

APPENDIX 2
LETTERS OF SUPPORT



New Mexico State Senate
State Capitol
Santa Fe

SENATOR MARY KAY PAPEN
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE
D-Doña Ana-38

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May 9, 2016

Gladys deNochea, Ph.D.
Acting Department Head and Associate Dean
New Mexico State University
College of Education
Box 30001, MSC 3AC
Las Cruces, NM 88003

Dear Dr. deNochea:

As a long-standing advocate of services for the mentally ill in New Mexico, I have observed the dire need for mental health providers of all types. In recent years, state funding for the provision of such services has been devastated, leaving an underserved population to go without mental health care that includes the provision of medication.

I have been carefully following the psychologists' prescriptive authority movement since its inception in 2000. I am very pleased to see that the numbers of prescribing psychologists in the State has grown to be more than 50. Their reputation for effective treatment is well known. Further, many of these prescribing psychologists are working in rural areas and serving our most vulnerable Medicaid populations. I am aware that the current primary care provider serving Las Cruces and surrounding communities, La Clinica de Familia, has issued a "special call" for prescribing psychologists. The prescribing psychologists meet several needs in that they are experts in psychotherapy, as well as medication management, and apply a holistic approach to serving clients. Because of their medical background, prescribing psychologists can work "hand in hand" with primary care physicians and also supervise mental health practice.

It is my understanding that New Mexico State University wishes to further refine its excellent program in psychopharmacology for psychologists by elevating it from an interdisciplinary Master's Degree to a Master's of Science in Clinical Psychopharmacology. In my opinion, this effort to increase the stability and strength of the program will bring more psychologists into the State to train as prescribing psychologists and service our most needful populations. It is also my understanding that no other university within New Mexico has made any plans to provide this critical training. Your support of this effort will serve to bring greater distinction to this unique training program which was first offered within the State of New Mexico and currently stands as

one of only three available nationwide. Doing so will help better serve the ever increasing mental health need of our population from childhood to adulthood.

Therefore, I strongly endorse efforts at New Mexico State University to transition its interdisciplinary program to a Master's of Science in Clinical Psychopharmacology. Please let me know if I can be of assistance in this matter. You may contact me at (575) 649-7853.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary Kay Papen", followed by a horizontal flourish line.

Mary Kay Papen
New Mexico State Senator, District 38



Elaine S. LeVine, Ph.D., ABMP
Prescribing Psychologist Licensed in Child & Family Therapy

January 13, 2016

Enedina Vazquez, Ph.D.
Gladys De Necochea
New Mexico State University
P.O. Box 30001 MSC, 3AC
Las Cruces, NM 88003

Dear Dr. Vazquez and Dr. De Necochea:

I am writing this letter to express my strong support for efforts under your leadership to enhance the program in psychopharmacology in the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology in the College of Education at New Mexico State University. This program in clinical psychopharmacology has contributed significantly to meeting the needs of the many underserved mentally ill citizens in New Mexico. Since 1999, the program has been training doctoral-level psychologists to meet the requirements of the New Mexico Prescribing Psychologist Act. I join mental health practitioners in New Mexico, throughout the United States and, importantly, many citizens of New Mexico in expressing gratitude that New Mexico State University recognized the importance of efforts to increase access to mental health care by providing high quality training to licensed psychologists in order for them to meet the requirements of the first State in the United States to license properly trained psychologists to prescribe psychotropic medications for their patients.

The present efforts to strengthen and further institutionalize the psychopharmacology program as a Master's of Science in Clinical Psychopharmacology will greatly advance efforts to improve the mental health wellbeing of our New Mexico citizens.

As the Training Director of the program in psychopharmacology since its inception in 1999 to 2012, and, presently, as co-director of the program (along with Dr. Patrick Quinn), I believe I am in a unique position to be able to explain the importance of the next step in the growth of the psychopharmacology program to become a Master's of Science in Clinical Psychopharmacology. I would like to take

this opportunity to summarize the history of the psychologists' prescriptive authority movement and the evolution of the psychopharmacology program at New Mexico State University that is the foundation for the current request that the program become a postdoctoral Master's of Science in Clinical Psychopharmacology.

