

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Hospital Privileging of Psychologists and Other Non-Psychiatrist Mental Health Professionals

Approved by the Board of Trustees, July 2025

Approved by the Assembly, May 2025

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(reaffirmed 2007)

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“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – APA Operations Manual

Issue:

Hospital treatment is the highest level of treatment available to manage complex psychiatric conditions with or without comorbid general medical disease. Under US Code of Federal Regulations Title 42, hospitals are required to have an organized medical staff that must be composed of physicians and may also have other practitioners. Compared with other health care professionals, physicians have received the highest level of medical and clinical training of professionals and are the best qualified to oversee the comprehensive treatment of patients in hospital settings, considering information regarding medical and mental health, including interpretation of laboratory and radiological studies, pharmacologic management, and psychological and rehabilitation therapies. Patients hospitalized with psychiatric illness benefit from an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates medical and behavioral management, psychotherapy, socialization, addressing social determinants of health, and health education. Hospitals need to employ specialists for each of these roles that may include psychologists, social workers, recreational therapists, dietitians, and nurses.

APA Position:

Patients who are hospitalized in psychiatric settings and those who are hospitalized in medical settings who require psychiatric consultation are best served when responsibility for their mental health and substance use disorder care resides with psychiatrists leading interdisciplinary teams that include psychologists and other mental health professionals as critical members. All team members should be eligible for appropriate hospital appointments, however, nonphysicians should not be placed in the role of being the attending of record.

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