Psychology and Midwestern University) are in the process of creating training programs for psychologists in clinical psychopharmacology.

Interest, accompanied by much intense discussion, has been strong with legislators and others in Illinois who are concerned about mental health treatment options.

By late November, 2012, 38 meetings with legislators and RxP supporters in their districts had been completed with an additional 48 meetings in the works. Whereas five third party statewide organizations have officially endorsed the RxP bill, there have been ongoing discussions with numerous other third party organizations that will yield significant formal endorsements over the next few months. Dr. Jana Martin, CEO of the APA Insurance Trust, and Dr. Elaine LeVine, the first prescribing psychologist in New Mexico, have been actively engaged in many of these discussions. The IPA is looking forward to re-introducing the RxP legislation early in 2013 with the hope that the bill will pass out of both Houses of the State Legislature during the spring session. Early in November, the American Psychological Association's Practice Organization (APAPO) announced that it was giving the IPA an award of \$55,000 to help defray lobbyist expenses for our RxP initiative. The APAPO noted, in its award letter, that it was particularly impressed by the IPA's organizational strength in pursuit of this initiative. The award is a wonderful vote of confidence from our parent organization! ■