



SENATE BILL 171: Modernize Reg/Master's Level Psychologists.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate	Date:	April 2, 2025
Introduced by:	Sen. Burgin	Prepared by:	Stewart Sturkie
Analysis of:	Second Edition		Committee Co-Counsel

OVERVIEW: *Senate Bill 171 would allow certain licensed psychological associates to practice without supervision by a licensed psychologist or licensed psychological associate and would address the practice of neuropsychology and forensic psychology by licensed psychological associates. It would also allow certain licensed psychological associates to provide health services without supervision, or to qualify for certification as a health services provider psychological associate. It would also make changes to the procedure for appointing psychologist members to the North Carolina Psychology Board (the Board).*

CURRENT LAW:

- Licensed psychological associates are currently prohibited from practicing psychology without the supervision of a qualified licensed psychologist.
- Licensed psychological associates are currently prohibited from providing health services without the supervision that is required by rules of the Board.
- When a Board member's term expires, or when a vacancy arises, the North Carolina Psychological Association, on advice of the chairs from psychology graduate departments in the State, proposes a list of three names to the Governor. The Governor then makes an appointment from that list.

BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1 would allow a licensed psychological associate to independently practice without supervision by a licensed psychologist or licensed psychological associate if:

- They have 4,000 hours of post-licensure experience in providing psychological services under supervision by at least one qualified licensed psychologist or qualified licensed psychological associate. This experience must be obtained between 24 and 60 consecutive months.
- They document that they received average or above average performance ratings for all 4,000 hours of post-licensure experience.
- They apply for independent practice with proof of the experience listed immediately above.

Section 1 would also make technical changes.

Section 2 would require licensed psychological associates to demonstrate their specialized education and training to the Board before practicing neuropsychology or forensic psychology. The bill would also instruct the Board on considerations for whether or not an associate is qualified to practice in those areas. "Neuropsychology" and "forensic psychology" are also defined.

Section 3 would:

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- Allow a licensed psychological associate, who is certified as a health services provider psychological associate, to provide health services without supervision if they meet the requirements outlined in Section 1.
- Allow a licensed psychological associate, who was licensed before June 30, 2013 and can demonstrate that they have provided health services psychology under supervision for 4,000 hours between 24 and 60 consecutive months, to qualify for certification as a health services provider psychological associate.

Section 4 would change the process for appointing a psychologist member to the Board. It would require the Board, the North Carolina Psychological Association, and the North Carolina Association of Professional Psychologists to form a nominating committee and seek nominees from licensees. The committee would then send a list of three eligible persons to the Governor, who would appoint someone from the list.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This act would be effective October 1, 2025.