Critical Events in the Evolution of Prescriptive Authority for Psychologists in New Mexico:

- During the 1990s, ten psychologists from all branches of the military were trained through a Department of Defense Demonstration Project to prescribe psychotropic medications for their patients, as a means of increasing access to and quality of mental health care. Evaluations by the GAO and a private Vector Study demonstrated the competence of these prescribing psychologists;
- In 1998, the American Psychological Association voted to support prescriptive authority for properly trained psychologists and developed a core curriculum modeled after the Department of Defense Demonstration Project training;
- In 1999, under the guidance of Dr. Michael Morehead, Dean of the College of Education, and Dr. Luis Vazquez, Department Head of Counseling and Educational Psychology in the College of Education, a certificate program in psychopharmacology for licensed doctoral-level psychologists was conjointly developed by the Southwestern Institute for the Advancement of Psychotherapy (SIAP; Elaine LeVine, Ph.D., Director) and the College of Education (Distance Education Department). Psychologists from New Mexico and other states began participating in a program consisting of 450 academic hours of study as outlined by the document on prescriptive authority for psychologists developed by the American Psychological Association in 1998;
- In 2002, New Mexico became the first State in the United States to pass a law allowing psychologists with appropriate post-doctoral training to prescribe psychotropic medication for their patients in consultation with patients' medical providers;
- Since the inception of this law, over 60 psychologists with post-doctoral training have obtained New Mexico licenses to prescribe psychotropic medications for the most critically ill and underserved mental health populations. These psychologists work in rural areas throughout the State, on Indian reservations, and on various military bases;
- Most of the prescribing psychologists in New Mexico obtained their training in psychopharmacology through the program provided at New Mexico State University;

- Over the years, this NMSU psychopharmacology program has advanced from offering professional development credit to an Interdisciplinary Master's of Arts Degree;
- This coursework has been taught by national experts in psychopharmacology, NMSU faculty from the Counseling and Educational Psychology Department and the Nursing Department, and physicians throughout the State;
- The Family Medicine Center associated with Memorial Medical Center has played an instrumental role in providing faculty as well as supervision of students in their practica;
- La Clinica de Familia, a clinic which provides medical care and mental health care, has also provided opportunities for internships for the students in this program.

Accomplishments of the Program:

- Since 1999, more than 150 licensed psychologists from New Mexico, various States throughout the United States, Canada, Guam, Australia, England and the Netherlands have participated in coursework in the psychopharmacology program. All of these psychologists report that they have used their training to enhance their ability to consult with medical personnel about psychotropic medications for their patients;
- From 2008 to 2010, 18 students from the Netherlands participated in a special iteration of the program culminating in executive-tract practica in sites throughout New Mexico and earned the Interdisciplinary Master's of Arts Degree.
- New Mexico State University is presently offering the 8th Iteration of classes in psychopharmacology;
- Over 40 of the students who participated in the New Mexico State University coursework have completed the rigorous internship requirements, national licensing exam, 450 academic hours, and are presently licensed prescribing psychologists in New Mexico. These psychologists are located throughout the State and are providing needed care in highly underserved areas;
- The work of the prescribing psychologists is highly regarded. As evidence of this, a headline article in the Las Cruces Sun News on December 6, 2015 began, "Shortage Plagues Health Service: La Clinica experiences a lack of available staffers." Susan Martinez de Gonzales, Director of La Clinica, was

quoted in this article as saying, “We have about 55 positions open for prescribing psychologists, for psychiatrists, and for licensed personnel for counseling.”

- Not only are the accomplishments of the prescribing psychologists recognized and desired, but it is also important to note that since the inception of the law, there have been no New Mexico Board of Psychologist Examiners’ actions or lawsuits against a prescribing psychologist for malpractice.

