UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
College of Pharmacy

March 15, 2017

Members of the Prescribing Psychologist Permit
Technical Review Committee
c/o Ron Briel
Program Manager
Credentialing Review Program
Licensure Unit
Division of Public Health
POB 95026
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Committee Members:

By way of introduction, I am a pharmacologist and toxicologist and currently a Professor at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy in the Department of Clinical and Administrative Pharmacy. I have been employed as a professor at the University of Georgia since 1981. My position entails teaching pharmacy students and graduate students. The courses that I teach include physiology, pathophysiology, disease management, advanced therapeutics, research methods, forensic pharmacy, ethics and abused drugs. Additionally, my responsibilities include providing continuing education to pharmacists, physicians, psychologists, nurses, attorneys, and judges concerning pharmacology and adverse drug reactions. I serve as the chairman of the College of Pharmacy Students Impairment Committee and provide alcohol and drug education to athletes and others across the U.S. I regularly provide pharmacology lectures and do the pharmacology board review for medical students at the Philadelphia College of Medicine. I have served as a peer reviewer for the CDC National Center for Injury Prevention and Control concerning unintentional poisoning from prescription drug overdoses. I have been recognized as an expert in the pharmacology and toxicology in several states.

In 1975, I received a BS in Biology from Jacksonville University, located in Jacksonville, FL. In 1977, I earned a MS in Pharmacology and Toxicology from Auburn University. In 1979, I earned a PhD in Pharmacology and Toxicology from the University of Georgia. I performed a

postdoctoral fellowship in Pharmacology and Toxicology at the Medical University of South Carolina from 1979 to 1981.

I have adjunct faculty appointments at Alliant University and Fairleigh Dickinson University. I have taught in the postdoctoral psychopharmacology program offered at both of these Universities for several years. I helped develop the postdoctoral program and taught a large portion of the curriculum in Georgia. In 2000, I received the American Psychological Association Presidential Citation for my efforts in developing and delivering the postgraduate psychopharmacology curriculum. Additionally, I received a grant from the Attorneys General of 50 States and the District of Columbia which administered by a Special Committee of state Attorneys General pursuant to an Oregon court order and an Attorney General Memorandum of Understanding. The Attorney General Consumer and Prescriber Education Grant Program funded a program that I designed that provides instruction to physicians, health care professionals and consumers about labeling information relating to prescription drugs, including how drugs are marketed. The grant is entitled the "Prescriber Curriculum Development and Dissemination," with the goal of improving prescribing practices by: 1) educating health professionals at all levels of training about the drug development and approval process; 2) making health professionals aware of pharmaceutical industry marketing practices and assisting them in developing the knowledge and skills to evaluate those marketing techniques; and 3) providing examples and strategies for evaluating existing sources of drug information, and for accessing unbiased sources of information about drugs. As part of this grant, I developed a curricula that teaches physicians and other healthcare providers to prescribe drugs objectively and strategically in an evidence-based, cost-effective manner, so that future generations of health practitioners will be better prepared to provide the best possible care for their patients.

In the development of the curriculum for psychologists, several basic tenets were incorporated. It was deemed that the curriculum would provide a knowledge of the biological bases of psychopharmacology which would be built on a competent practical and theoretical knowledge base on neuroanatomy, neurochemistry and physiology. The students in the curriculum would use this basis to understand pharmacology of drugs in general but also detailed instruction of the mechanism of action, side effects, and drug interactions of psychotropic compounds. Additionally, throughout the curriculum, there is a thorough discussion of risk: benefit analysis, communication of important drug information to the patients, appropriate monitoring for side effects and drug interactions, and communication/interaction with physicians and other health care professionals. The curriculum was also designed to complement the strength of psychologists. Psychologists are trained to establish excellent communication with patients and to listen to the patients. When coupled with in depth psychopharmacological training, this is a very powerful set of skills that allows for appropriate prescribing and monitoring of a patient on an individual basis. Furthermore, it has been my experience that psychologists rely less on using exclusive drug therapy and tend to integrate alternative treatment modalities. This, coupled with a limited formulary, provides excellent and individualized care for patients. This is of importance when dealing with patients with mental disease because the students graduating in the clinical psychopharmacology program have advanced special training in mental disorders and the

training we provide gives them advanced training in psychopharmacology. This allows them to integrate both the pharmacological and psychological aspects of treatment. Many current prescribers of psychotropic drugs (e.g. general practitioners) do not have sufficient time or have limited training in diagnosing mental diseases. Psychologists with advanced training in psychopharmacology will fill this important void especially in underserved and rural populations.

