

The Ontario Board of Examiners in Psychology

37 Prince Arthur Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
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Telephone: (416) 961-8817

June 14, 1983

Dear Colleague:

RE: Procedures in Appointing Members to the
Ontario Board of Examiners in Psychology

We are concerned that the current procedures for the appointment of members to this Board are obsolescent and may not be in the best interests of the profession of psychology. Without prejudice, we must inform you that the 1983 appointment to replace Dr. G. Ray Engel is being finalized by the Minister of Health without consulting this Board or the Ontario Psychological Association.

Such a practice is contrary to tradition and contrary to our belief that psychology, as an established profession in Ontario, should be accountable but self-governing. As you are no doubt aware, we have prepared, revised and submitted to the Minister of Health a proposed Psychology Act. If approved by the Ontario Legislature, it would replace the current statute and would, among other things, assure self-governance through the election rather than appointment of members of the regulatory board, and accountability through the appointment of lay members.

For your information, we include the texts of recent correspondence in which we have indicated our specific concerns to the Ontario government.

April 21, 1983

Dear Mr. Grossman:

The Board of Examiners in Psychology has received information that you intend to appoint someone to the Board who is not one of the persons nominated by either the Board or the Ontario Psychological Association. Although the source of the information is credible, we find it difficult to believe that such an appointment would be made without consultation with the Board.

Although the legislation passed in 1960 governing psychologists gives the profession no autonomy, past Ministers of Health have permitted psychologists some semblance of autonomy by tacitly agreeing to make an appointment to the Board from nominations made by the Board and the Ontario Psychological Association. The Board does not recall any instance in the past twenty-three years in which a Minister found compelling reasons to appoint someone other than those nominated by either the Board or the Association. As a result, past appointments have been from the nominations of the Board and of the Association.

The Board's credibility has been questioned by the professional association for a number of years now, by virtue of the fact that the Minister of Health makes all appointments to the Board, and technically, can do so without reference to that body. This lack of confidence in the Board has been considerably attenuated by the tradition of making appointments from among nominations made by the profession itself. The Board has good grounds for believing that departing from this tradition would be a serious reflection on the Board's credibility, judgment and integrity, and that it would meet with strong and negative reactions from the profession as a whole.

Given the seriousness and urgency of this matter, the Board respectfully requests that you clarify this matter at a meeting with Board representatives.

John E. Callagan, Ph.D.

Sincerely,

Chairman

April 27, 1983

Dear Premier Davis:

The Ontario Board of Examiners in Psychology is the regulatory body for psychologists in Ontario. We are writing to you at this time because we believe that a principle important in the regulation of the professions in Ontario is being overlooked by the Minister of Health.

On April 19, 1983 we learned that the Minister of Health was planning to make an appointment to the Ontario Board of Examiners in Psychology without regard to the nominations recommended to him either by the Board or by the Ontario Psychological Association, and in doing so was about to break with the tradition in appointments to this Board established over the last twenty-three years. On April 21 the Board delivered a letter to Mr. Grossman and asked for clarification of the reasons for this apparent change in policy. We append a copy of our letter. Although an official from the Ministry of Health and a member of Mr. Grossman's staff have spoken with members of the Board of Examiners, to date we have received no official response from the Minister. In his verbal communication with the Board, Mr. Grossman's executive assistant indicated that, if the Board could not accept the Minister's choice for this appointment, the Minister would withdraw his choice but, at the same time, would also withdraw all intended appointments of psychologists to

councils and boards over which he has jurisdiction. This intention was outlined to the Board members notwithstanding the fact that the Board had not questioned the Minister's prerogative in making appointments to the Board of Examiners.

The Board wishes to emphasize this point - that it is not questioning the Minister's prerogative in making Board appointments. The principle being questioned is the departure from the practice and tradition of over two decades of making appointments to this professional governing body from a slate composed of psychologists recommended either by this Board or by the fraternal association. Nevertheless, the only answer we have been given contains the threat to withdraw any support the Minister has shown this profession.

We would be grateful if you would use your good offices to obtain an answer for us. To the Board, that is charged with the administration of this Act, it is clear that the credibility of the Board of Examiners will shortly disappear if any semblance of its autonomy is removed by what must seem to our colleagues as a primarily political appointment. We reiterate that we have been unable to obtain a direct response from the Minister and that this letter is being written as a last resort because we have been unable to reach him through normal channels.

Yours very truly,

Ruth M. Bray, Ph.D.
Acting Chair

We believe that you, as a psychologist who is concerned with the governance of the profession, should be informed about this matter. You may be able to facilitate the process of updating the legislative statute by which psychology is regulated if you, for example, express your views or concerns in a letter either to the Minister of Health or to the Premier of Ontario.

Yours sincerely,



Ruth M. Bray, Ph.D.
Chair
for the Board
John Callagan, Ph.D.
Henry Edwards, Ph.D.
John McGrory, Ph.D.