

September 2025

PAA Advocacy Efforts

PAA continues leading advocacy efforts that elevate the unique role of psychology, not only within Alberta, but also as part of a national movement to distinguish psychologists from counselors, counselling therapists / psychotherapists, and other allied health professionals, such as social workers. This work is aligned with broader initiatives of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) and Council of Professional Associations of Psychology (CPAP), where PAA's CEO, Dr. Bill Hanson, serves as Vice-Chair of the Executive.

By engaging regularly with:

- CPAP leadership
- Healthcare Associations of Alberta (HAA)
- American Psychological Association's Division 31/CESSPA/SPTA and Board of Professional Affairs
- AHS' Psychology Practice Council
- Health Coalition of Alberta and
- BC and Ontario psychological associations...

PAA is ensuring that Alberta's voice is aligned with national and international advocacy.

These collaborations reinforce psychology's evidence-based expertise in diagnosis, assessment, and treatment, and ensure that psychologists are recognized as highly trained experts in the field. Additionally, close attention is being paid to Measurement-Based Care (MBC) initiatives and government-subsidized treatment (see Nova Scotia) and regularly meeting with government leaders (e.g., Minister of Mental Health & Addiction, Honourable Rick Wilson) and regulatory bodies (CAP).

Between May and July 2025, PAA made meaningful and measurable progress on its strategic priorities and advocacy efforts. Highlights include:

-developing a unified “ONE PAA” revitalization campaign, which will be anchored in the forthcoming 2026-2030 strategic plan

-Dr. Hanson’s leadership role on CAP’s new Diagnosis and Assessment Task Force and his work with insurance companies to recognize psychologists as provincial experts on mental health further advance the profession’s visibility and credibility.

By meeting with lifetime members, provincial health organizations, and peer associations, PAA has been both strengthening partnerships and directly influencing policies that shape the mental health landscape. These efforts are positioning psychology as a cornerstone of health and well-being in Canada, differentiating the profession in ways that benefit both practitioners and the public. The overarching idea is to elevate both psychologists and counsellors and help the public understand (and value) differences through, for example, metaphors and analogies (e.g., builders and architects, mechanics and engineers). All are needed and valued, but they do different things with some overlap. Soon, PAA will launch a public-facing advocacy campaign related to these matters, including documents related to profession-specific training, education, scope of practice, etc.

Also of note, to advocate most effectively for people who, for example, are unhoused, lack benefits, or rely on programs like Alberta’s Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), we must continue building coalitions/partnerships with CPA, CPAP, health system partners, and insurers to expand coverage, embed psychologists in community programs, and ensure referral pathways from housing and income support services. To ensure impact, advocacy should emphasize measurable outcomes, such as reduced waiting times, improved mental health and wellbeing, and housing stability, while integrating lived-experience voices to guide culturally safe, trauma-informed care. Ongoing consultation with CMHA Alberta is vital.