

My name is Deborah Wachtel, and I am a Nurse Practitioner and EMT practicing in Addison County, Vermont. I am writing to express my support for H.237, the legislation that would allow appropriately trained doctoral psychologists to prescribe and deprescribe psychotropic medications.

In my clinical work, I have seen first hand the challenges Vermonters face in accessing timely, integrated mental health care — especially in rural areas. Long wait times, limited psychiatric providers, and fragmented treatment systems often delay care for patients who are struggling. Expanding the role of highly trained psychologists with additional, specialized education in clinical psychopharmacology is a practical, patient-centered solution. As an EMT, I go to mental/behavioral health emergency calls - including attempted suicides - for people who have experienced frightening regression in their mental health due to inability to find appropriate and accessible mental health prescribers causing a lapse in prescriptions.

Psychologists bring deep expertise in assessment, psychotherapy, and behavioral health. With the additional master's-level training and supervised clinical experience required under H.237, they would be well prepared to collaborate with primary care providers and advanced practice clinicians like myself. This team-based model has been successfully implemented in other states and has helped improve access to care without compromising safety.

As a Nurse Practitioner, I value collaborative, interdisciplinary care. I believe prescribing psychologists would be strong partners in supporting patients with complex mental health needs, particularly in underserved communities across Vermont.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation and for your ongoing work to improve access to mental health services in our state.