In response to the ongoing mental health crisis in the United States and the public’s acute need for access to psychological services, the Board of Directors of the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) approved the creation of the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT) in February of 2015. In May of 2016, Arizona became the first state to enact PSYPACT; today, PSYPACT is effective in 39 states/jurisdictions.

While this is meaningful for PSYPACT Authorization Holders who can now practice into all 39 of those states/jurisdictions, this also means that individuals in those 39 states/jurisdictions who find themselves in need of psychological services now have a much larger selection of psychologists available to them.

So, what is PSYPACT and how does it work? Who benefits from PSYPACT? How does a psychologist become a PSYPACT Authorization Holder?

PSYPACT is a legally binding contract that is enacted by legislation for the purpose of providing state-to-state authorization for practice to qualifying psychologists. When PSYPACT legislation passes in a state, it joins PSYPACT’s governing body, the PSYPACT Commission. Psychologists in PSYPACT-enacted states wishing to practice under PSYPACT authorization must meet strict eligibility requirements. Participating states can communicate and exchange information - including verification of licensure and disciplinary sanctions - with other PSYPACT states, as well as the PSYPACT Commission.

Any person needing psychological services benefits from PSYPACT because they gain increased access to care with assurance that psychologists authorized to practice via PSYPACT meet its rigorous qualifying criteria. PSYPACT facilitates continuity of care when individuals relocate or travel and allows psychologists to serve populations that are currently underserved or geographically isolated.

PSYPACT benefits psychologists by allowing them, as Authorization Holders, to practice telepsychology from their home states and/or conduct temporary in-person, face-to-face practice across state lines without having to establish independent licensure in those distant states. Time allowances for temporary practice regulations are also standardized under PSYPACT.

To become a PSYPACT Authorization Holder, a psychologist must meet strict eligibility requirements which include, among other qualifying criteria, holding a full, unrestricted license in a PSYPACT-participating state. This means that they must not have had disciplinary action taken against any license they own, and they must be able to obtain the necessary pre-requirements issued by ASPPB. To maintain PSYPACT authorization, a psychologist must continue to hold a full, unrestricted license in a PSYPACT-participating state, have no disciplinary action taken against them, renew required ASPPB certifications and PSYPACT authorizations annually, and comply with all state/jurisdictional and PSYPACT rules, laws, policies, and regulations.

The PSYPACT Commission will continue to reduce regulatory barriers and increase access to mental health care.

For additional information, please visit the PSYPACT website (www.psypact.org).