

My name is Barbara Colombo, PhD, and I am President of the Vermont Psychological Association. I am writing on behalf of many of our members to express strong support for H.237, which would allow doctoral psychologists who complete advanced education and supervised training in clinical psychopharmacology to prescribe and deprescribe psychotropic medications.

Vermont, like many rural states, faces persistent shortages in psychiatric care. Psychologists are often the providers who know these patients best, yet we are currently unable to fully address their needs when medication becomes part of treatment. H.237 represents a careful, incremental step toward more integrated care. It does not expand prescribing broadly, but rather establishes a rigorous pathway for a limited group of doctoral psychologists to obtain additional master's-level training, supervised clinical experience, and collaborative relationships with medical providers.

The bill reflects the Office of Professional Regulation's thorough Sunrise Review and incorporates safeguards that prioritize patient safety, interdisciplinary collaboration, and clear scopes of practice. In states where prescribing psychologists have been established, the model has improved access to care—particularly in underserved and rural communities—while maintaining strong safety records.

As President of the Vermont Psychological Association, I believe H.237 is a thoughtful, evidence-informed policy that strengthens Vermont's mental health workforce and supports more coordinated, patient-centered care.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to the well-being of Vermonters.