



Position on Prescribing Privileges for Psychologists

Based on the information and evidence obtained at the NAMI Task Force meeting and in preparing this report, staff believe that **it would not be appropriate at this time for NAMI to adopt a position in support of state legislation allowing prescribing privileges for psychologists.** NAMI recommends the following:

Implementation of the New Mexico law granting prescribing rights to psychologists should be carefully monitored, through the NAMI Policy Research Institute and other vehicles, to assess its impact on patient safety and outcomes, as well as its impact on addressing serious human resource shortages in public sector mental health.

The only research conducted on psychologists' prescribing privileges, the PDP was conducted under circumstances very different from those experienced by mental health practitioners in the public sector. DOD psychologists practice under controlled circumstances, with specific formularies and close collegial relationships with psychiatrists. Moreover, with some exceptions, they tend to treat patients with less serious mental illnesses.

By contrast, psychologists in the public sector would more likely treat patients with more serious mental illnesses and other medical conditions. They would also have less access to consultation and supervision by psychiatrist colleagues, due to severe workforce shortages in the public sector. There appears to be a serious lack of clinical protocols guiding advance practice psychiatric nurses and other non-psychiatrists authorized to prescribe psychiatric medications regarding when to seek psychiatric supervision or transfer complex cases to psychiatrists.

Staff recommend that clinical protocols and algorithms be developed to guide practitioners in these treatment considerations. This information is summarized from the Prescribing Privileges Task Force Report and Recommendations to the NAMI Board of Directors, December 2002.

Link to the page below to see NAMI's position, its background piece of psychologist prescribing, and its Advocacy Goals and Strategies.
http://www.nami.org/template.cfm?section=Issue_Spotlights&Istid=274

NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots organization for people with mental illness and their families. Founded in 1979, NAMI has affiliates in every state and in more than 1,100 local communities across the country.