Need for a Master’s of Science Degree in Clinical Psychopharmacology:

- There are, presently, three programs within the continental United States providing training for prescribing psychologist: New Mexico State University; Alliant University; and Fairleigh Dickinson University. There is also a small training program at the University of Hawaii in Hilo;
- The other programs offer a Master’s of Science Degree in Clinical Psychopharmacology. Their overall content is similar to the New Mexico State University program, as all of the programs that are designated by the American Psychological Association must fulfill very clear and high standards of training;
- The program at New Mexico State University is unique in the depth to which it has provided hands-on experience in pathophysiology and physical assessment.; integrates the practical into the training program; and has developed internship sites where psychologists can practice. Consequently, many psychologists from all over the country have chosen the New Mexico State University program;
- Despite the accomplishments of the New Mexico State University program, there have been a number of administrative complications because the program is not yet established as a designated Master’s in its own right within the University structure;
- Further, some potentially strong students who want to move to New Mexico to provide service in New Mexico are choosing other training programs because they feel it is important to have the credential “Master’s of Science Degree in Clinical Psychopharmacology.” Graduates with these degrees are able to add MSCP after the Ph.D. or Psy.D. of their credentials. While the present New Mexico State University program does qualify psychologists for licensure within New Mexico, the credential of “Master’s of Science Degree in Clinical Psychopharmacology” opens avenues in forensic and institutional work for psychologists with that designation.

Summary:

There is a dramatic potential for growth in the psychopharmacology program at New Mexico State University. Many psychologists from New Mexico and other states as well as overseas prefer NMSU's program because it is housed in the first State that has a licensing law for prescribing psychologists and because of the unique aspect of its intensive training in pathophysiology, clinical assessment, and clinical practica. Given the critical needs for mental health care, there are huge demands for prescribing psychologists in New Mexico and elsewhere. Further structuring the psychopharmacology training program to be a Master's of Science Degree in Clinical Psychopharmacology will greatly enhance potential psychologists' interest in the program as well as streamline organization of the program and facilitate funding opportunities for students and the program as a whole.

It is hoped that the New Mexico State University community will give this proposal to implement a Master's of Science Degree in Clinical Psychopharmacology its most serious consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elaine S. LeVine, Ph.D., ABMP". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Elaine S. LeVine, Ph.D., ABMP
Prescribing Psychologist

Patrick K. Quinn, Ph.D.

Clinical and Consulting Psychologist
4018 La Purisima Drive
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88011
575-522-4692
patrick.kaye.quinn@gmail.com

13th January 2016

Enedina Vazquez, Ph.D.

Gladys De Necochea
New Mexico State University
P.O. Box 30001 MSC, 3AC
Las Cruces, NM 88003

Dear Dr. Vazquez and Dr. De Necochea:

I am writing this letter to express my strong support for your efforts to establish a formal Masters of Science in Clinical Pharmacology degree program in the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology (CEP) in the College of Education at New Mexico State University (NMSU).

I am a May 2015 graduate of the current program which grants a post-doctoral Master's of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies. I can attest to the high quality of instruction in the interdisciplinary program which has been designated by the American Psychological Association (APA) as one of only three (soon to be four) graduate programs approved to offer post-graduate training in clinical psychopharmacology to psychologists.

It is worth noting that the NMSU program is the only designated program affiliated with a major research university. That said, it is the only program that awards a non-specific interdisciplinary degree rather than the discipline-specific Masters of Science degree that has become recognized as the standard degree in the field..

I retired to New Mexico in early 2009. I had worked with the chronically mentally ill for many years, early in my career , and I knew that

population to be very much underserved in every way imaginable. I was committed to working with that population after I retired when I no longer needed to worry about making an adequate living (since as you know practitioners working with the chronically mentally ill are typically underpaid). My enrolling in the NMSU Psychopharmacology Program for Practicing Psychologists was a logical extension of that commitment.

