

SB-53:

Under current Ohio Law (ORC 5122.10), psychiatrists, physicians, psychologists, health officers, and various police officials are allowed to sign Ohio's application for emergency admission to a hospital if they believe the person is mentally ill and is at substantial risk of physical harm to self or others. PCCs are not included in this list. This means that when a PCC believes that emergency hospitalization is the best way to discharge his or her duty to protect third parties from their client's violent urges, the PCC must find a psychiatrist, physician, psychologist, or health officer to sign the "state mental hold" form. In at least six other states, independently licensed clinical mental health counselors are authorized to sign 72 hour holds. Research conducted in Florida has shown that granting counselors the authority to sign a mental hold has had no adverse effect on clients, has not overburdened the hospital emergency system, and has not resulted in increased expenditures for mental health care. Empowering Ohio Professional Clinical Counselors to be able to sign our "state mental hold" would increase public safety by allowing PCCs, especially PCCs in private practice, to more quickly respond to client threats of harm self or others and would eliminate costly duplication of services.