

ELIE G. AOUN, MD

GENERAL, ADDICTION AND FORENSIC PSYCHIATRY

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Statement of Intent

I am a candidate for the ECP Trustee at Large position at the APA. My dedication to our field and to disenfranchised and disadvantaged populations makes me an ideal candidate for this position. My firsthand experience as an early career psychiatrist, a man of color, a gay man, and an international medical graduate gives me a unique perspective on the issues faced by our colleagues and our patients.

The APA offers members the unique opportunity to find mentorship and grow in leadership. When I left Lebanon in 2010, I could not have imagined that I would earn four board certifications and gain several prestigious academic faculty appointments. The APA opened many of these doors for me and I pursued the opportunities to learn, grow, and meaningfully contribute to the psychiatric community.

I grew up in Lebanon, where a 20-year civil war produced a generation plagued by collective PTSD and where homosexuality is considered both a crime and a mental illness. In order to be an agent of change, I sought training in the United States. The struggles of the most marginalized patients sparked my interest in substance use disorders (SUDs). The complex relationship between the legal system, mental illness, and SUDs led me to pursue fellowships in both addictions and forensics. It fueled my research into the social determinants of health and the sociolegal factors that perpetuate SUDs in the most ostracized patients.

Although psychiatric training was busy, learning how psychiatrists influence public opinion on mental health and shape policy was integral to my education. Serving on the APA Assembly, I wrote numerous action papers and defended them, advocating for both our patients and profession. I went on to be elected mentor for junior residents and fellow members so they could do the same. As an APA Leadership fellow, I served on the Council on Addiction Psychiatry (CAP), and developed influential position statements. With the APA-SAMHSA Substance Abuse and Minority Fellowship Award grant, I developed a national mental health training curriculum for law enforcement officials.

In 2016, Dr. Maria Oquendo, the first female Latina APA President appointed me as the ECP member of CAP. In 2018, Dr. Altha Stewart, the first female African American APA president, appointed me vice-chair of CAP. I embraced these leadership roles entrusted to me by these role models. I mentored junior members on the council and ensured that they too had a chance to grow.

I am running because too many psychiatrists are disillusioned by the state of our profession. I am running because I want to make a difference. I am running to serve, because if it wasn't for the service of generations before me, I would not be here today. I am running to ensure that future generations of psychiatrists can be proud of our astonishing American Psychiatric Association.

Given the honor of serving as ECP Trustee at Large, I will strive to represent us all and to advocate for meaningful professional reform to protect our collective professional future. If elected, I will serve our organization, my fellow colleagues and the communities that constitute our patients tirelessly. My love for the field, my value for integration and tolerance, and my tenacity and idealism make me the right choice to for the position of APA ECP Trustee at Large.

Elie G. Aoun, M.D.

Assistant Professor of Psychiatry

Columbia University, Division of Law, Ethics and Psychiatry

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Elie Aoun".