

I am writing to express my concerns regarding H 237, the bill that would permit psychologists in Vermont to prescribe medications. I am very much in opposition to this bill, and this is not, as one might expect, a guild issue for me. I have professional experience with this issue and it is this experience that makes me so worried.

Almost 15 years ago, I participated as a psychopharmacology instructor for the master's programs for psychiatric prescribers at the Massachusetts Professional School of Psychology. My participation as a professor in that program was initially to show my support for the *expansion* of prescribing rights to PhD and PsyD professionals and clinicians. However, I found that the level of knowledge necessary to do this safely, something I thought surely could be taught in a one or two semesters, was not at all possible. I wrote about this experience and would be interested in testifying if that would be useful. All of the medicines that I routinely prescribe have multiple systemic effects, and these effects are, through the process of medical education, literally engraved in everything that psychiatrists, neurologists, and primary care physicians do. The signs of worrisome side effects, dangerous drug-drug interactions, and non-psychiatric conditions that mimic or complicate psychiatric disease are easily missed and require the kind of training that training in systemic health care best offers.

I would be glad to send you the essay I wrote outlining these thoughts in Psychology Today. And please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like more information.

I am well aware of the challenges to bringing care equitably and safely throughout Vermont. There are other solutions that do not so seriously constitute a significant and real risk to the safety of those in need.

Thank you for your attention to this matter

Best Regards,

Steven C. Schlozman, MD