



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

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	Senate Health Care. If favorable, re-refer to Rules and Operations of the Senate	Date:	March 31, 2025
Introduced by:	Sen. Burgin	Prepared by:	Stewart Sturkie
Analysis of:	First Edition		Committee Co-Counsel

OVERVIEW: *Senate Bill 171 would allow certain licensed psychological associates to practice without supervision by a licensed psychologist and would make changes to the procedure for appointing 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.
- 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 if:

- They have 3,000 hours of postgraduate experience in providing psychological services under supervision by at least one qualified, licensed psychologist. This experience must be obtained between 24 and 60 consecutive months.
- They apply for independent practice with proof of the experience listed immediately above.

Section 1 would also make technical changes.

Section 2 would allow a licensed psychological associate to become certified as a health services provider psychological associate if they meet the requirements outlined in Section 1 and pay an application fee.

Section 3 would require members of the Board to serve until their successor is appointed, even if their term has expired. If a member's term expires or a vacancy arises, the bill would require the governor to appoint a new member within 60 days of the vacancy. The process for appointing a new member would require the Board to solicit applications from all licensees, to submit the names of qualified applicants to all the licensees for a vote, and to send a list of the three applicants who received the most votes to the Governor. The Governor is then required to make the appointment from the list.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

Section 3 would become effective October 1, 2025, and would apply to vacancies existing on or after that date. The remainder of the act would become effective October 1, 2025.

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