For two years I provided pro-bono service to La Clinica de Familia, a local federally qualified health care organization, serving the poorest-of-the poor, while I completed the practicum requirements for the Interdisciplinary Master's. During that time I supervised doctoral candidates from NMSU's APA-approved Counseling Psychology Program who were also providing pro-bono service to La Clinica.

Anyone who had the opportunity to see what the students and I saw while we were I at La Clinica would understand the desperate need for expert mental health practitioners in this community -- particularly prescribers -- and would understand, too, the key role that CEP is playing in meeting that need.

Sincerely,

Patrick K. Quinn, Ph.D.



La Clinica de Familia, Inc.

105 W. Griggs Ave
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Thomas C. Thompson, PhD, MP, ABN, ABMP
Board Certified Medical and Neuropsychology-Prescribing
LCDF-MH-ACT Program

January 14, 2016

Enedina Vazquez, Ph.D.
Gladys De Necochea
New Mexico State University
P.O. Box 30001 MSC, 3AC
Las Cruces, NM 88003

Dear Dr. Vazquez and Dr. De Necochea:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to support the Psychopharmacology Training Program for Psychologists at the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology in the College of Education at New Mexico State University. I am also pleased to express my appreciation to this Department. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to train in the NMSU/SAIP program from which I graduated in 2004. In so doing, I became the third psychologist licensed to prescribe in the state of New Mexico.

Having the opportunity to train in the New Mexico State University program allowed me as well as others to benefit from the integration of in-depth academic and practical hands on training. We were fortunate to learn assessment of the "whole patient" as the old saying goes, "from head to toe", and all parts and systems in between. The program emphasizes developing an integrated understanding of pathophysiology, its physical presentation in hands on assessment, and laboratory findings.

As 2004 graduates of the program, we were positioned to exponentially increase our future learning. I was one of three psychologist graduates to participate in coordinated training at The Family Medicine Residency Program associated with Memorial Medical Center. For the better part of two years (half time) we trained, under faculty supervision, along side Family Medicine Residents. During that time, we learned to increase the integration of our training in psychology and

psychopharmacology with integrated assessments and treatment of patients with comorbid mental and physical health disorders.

The quality and uniqueness of NMSU CEP psychopharmacology program and its interactions with other community resources has been instrumental in providing treatment to underserved populations in New Mexico as well as other locations. In these populations, comorbidity was and is the “Norm”. These are patient populations with exposure to the multiple risk factors associated with family, social, educational, vocational, lower socioeconomic as well as health stressors and hardships. It is a conglomeration of factors where the bi-directionality of mental health/illness and physical health/illness is the defining feature.

The enormous benefit of the NMSU CEP psychopharmacology programs is it results in an integrated and expanded level of understanding of physical medicine and pathophysiology with the graduate’s years of clinical, counseling and neuropsychology training and experience. For me and for others who have trained, the doors to a larger bidirectional universe of the comorbidities existing between physical and mental disorders opened wide. The ability to conceptualize, understand and treat patient populations with enormous need began to and has continued to take on increased clarity.

As you can gather from my discussion, this program is extremely important to New Mexico. Additionally, it should be noted the majority of these graduates stay in New Mexico. The program is extremely important in meeting the needs of many rural and urban underserved citizens of New Mexico. As most of you already know there is an enormous shortage in New Mexico (nation wide) for high-quality well-educated mental health prescribers. In New Mexico the psychopharmacology program in the CEP Department has and is having a very positive and much needed impact on these needs across New Mexico.

Between 2005 and 2015 I spent 25 to 40 hours a week as the Prescribing Medical and Neuropsychologist at the Behavioral Health Program at Sierra Vista Hospital in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. During that time, I served as a full member of the medical staff. The quality of the training and experience which I received through the NMSU CEP psychopharmacology program allowed me to help facilitate the integration of behavioral and physical medicine. The population there was and continues to be an underserved population of high need with multiple medical comorbidities.

