

MENTAL HEALTH STUDIES

OVERVIEW OF PRACTITIONER TYPES

BACKGROUND

Mental health services are provided in many different settings through several different entities, but the treatment must be provided by individuals licensed or certified to provide the treatment. This briefing paper outlines the different types of mental health practitioners.

PRACTITIONERS WITH INDEPENDENT AUTHORITY

The graphic below shows the types of licensed mental health practitioners who are authorized by state law to operate independently, without supervision by another licensee.

Psychiatrist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical doctor licensed under Title 37, chapter 3• Prescribing authority• Medical school, residency, and national exam required
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Licensed under Title 37, chapter 8• Can apply to licensing board for prescribing authority• Graduate level education and national certification required
Clinical Professional Counselor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Licensed under Title 37, chapter 23• No prescribing authority• 60 semester hours master's degree, 3,000 hours of supervised practice, and national exam required
Marriage and Family Therapist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Licensed under Title 37, chapter 37• No prescribing authority• 60 semester hour master's degree, 3,000 hours of supervised practice, and national exam required
Clinical Social Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Licensed under Title 37, chapter 22• No prescribing authority• Master's degree, 3,000 hours in not less than 24 months of supervised practice, and national exam required
Psychologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Licensed under Title 37, chapter 17• No prescribing authority• Doctoral degree, 2 years of supervised practice required, and national exam required

PRACTITIONERS WITH LIMITED AUTHORITY OR SCOPE

The graphic below outlines additional types of practitioners who are licensed, certified, or trained to provide a more limited set of services or to practice under the supervision of another licensee.

Physician Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Licensed Under Title 37, chapter 20• Supervised by a physician• Scope of duties, including prescribing authority, established in a written "duties and delegation agreement"• Physician assistant training program and national exam required
Master's and Baccalaureate Social Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Licensed under Title 37, chapter 22• No prescribing authority• Allowed to practice outside of an agency or organized setting but may not engage in independent practice• Cannot provide counseling or therapy to individuals, families, or groups• Master's or bachelor's degree, 2,000 hours in no less than 18 months of supervised experience, and national exam required
Peer Support Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certified under Title 37, chapter 38• In recovery from a mental illness or chemical dependency• Completion of training program that contains Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration core competencies• Supervised by a physician, psychologist, social worker, professional counselor, APRN, or family and marriage therapist
Certified Nurse Aide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completion of at least 100 hours of nurse aide training and a state-approved exam
Behavioral Health Paraprofessionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often called mental health or behavioral health aides or technicians• Qualifications generally established in administrative rules for various mental health services• Education levels vary with a minimum standard of a high school diploma• Provider agency required to provide training in certain areas• Typically supervised by a licensed professional

People trained as social workers, professional counselors, and marriage and family therapists also can apply for candidate licensure before they are eligible to practice independently. Candidate licensure allows a person to practice while reporting to a supervisor.

Sources

- Montana Code Annotated: Title 37, chapters 3, 8, 17, 20, 22, 23, 37, and 38
- Administrative Rules of Montana:
 - Title 24, chapters 156, 159, 189, and 219
 - Title 37, chapters 87 and 106
- 42 CFR 483.150