

AMERICAN BOARD OF MEDICAL PSYCHOLOGY

December 1, 2009

David Cox, Ph.D., ABPP
Executive Officer
American Board of Professional Psychology
600 Market Street, Suite 300
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Re: Opposition to an application to establish an ABPP Diplomate in Medical Psychology

Dear Dr. Cox:

It has recently been brought to the attention of the American Board of Medical Psychology (ABMP) that a committee of Division 55 of the American Psychological Association (APA) is preparing to make application to the American Board of Professional Psychology to establish an ABPP Specialty Designation in Medical Psychology. The purpose of this correspondence is to stand in opposition to this action for the following reasons.

The Academy of Medical Psychology (AMP) is a national organization that was founded in 1998 to register psychologists who have completed a designated course of training and experience in the area of psychopharmacology and related sciences. The American Board of Medical Psychology began awarding the Board-Certified Diplomate in Medical Psychology in 2005. In fact, many of our Diplomates are prescribing medication in states that have passed legislation allowing them to do so. The Academy of Medical Psychology and subsequently the American Board of Medical Psychology have thus been nationally recognized as the certifying body for the specialty of Medical Psychology for many years. It would seem then that any action by ABPP to develop a specialty in Medical Psychology would be a redundant and duplicative pursuit.

On the Board of Directors for ABMP we have represented a former APA President, two Past Presidents of APA's Division 55 and several current ABPP certified psychologists. In addition, among those who have earned the ABMP Diplomate there are several other Division 55 officers, many members of APA, as well as, many other ABPP psychologists. Any action by ABPP to establish a specialty in Medical Psychology, in the absence of rigorous requirements, could result in an unnecessary and unreasonable splintering of efforts in this very important specialty and ultimately serve to undermine the movement toward prescriptive authority for psychologists. In addition, such action would potentially disenfranchise our members who are also APA members and interfere with their current specialty.

Another puzzling aspect of this application from a division of the American Psychological Association is that, according to APA, psychopharmacology is considered a proficiency rather than a specialty. Thus, the application is internally inconsistent based upon APA's own criteria. Another seeming inconsistency is that Division 55 is the American Society for the Advancement of Pharmacotherapy (ASAP) and its primary

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focus has been in the area of psychopharmacology versus medical psychology which by definition is far more comprehensive.

In addition to the concerns listed above, it should be noted that our Board holds the trademarks for the American Board of Medical Psychology, and our journal representing the specialty, *The Archives of Medical Psychology*. The Academy of Medical Psychology is also trademarked. We would consider any further action on the application that was filed by Division 55 as an infringement on our trademarks in Medical Psychology, and we are willing to take any legal action necessary to protect our property rights accordingly.

I trust that you will take our concerns seriously as you deliberate on the application in question and that you will choose not to approve an additional specialty in Medical Psychology.

Sincerely,



James K. Childerston, Ph.D., ABMP
President – American Board of Medical Psychology