I serve on the Application Committee for Credentialing of Prescribing Psychologist for the New Mexico Board of Psychologist Examiners. From this vantage point, I can speak for the significant positive impact the program is having on the needs of the state. Prescribing Medical Psychologists who provide services in other clinical health settings in north, central, and southern New Mexico serve a population of citizens with many problems and great needs.

Past data from 2013, and data currently being gathered, continue to reflect the enormous amount of time providers spend delivering services to underserved rural populations in New Mexico. In 2013, findings indicated that as much as 60% of the time of Prescribing Psychologist in New Mexico was spent in these underserved settings.

While I am no longer providing services in Sierra County, other prescribing psychologists are associated with Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers and continue to provide services in Sierra and other rural New Mexico counties. As I am partially retired, I spend approximately 25 hours of my week as the Prescribing Medical & Neuropsychologist with La Clinica de Familia in their Mental Health Assertive Community Treatment(ACT) Program. In this capacity, I continue to provide services to an underserved and vulnerable population of patients with Severe Mental Illness (SMI) with multiple comorbid medical and neuropsychiatric disorders.

What we do and what I have done would not be possible without the foresight that went into the development of the psychopharmacology program in the department of Counseling and Educational Psychology at NMSU. The next step toward a designated Masters of Science in Clinical Psychopharmacology (MSCP) is another major and important goal. It reflects the same foresight that has provided the development and guidance for which we have been able to benefit and then proceed to improved care to the many underserved and needy citizens of this state.

As a Native of New Mexico, I have had the honor and privilege to be a graduate of this program. I have also had the honor and privilege of using my training to be of service to the citizens of my native state, New Mexico.

I am pleased to endorse the Masters of Science in Clinical Psychopharmacology degree designation for the program. I encourage all of you to support the department in this continued evolution toward meeting the needs of the citizens of New Mexico, many of whom are the neediest and most vulnerable. The designation of the MSCP degree is becoming the standard in the field nationally. As the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology at New Mexico State University is one of the premier founding programs, a designated MSCP degree becoming available is an important evolutionary goal.

Respectfully,



Thomas C. Thompson, Ph.D., MP, ABN, ABMP
Medical and Neuropsychology-Prescribing
Member of Rules and Application and RxP Application Committees
New Mexico Board of Psychologist Examiners

January 18, 2016

Enedina García Vázquez, PhD
Professor and Associate Dean
New Mexico State University
College of Education
Box 30001, MSC 3AC
Las Cruces, NM 88003

Dr. Vázquez:

I wish to strongly support your efforts in transitioning the Postdoctoral Masters Program in Clinical Psychopharmacology to a Masters of Science status. I believe this would better reflect the nature of the program which trains graduates for science based practice of psychopharmacology. Since the beginning this program has remained faithful to the American Psychological Association's model curriculum and that curriculum mandates a strong core of education in biological and physical sciences as a basis for insuring the safety of practice.

I personally matriculated in the program after having fully completed the curriculum elsewhere and having graduated with a Master of Science in Clinical Psychopharmacology (from Fairleigh Dickenson University) but I determined that the training I had received in the actual practice of patient physical assessment and management was not sufficient, so I took the entire pathophysiology sequence again through the NMSU program and then completed the practical training under the auspices of NMSU. This was, in my view, an very beneficial choice as I was provided more depth in the biological science portion of medication management (pathophysiology, physical assessment, pharmacology) than I had previously received.

I have remained affiliated with the program since that time, teaching courses in which I incorporate the fundamental information regarding the science of psychopharmacology and patient assessment and treatment. The focus of the courses is science based practice.

The CEP program has been an outstanding resource for practitioners who wish to become safe and effective providers for New Mexico, Louisiana, the US Armed Services, the Public Health and Indian Health Services. In fact this program is unique in that it attracts healthcare providers to New Mexico, and most remain to make a contribution here.

I wish you the best in this effort to strengthen the program.

