

Powerful Psychiatric Drugs Affect the Mind and the Body

Powerful psychiatric drugs, some of the most potent medications in modern medicine, affect not only the mind but the entire body and can interact poorly with other drugs.

More than half of patients living with mental illness also have an underlying physical illness.

Advanced medical training is required to understand how psychiatric drugs affect the entire body and interact with other medications.



OUR POSITION: For safely prescribing mental health medication, medical doctors like psychiatrists have a clear advantage over psychologists.

It is essential to patient safety that a medically-trained clinician like a psychiatrist prescribes and manages a patient's mental health medications

Graduating medical school, earning a state medical license, going through residency and often a specialty fellowship program, and years of on-the-job expertise, ensures psychiatrists understand:

- How psychiatric drugs interact with other medications.
- How psychiatric drugs affect not only a person's mind, but other organ systems.
- The difference between psychiatric conditions and other illnesses and diseases that may look like a mental health issue but require other medical treatments.

Psychologists have no clinical medical training, compared to psychiatrists who have 12,000-16,000 hours of specialized clinical psychiatric training.

WHAT THE PUBLIC SAYS: Only Medically-Trained Professionals Should Prescribe

78% of voters recently polled across the United States think only those with a medical degree and a license to practice medicine should be allowed to prescribe powerful psychiatric drugs.

NATIONAL PRECEDENT: Medicare Rejected Psychologists Prescribing

Medicare does not reimburse psychologist prescribing because federal experts say psychologists do not have the "knowledge and ability to perform evaluation and management services."



SOLUTIONS: Greater Access to Mental Health Care

People believe government should increase access to care by:

- Making it easier for mental health care to be coordinated between different types of clinicians, so more people have timely access to care that's overseen by a physician.
- Making it easier to see a healthcare professional via telemedicine.
- Incentivizing healthcare professionals to practice in rural and inner-city communities.

State legislatures should enact policies that prioritize care coordination and ensure that when a patient's mental health condition requires medication, a trained medical doctor like a psychiatrist oversees prescribing.

