



TPA LEGISLATIVE ALERT

TPA Sunset Advisory Commission Talking Points

It is a crucial time for psychology. We are at point where we must distinguish ourselves as a true doctoral-level profession. The Texas Psychological Association Board of Trustees has approved TPA's official position on the recent Sunset Advisory Commission staff recommendations. It is now time to make our voice heard. We are asking *every* TPA member to contact the Sunset Advisory Commission members and share with them our concerns about the recent recommendations. For the Commission members' contact information, please go to TPA's website at www.texaspsyc.org. We need for you to **call and email** *every* member and share with them our concerns. The messages we want you to share are as follows:

ISSUE: ORAL EXAM

Sunset staff recommends the elimination of the oral exam.

TPA'S POSITION: TSBEP needs to continue to utilize this competency exam as a requirement for licensure.

TALKING POINTS

- Psychology is a profession that requires face-to-face interaction. It is important that qualified licensed psychologists be required to take this competency exam as it tests a candidate's ability to successfully interact with clients.
- *Provide your own experience* with taking the oral exam and how it prepared you for your practice.

psychologists should obtain the specific and pivotal experience that is unique to the post-doctoral internship.

- **PLEASE USE YOUR OWN STORY** on how your post-doctoral experience uniquely prepared you for professional practice.

ISSUE: TSBEP

Sunset staff recommends the administrative aspects of TSBEP be merged with other agencies.

TPA'S POSITION: TSBEP should be kept independent with its own dedicated staff.

TALKING POINTS

- Psychology is a doctoral-level profession and it take a special body of knowledge to provide guidance and consultation to the licensees.
- We understand other mental agencies are moving to Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) but moving TSBEP to TDLR would change the structure from a policy committee to an advisory committee.
- If TSBEP remains an independent agency, other behavioral health professionals who are seeking licensure could be housed within TSBEP and receive administrative support from the TSBEP staff.
- TSBEP is a member of the Health Professional Council and actually

provides administrative support to other member's agencies within HPC. If you remove a vital member of the agency this will result in a trickle-down effect and the public will be impacted by not having adequate staff for their administrative functions.

- **WE NEED TO KEEP OUR INDEPENDENT BOARD.**

ISSUE: NEW DEFINITION OF PSYCHOLOGY

Sunset staff recommends that the Texas Legislature adopt a new definition for the profession of psychology.

TPA'S POSITION: TPA agrees a new definition for psychology is needed and will work with the state Legislature to adopt a new definition. However, to accurately reflect the nature of a psychologist's practice, the new definition should include diagnose.

TALKING POINTS:

- TSBEP may be unable to prosecute the unlicensed practice of psychology and could have difficulty in enforcing practice standards from individuals who claim to be practicing a particular activity which constitutes the practice of psychology.
- In Texas, we have a practice act and a title act. Having a practice act is necessary to create an enforceable statute that without one an individual

could engage in unlicensed practice.

- A practice act protects the health and safety of Texans.
- Psychologists diagnose in their practice and even include a diagnostic code on insurance forms.
- Psychiatrists who consult with psychologists ask the PSYCHOLOGIST to provide a diagnoses so they can prescribe medication.
- The Medicare Definition of psychologists **includes** the word diagnose in the definition. If the federal government recognizes these type of service then Texas should as well.

TSBEP is being ask to hold a public hearing and provide three definition proposals offering different approaches to defining the practice of psychology with the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. These proposals ranked or unranked would then be submitted to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and the House Public Health Committee.

The Sunset Advisory Commission is holding a hearing on December 8th. Please contact David White at tpa_dwhite@att.net if you are able to testify at this hearing.

ISSUE: POST DOC HOURS

Sunset staff recommends the required 3500 hours of supervised experience can be obtained through either the pre-doctoral internship or the post-doctoral internship.

TPA'S POSITION – The post-doctoral internship provides a different level of internship experience and therefore should still be a requirement for licensure.

TALKING POINTS

- There is a significant difference between the experience provided during the pre-doctoral internship and the post-doctoral internship. For the well-being of the client, all licensed