

**House Bill 09-1341**  
**House Health and Human Services Committee**  
**April 16, 2009**

**Title: Concerning the Continuation of the Licensing of Psychiatric Technicians by the State Board of Nursing**

**Sponsors: Rep. Pace, Sen. Tapia**

**Summary of Legislation:**

HB09-1341 continues the licensing and regulation of psychiatric technicians (LPTs) by the State Board of Nursing until July 1, 2019. The bill is effective July 1, 2009. Without this legislation, licensed psychiatric technicians will begin a one-year phase-down July 1.

Licensed psychiatric technicians provide essential client services at the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Pueblo and the State's Regional Centers for persons with developmental disabilities. The complexity of Institute and Regional Center clients and treatment settings require that a skilled, competent, and trained workforce be maintained to ensure positive and safe outcomes for patients and staff. LPTs fill a significant void created by the current shortage of Registered Nurses. The employment of LPTs allows technical skills to be performed without on-site oversight by a Registered Nurse. LPN and CNA duties require on-site supervision.

Psychiatric Technicians are responsible for administering medications to residents of the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Pueblo and the three Regional Centers in Colorado. They monitor side-effects of medications and of suspected mental illness; they implement behavioral interventions as prescribed by psychiatric staff. They are the front line observers at the regional centers and the state hospital on whether a particular treatment is effective or needs to be changed. When delegated, they provide health monitoring of blood glucose levels and blood pressure, as well as occupational and speech therapies. They also prepare and implement specialized diets. They also deal with dangerous patients and have training on physical intervention.

The Department of Human Services anticipates it would be difficult to recruit CNAs or LPNs into the Institute setting. Many of these individuals want to utilize their skills in acute care medical hospitals and/or in skilled nursing facilities rather than in a psychiatric setting. The violence often presented by the Institute patient population provides unique, and often frightening, challenges to recruitment and retention of health care providers.

HB09-1341 will enable the Mental Health Institute and the Regional Centers to continue to utilize licensed psychiatric professionals to provide a unique skill set that is vital to meeting the needs of clients with a mental illness or a developmental disability.