

CAPP
CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION
OF PSYCHOLOGY PROVIDERS

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2009
Board of Directors

January 19, 2009

Andy Schwartz, Ph.D.
President
Mission Viejo, CA

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

Jay Slosar, PhD
Secretary
Irvine, CA

I am writing to you on behalf of the California Association of Psychology Providers (CAPP), a state-wide organization of California licensed psychologists. It has come to our attention that consideration is being given to create a Board for mental health professionals that would include the profession of psychology. On behalf of our Board and our members, we strongly believe that such a Board is not in the best interests of the people of California.

Rosalyn Laudati, PhD
Treasurer
Newport Beach, CA

Stephen Berger, Ph.D
Executive Director

We are confident that you will receive many messages from others regarding flaws in this proposed plan. We will confine ourselves to one fundamental issue. For approximately half a century, the Legislature has recognized that the professional practice of psychology is a **doctoral** level profession. First there was Certification of psychologists (1958), with licensure of psychologists in 1967. Only a decade later, in 1978, the Legislature recognized that licensed, doctoral psychologists, who are Clinical Psychologists, are qualified for independent practice in a hospital (Health and Safety Code Section 1316.5).

In 1980, the Legislature further recognized the doctoral level standards of psychologists in declaring that hospitals were not to discriminate in favor of medical doctors against California's licensed, doctoral level Clinical Psychologists. The other health professions authorized to function independently in hospitals are also doctoral level professionals (medical doctors, dentists, podiatrists). Thus, in the mental health arena, Clinical Psychologists and medical doctors who specialize in psychiatry are considered by the Legislature to be unique from all other mental health professions in permitting both professions to independently treat patients in hospitals. Among licensed practitioners who provide health services, the Legislature has clearly defined psychology as a unique doctoral level profession, just as it has with other doctoral level practitioners. In 1990, the California Supreme Court upheld the Legislature's authorization of independent hospital practice for California's licensed, doctoral, Clinical Psychologists (*CAPP v. Rank*). ***The proposed action negates the Legislative statutes that apply to the practice of psychology.***

We urge you to recognize that under California law, doctoral level, licensed psychologists are a unique profession that should not be grouped with non-doctoral level practitioners. The public should not be confused and misled regarding the fact that psychology is a doctoral level profession. We would be happy to discuss this matter with you or your staff at any time.

Respectfully,

Stephen E. Berger, Ph.D., ABPP
Executive Director, CAPP

CC: Board of Psychology
California Psychological Association
American Psychological Association