

Tidal Neuropsychology, PLLC

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North Carolina Psychology Board

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Griffin Pollock Sutton, and I am a board-certified clinical neuropsychologist in private practice in Hampstead, North Carolina. I am originally from North Carolina and in fact practice in the same county (Pender) in which I was raised. I moved away for a number of years in order to complete my undergraduate degree (Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina) followed by my doctoral degree (University of Nevada Las Vegas in Las Vegas, Nevada) and my pre-doctoral internship (VA North Texas Healthcare System in Dallas, Texas). I completed my post-doctoral fellowship with Antonio E. Puente at UNC Wilmington (Wilmington, North Carolina). My practice in Hampstead focuses on neuropsychological evaluations of individuals ages six through end of life, as well as individual psychotherapy with adults. I see individuals with insurance plans from all major carriers, including Medicaid.

I am writing in opposition to the proposed changes to supervision for Licensed Psychological Associates (LPAs). While I fully support, respect, and appreciate the valuable services which LPAs provide in our rural, underserved community (as well as other communities), I believe that LPAs should be required to maintain their present levels of supervision as currently outlined in the North Carolina statutes. My reasons for encouraging maintenance of the current statutes are three-fold:

- (1) Given educational requirements for LPAs as compared to licensed psychologists (LPs), LPAs underwent less rigorous training prior to entering into practice. This was completed with the understanding that the individual working towards their LPA status would always require ongoing supervision from someone with more extensive and more rigorous training. Increased time in practice does not equate to more extensive and more rigorous training. This ensures that good, ethical, appropriate practice is being completed by the LPA as supervised by the LP, and thus ensures that the public continues to receive such exceptional service. Removal of the supervision requirement may decrease the quality of the services being received by the public;
- (2) Slight alterations in these statutes may result in a blurring of the distinction between doctoral level and master's level clinicians, which is again problematic from a public use of services perspective. As a personal comparison, I am completely fine with having my daughter see a Physician's Assistant (PA) for routine check-ups or for such concerns as a possible ear infection. In contrast, I request that she only see the medical doctor when having her cataracts evaluated. As a consumer of these medical services, I need to know when someone has one degree versus another. I otherwise have no ability to evaluate the qualifications of the individuals providing the services; and,

- (3) From the perspective of neuropsychological practice, slight alterations in the statutes may lead to a blurring of what is considered appropriate work for LPAs to conduct, including neuropsychological evaluations, which require extensive specialized training in neuropsychological assessment, statistics, and brain functionality. I have already seen a number of evaluations completed by LPAs which have begun to “push” these boundaries to a degree under the umbrella of psychological evaluations. Again, this would be problematic from the standpoint of the public’s perception of who is qualified to complete an evaluation for someone who is seeking one for themselves or a loved one.

Again, I am writing to encourage the maintenance of the current statutes regulating the practice and supervision of LPAs in North Carolina. I appreciate your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Griffin P. Sutton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Griffin P. Sutton, Ph.D., ABN
Psychologist