Yours truly,



Marlin C. Hoover, PhD, MS, ABPP
Behavioral Science Faculty – Southern New Mexico Family Medicine Residency Program
Memorial Medical Center – Las Cruces, New Mexico 88011



January 28, 2016

Enedina García Vázquez, PhD
Professor and Associate Dean
New Mexico State University
College of Education
Box 30001, MSC 3AC
Las Cruces, NM 88003

Dear Dr. García Vázquez:

Memorial Medical Center's Southern New Mexico Family Medicine Residency Program has served as a training site for prescribing psychologists since the passage of permissive legislation in the State of New Mexico in 2002. As Designated Institutional Official of the residency program and as Chief Medical Officer at the hospital for over fifteen years, I have had the opportunity to witness first-hand the dedication of the faculty in continuously improving the scientifically based training curriculum and to witness the beneficial impact on the provision of behavioral health care in our region by prescribing clinical psychologist trainees and graduates. This letter serves to support the transition of the training program for prescribing psychologists from an Interdisciplinary Master of Arts program to a Master of Science program because such a change would more accurately reflect the type of training in the program, as well as the scientifically based proficiency of its participants and practitioners.

Please contact me if I may address any additional concerns or questions.

Sincerely,


Bruce D. San Filippo, MD
Phone -- 575-521-2218





College of Health and Social Services
School of Nursing
New Mexico State University
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Phone: (575) 646-3812 Fax: (575) 646-2167

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Enedina Vazquez, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Education

Dr. Gladys de Necochea, *Interim* Department Head, Counseling & Education Psychology Department

FROM: Dr. Pamela Schultz, Enriquez Professor, Associate Dean and Director
School of Nursing 

SUBJECT: Support for Psychopharmacology Training Program

DATE: February 23, 2016

This letter is in support of the Psychopharmacology Training Program. The School of Nursing has an extensive nursing simulation/skills laboratory which has been offered to the program. They have utilized the nursing lab and the simulation equipment with Nursing faculty providing guidance in the use of the equipment.

Nursing faculty has participated in the psychopharmacology program. The nursing faculty involved are doctorally prepared nurse practitioners. There has been various involvement since 2002. At this time, the nursing faculty that participate in the psychopharm program have appreciated the collaboration with other psychology faculty.

In the state of New Mexico disparities exist in the prevalence of serious mental illness among adults, with 5.4% of Hispanic, 6.8% of White, and 11.3% of Native American adults having a serious mental illness diagnosis (WICHE, 2008). Adult suicide rates exceed the national rate. There is a high rate of substance abuse in Hispanic and Native American adults and adolescents. It has been reported that mental health service utilization is lower in the underserved of New Mexico (TAC, 2002). The availability of behavioral health providers in rural NM is among the lowest in the country (TAC, 2002). NMSU-School of Nursing is the only educational institution in New Mexico providing a steady supply of psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners to address these high rates of mental health disparities among the state's racially and ethnically diverse population. These advance practice nurses are licensed to provide primary mental health services, including treatment therapies and medication management.

Our collaboration with psychopharmacology has resulted in several positive outcomes. This program has been able to collaborate with our nursing faculty. This has expanded the availability of mental health professionals in the treatment of mental illness in New Mexico. Interdisciplinary collaboration is crucial in the education utilizing the training in psychopharmacology.

The School of Nursing is in support of the name change to a Master Science degree in Clinical Psychopharmacology.



New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS DIVISION

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January 19, 2016

Susana Martinez
GOVERNOR

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David Jablonski
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Diana Martwick
GENERAL COUNSEL

Claudia Armijo
DEPUTY GENERAL
COUNSEL

Enrique C Knell
DIRECTOR

Daniel Ullman, Ph.D., MSCP
Long Professional Building
4535 Normal Blvd, #212
Lincoln, NE 68506

Dear Dr. Ullman,

The New Mexico Board of Psychologist Examiners has had no disciplinary action taken against a licensed RxP Psychologist.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Thank you,

Samantha Lopez

Samantha Lopez
Board Administrator
505-476-4622

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