

Attached please find my testimony regarding H. 237. I also want to be clear that I am writing this as a resident of the state of Vermont and a Vermont physician. I am not writing as a representative of The University of Vermont Medical School or Medical Center.

I am very worried about this house bill, and I have a number of concerns.

I have had the opportunity to teach psychopharmacology in one of the best psychology graduate schools in the country. I served as a professor in this program because I was well aware of the need for additional prescribers even in cities like Boston, where I was living at the time. I was extremely hopeful that this program could alleviate some of the challenges towards finding skilled prescribers. However, I was naive to how little medical information the graduate students in this program grasped, and it quickly became apparent to me that giving psychologists the opportunity to prescribe psychiatric medications was not a safe solution to these challenges. I vividly recall the real consternation students expressed and that I felt when I explained the necessary monitoring for the medications we were discussing. I came out of this experience very worried that there would be the risk of real harm if these psychologists, who were extremely well-meaning, were to prescribe these powerful medications. Please understand that this is not a turf or a guild issue. This is about patient safety.

-The dearth of prescribers can be more efficiently, less expensively, and more safely approached through the well validated and evidence-based collaborative care models of patient care.

-80 years is far too old to serve as the safe cut-off. I have family and professional experience with these risks.

I am happy to talk more about this. Thank you for reading this email.

Sincerely,

Steven C. Schlozman, MD
Physician and Patient