

New Rule Paves the Way for Out-Of-State Psychologists to Practice in NY

The state has adopted a new rule that will broaden the field of providers who can practice psychology in New York.

The rule, which was formally adopted last week, will allow for licensure by endorsement, meaning that New York will grant licenses to certain psychologists who are already licensed in other states. State psychology associations and individual providers praised the move as providing a pathway to increase the number of practitioners in the state at a time of high demand for mental health services.

In a given year 1 in 5 New York City residents experiences mental illness. Just 30% of Black New Yorkers with depression receive mental health treatment, compared with 58% of white New Yorkers, according to city data.

One licensed psychologist who supported the proposal cited his pro-bono work with traumatized health care professionals and noted a need for "all the help we can get" in providing mental health services.

The rule permits applicants with doctoral degrees in psychology from accredited programs to meet New York's education requirements for licensure, waiving the need for individual transcript reviews. The change will expedite their licensure applications, said the state Department of Education, which oversees health care licensing.

Critics said practitioners from out of state might not understand the needs of New York's diverse population. In its assessment of public comment, the department responded that the proposal requires five years of licensed practice in the other state—three more than is required for in-state psychologists. The additional experience "should provide a depth and breadth of knowledge and experience with different types of populations greater than that of less-experienced psychologists," the department wrote in its notice of adoption.

A licensed psychologist who supported the proposal said he knew of no evidence to suggest licensure by endorsement has been problematic to "home state" psychologists in other places that allow it. Twenty-seven states allow reciprocity of license from state to state, the American Board of Professional Psychology said.

Another concern was that out-of-state psychologists would be motivated to practice in New York because of higher reimbursement rates. The Education Department said insurance reimbursement did not fall under its purview and declined to revise the proposed rule.

The rule was proposed in December 2021 and will be initially reviewed in 2025.