



Reducing Regulatory Barriers. Increasing Access to Mental Health Care.

Statement of the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact Commission Regarding Emotional Support Animal Letters Issued by American Service Pets

The Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact Commission (“PSYPACT Commission”) has been made aware of letters purportedly issued by psychologists affiliated with American Service Pets (ASP). These letters, which appear to all be substantially similar in form and content, state that the individual to whom the letter is directed has a qualifying disability under the ADA, the Fair Housing Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and recommends an emotional support animal (ESA) for the individual. In some cases, these letters appear to be signed by a psychologist who purports to be practicing under “Authority to Practice Interjurisdictional Telepsychology (APIT) Granted by the PSYPACT Commission.”

The PSYPACT Commission has been presented with these letters by landlords and others asking for verification of the letters.

The PSYPACT Commission has absolutely no way to verify these letters and does not issue any such verifications of such letters, the conditions of the individuals bearing the letters or their eligibility for an ESA under any applicable laws.

The PSYPACT Commission has reviewed the ASP website, which claims that licensed psychologists review a questionnaire prepared by the individual applicant. There is no indication that any telepsychology services are provided at any point prior to the issuance of the ESA letters described above. Absent any provision of telepsychology services, the psychologists purportedly signing these letters are not practicing interjurisdictional telepsychology and therefore the PSYPACT practice privilege is not applicable to the issuance of these letters.

Accordingly, any individuals or entities presented with such letters are cautioned not to rely upon representations of psychologists purporting to issue such letters under the Authority to Practice Interjurisdictional Telepsychology (APIT) issued by the PSYPACT Commission, as such authority does not extend to the issuance of ESA letters without the prior provision of telepsychology services provided in a state participating in PSYPACT.

Individuals wishing to verify the licensing status of an individual psychologist should check with the state licensing authority (such as the state board of psychology) in the individual state(s) in which the psychologist is licensed. While the PSYPACT Commission can verify whether an individual holds an APIT under PSYPACT, we again caution that the issuance of these letters is not authorized under PSYPACT privileges where such letters are issued without a prior telepsychology consult between the psychologist and the individual who is in a state participating in PSYPACT.

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