

# NEWS RELEASE

Senator Judy Ward

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## **Bill to Increase Access to Psychology Services Sent to the Governor**

HARRISBURG – A bill that would expand access to psychology services is on its way to the governor’s desk to be signed into law, according to the bill’s sponsor, Senator Judy Ward (R-30).

[Senate Bill 67](#) would allow Pennsylvania to join the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT) to allow telepsychological practice across state lines. Each state has its own licensing laws and rules which vary considerably, making it extremely difficult for a person to obtain a license to practice in several states. As such, the possibility of providing psychological services via telecommunication technologies (telepsychology) across jurisdictional boundaries is unattainable. Also, each state has varying time frames as it relates to permitting a psychologist to temporarily provide services (in-person, face-to-face) in their state.

Under PSYPACT, licensed psychologists will be able to apply to practice telepsychology and conduct temporary in-person, face-to-face practice in other states in the compact. The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards developed PSYPACT to improve patient access to services by removing red tape that prohibits psychologists from serving patients in other states.

“Ensuring patients have access to psychological services is a serious concern during the pandemic, but without this bill, it will continue to be a challenge long after the public health emergency is over,” Ward said. “I am thankful that we are making strides to ensure more patients can access the services they need, especially in rural areas like mine where distance and a lack of providers creates significant barriers to care.”

Marie C. McGrath, Ph.D., President of the Pennsylvania Psychological Association, noted that PSYPACT “will increase the availability of treatment for those who live in areas of the state with relatively few providers, provide continuity of care for individuals who wish to continue therapy while traveling out of state for work or school, and facilitate emergency

provision of services by qualified professionals during times of crisis. We thank Senator Ward and her colleagues in the General Assembly for their support of this legislation, which holds tremendous potential for enhancing Pennsylvanians' access to psychological services, and look forward to Governor Wolf's signature."

Twelve other states have already passed laws to join PSYPACT.

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