

## NO Reply

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**From:** Kimberlee Cooper <kimberleec@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 30, 2019 11:27 AM  
**To:** NO Reply  
**Subject:** Proposed Rule Change Support

To whom it may concern:

My name is Kimberlee Cooper (License # 4580). I am writing to express my support for the proposed rule change under 21 NCAC 54.2008, which would end career-long supervision for Licensed Psychological Associates (LPA). I became licensed as an LPA in 2014. I have worked for a private practice in Cumberland County, and I currently work for Stonewall Jackson Youth Development Center in Cabarrus County. My long-term plan is to open my own private practice and provide psychological services to those living in Mecklenburg and Cabarrus Counties.

My master's program was extremely stringent, due to the fact that our professors geared the program towards entering into a Ph.D. program in Psychology. I completed my practicum at a VA hospital. Once I completed this practicum and graduated, my supervisor at the VA attempted to help me find employment at the VA. At this time, I realized I could not be employed with my license. I later discovered that I could still not work with the military population, due to the inability to take Tricare insurance as an LPA. Both realizations were extremely disheartening after thoroughly enjoying working with this population as a student.

While I was in graduate school, I was provided with a plethora of information about applying to Ph.D. programs, and there was very little guidance about applying for licensure and the limitations to working as a master's level psychologist in North Carolina. As a result, I did not realize that career-long supervision was required until I began seeking licensure. If I had been more informed, it is possible I would have sought a different path. Prior to learning about the proposed rule changes, I researched the requirements to become licensed as a profession counselor, due to the fact that LPCs have more independence and are reimbursable by insurance. They are also more likely to become employed. As you have likely become aware, other master's level clinicians, including LPCs, LCSWs, LCASs, LMFTs, are capable of gaining an autonomous place to serve in mental health care and becoming credentialed by insurance panels to offer services without on-going supervision.

My future goals include providing mental health services to the community. I want to continue working with under-served populations, and I hope to provide affordable care for those in need. I have looked into serving high-needs populations under the Health and Services Administration, but due to my license I cannot be employed. I also have attempted to help with disaster relief services with the Red Cross, which is also not an option due to my license.

When I was working for the private practice in Cumberland County, I can remember people in need of psychological testing were placed on waiting lists for months. Once tested, they would wait an additional month or two for the results. A clinician serving in Cumberland County reports that there is still a three month waiting period for psychological testing. I would imagine rural counties have even longer waiting lists. This confirms a need for LPAs to become independent and also reimbursable by insurance agencies.

I have been fortunate to work in positions that provide me supervision at no cost. As I plan to start a business, I am budgeting approximately \$100 per month to the cost of supervision. This is approximately a quarter of the costs of renting an office space. I plan to take Medicaid and BCBS. I would love to offer the same courtesy to others with varying health insurance plans, as opposed to requiring them to pay the full cost of testing or sessions.

Colleagues have informed me that eight other states allow for independent licensure of master's level psychologists. I believe the public would benefit if North Carolina became added to this list. My primary goal is to be able to serve populations in need of psychological services while also earning an income that is appropriate to my expertise and comparable to other master's level clinicians.

Sincerely,

Kimberlee Cooper