Exploring Alignment of Medicaid and Education Systems to Expand the Mental Health Workforce

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School Psychologist Credentialing & Medicaid Funding

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Terminology

• **Certification**
  – Term often used for credentialing by State Education Agencies (SEA)

• **Licensure**
  • Term most often used by Boards of Psychology
  • Also used by increasing numbers of SEAs

• **Credential**
  • Umbrella term when describing certification and licensure
Different entities issue credentials extending different privileges

**SEAs**

- Regulate school-based practice of school psychology in nearly all states.
- Exceptions exist (e.g., Texas, Hawaii)
- Majority of states use NASP standards

**State Psychology Boards**

- Typically regulate private and independent practice
- Other related credentials may exist
  - (e.g., Board of Professional Counselors; Boards of Allied Mental Health (MA); Board of Behavioral Sciences (CA))
- Many state boards use guidelines set by The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) and APA
SEA credentialing requirements...

- Significant **Inconsistencies** across states
- General lack of official reciprocity across states
- Often influenced by local education norms
Title

• “School psychologist” is the official title in most states, except
  – Arkansas – School Psychology Specialist
  – Texas – Licensed Specialist in School Psychology

• Some states have multiple distinctions or levels
  – E.g., Mississippi, New Mexico, Maine
Scope of Practice

• In most cases, scope limited to schools
  – (including contractual work and private schools)

• Rarely limits the range of services
More on the Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) Credential

- Recognized by 34 states as part of credentialing regulations
- Recognized by 8 states to satisfy renewal requirements
- Over 15,000 active NCSPs
Temporary/Provisional Credentials

- Approximately 20 states have temporary or provisional credential for:
  - SP Interns
  - People completing SP program
  - Emergency waiver (often using SP interns)

- Should not be considered eligible for Medicaid reimbursement
http://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/state-school-psychology-credentialing-requirements

State School Psychology Credentialing Requirements

The State School Psychology Credentialing Requirements list provides information on:

- Credentialing requirements needed to practice in schools
- Continuing education requirements to maintain credentials
- Whether the state accepts the NCSP as an alternative route to credentialing school psychologists
- Scope of practice as it applies to the state education agency (SEA) credential
- Contact information for state departments of education

Disclaimer

This document is intended for informational and clarification purposes only. It is provided as a service to the school psychology community as well as those with an expressed interest in school psychology. We cannot and do not guarantee the currency or accuracy of the information contained in this document. Although we will make every effort to provide current and updated information as we receive it, individuals should in all cases contact the appropriate state agencies to confirm the state’s current requirements. We will endeavor to update the information as it becomes available to us.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
Arkansas

SEA Credential:
School Psychology Specialist requires a Standard Non-Instructional Student Services License. To obtain this credential, one must meet the following requirements:

- Completion of an advanced degree in school psychology or completion of an advanced degree in counseling with a graduate level program of study in school psychology from a college/university and program holding accreditation recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

- Score of 147 or higher on the Praxis School Psychologist exam

School Psychology Specialists are not eligible for a provisional teaching license.

Continuing Education Requirements:
Required 60 contact hours every 5 years. NASP approved CPD hours are accepted towards renewal.

Scope of Practice:
School Psychology Specialists are not permitted to practice in any other arena other than the schools, and may not refer to themselves as "school psychologists". Individuals at the doctoral level may become licensed through the Arkansas Board of Psychology, at which point they may refer to themselves "school psychologists".

SEA website: http://www.arkansased.gov/

SEA Contact:
Loretta Wallace
Consultant for School Psychology Services
2402 Wildwood Center, Suite 170
Sherwood, AR 72120
loretta.wallace@arkansas.gov
501-835-3330
Fax: 501-835-3526

Medicaid Services Provided by School Psychologists

• Most states allow billing for evaluation & direct psychological services

• Some states limit billable services to case management, evaluation, or IEP only services.

• Some states reimburse school psychologists at lower rates as compared to other providers.
School Psychologists as Medicaid Providers

- 32 states recognize school psychologists (credentialed by SEA) as Medicaid providers

- 2 states (VA, NM) require special licensure from the Board of Psychology
Why not all states/territories?

• Misunderstanding/confusion
  – Source of Credential
  – 1995 TA Manual often misinterpreted
  – Services that SPs provide

• Ideally, Medicaid plan should recognize state SP credential.
Getting from 32 to 50 States

- Use other states as a model/framework (especially neighboring states)
- Leverage the NCSP
- Work with state associations/agencies
  - SP Associations
  - School Boards
  - Superintendents
- Identify process to make changes at state level
- Educate stakeholders about school psychologists
- Ensure districts equipped logistically
Why is it important to allow school psychologists to bill Medicaid?

• More revenue to school districts to expand existing services

• School psychologists are already providing these services to students

• They are the most qualified to provide school based mental health services
Improving Accessibility to High Quality School Psychological Services

- Work with state SP association
  - MH Service Professional Demonstration Grant
  - Tackling shortages
    - Recruitment
    - Salary/stipends
    - Expanding role
    - Access to graduate preparation
- Maintain integrity of professional certification/licensure
- Access NASP Resources
QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, INSULTS

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