The current curriculum begins with clinical biochemistry which provides a detailed overview of cellular organization and metabolism, protein structure and function, enzyme action, hormone and regulation and action, nutrition and nucleic acid function. This is provided to set a foundation of the biochemistry of physiological processes.

Neuroscience includes neurochemistry, neurophysiology (and neuroanatomy/neuropathology. In these courses, the major neurotransmitter systems are covered with detailed coverage of the anatomical distribution, synthesis, inactivation, synaptic specializations, pharmacology of specific receptors, second messenger systems as well as the role of these systems as they relate to specific behaviors. Neuroendocrine systems are also covered in the Neurochemistry course. The Neurophysiology course builds on the principles covered in Neurochemistry with more emphasis on integration. Membrane physiology and electrophysiology, neural integration, synaptic transmission, receptor physiology, sensory systems, motor systems, neural basis of sleep and arousal, right/left cerebral hemispheric specialization, learning and memory, and neuroendocrinology are covered in this course of the sequence. The final portion of the neurosciences course addresses the structure, function and common pathologies of the nervous system. The gross anatomy of the central and peripheral nervous systems is covered as well as their developmental neuroanatomy. Specific topics include dementia, delirium, cognitive disorders, movement disorders, vascular disorders, seizures, traumatic brain injury, extrapyramidal dysfunction as well as other pathologies.

The Neuroscience sequence is followed by Clinical Medicine/Pathophysiology. This course covers the normal anatomy and physiological processes but with an emphasis on the clinical characteristics of diseases in all major systems of the body. Specific attention is given to how these diseases and their treatments may impact psychological symptoms.

Physical Assessment and Laboratory Evaluation familiarizes the students with the general components of a physical exam. Signs and symptoms of physical illness with psychological sequelae are emphasized. Common lab tests are discussed.

Clinical Pharmacology covers basic pharmacology including pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics. For each class of drugs, the mechanism of action, side effects, therapeutic applications, drug-drug interactions, absorption, distribution, metabolism and excretion are discussed. All major classes of drugs are covered with an emphasis on their potential interaction with psychopharmacological agents. Additionally, the drug approval process, the role of the FDA, reporting of adverse events and generic drugs are covered.

Following the basic and rigorous foundation courses, the curriculum provides extensive specialized training in psychopharmacology. All major classes of psychotropic drugs are presented. For each drug class, indications for use, diagnostic considerations, historical perspectives, mechanism of action, adverse effects, specific laboratory and physiological assessments pertinent to their use, drug-drug and drug-food interactions, off label use and differences between the individual agents are presented. Herbal, supplement, and nontraditional treatments use are also discussed.

The curriculum also devotes a significant portion of time to psychopharmacology in special populations. These populations are initially addressed in previous courses but additional more advanced information is presented concerning pediatrics, geriatrics, developmental disorders, gender-related issues, multicultural issues, chronic pain, and patients with chronic diseases. Additionally, advanced lectures regarding chemical dependency is presented in which all the major classes of substance abuse are covered along with the biological bases of addiction, tolerance, withdrawal, dual diagnosis, and pharmacotherapy of chemical dependency.

The students are required to present a case seminar which integrates the coursework described above. This is followed by a pharmacotherapeutics section which also focuses on integrating the material in the curriculum. Professional, ethical and legal issues as well as research issues are integrated into the curriculum.

I have over 34 years' experience of teaching healthcare professionals either as students or in continuing education programs. The integration and specialization of the curriculum is unrivaled in my opinion. After teaching and interacting with several of the students after they have graduated, I feel that the students are well trained, they communicate and integrate well with other healthcare professionals. In fact, when teaching the Clinical Medicine and Clinical Pharmacology courses, the students are taught at the same level as I have taught medical students and pharmacy students. They have a limited formulary and are extremely well trained in the pharmacology of the drugs on that formulary. The communication skills they bring to the table when combined with the psychopharmacological knowledge is an excellent base for diagnosing, prescribing and monitoring drug therapy.

Sincerely,

Randall L Tackett, Ph.D.
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University of Georgia College of Pharmacy