



APA Assembly Notes

May 2019

This digest of events during the May Assembly meetings held in San Francisco, CA summarizes oral presentations and action items of the Assembly. Many other reports presented in written form can be found in the Assembly Packet. It is best to download or read these notes online, but may also be printed and distributed in hardcopy (without access to the web links). You may use it as is, or edit and modify the content to suit your particular needs. Any errors or omissions are to be considered unconscious. Corrections and suggestions may be sent to [Adam Nelson, M.D.](#)



Speaker's Welcome — James R. Batterson, M.D.



Dr. Batterson welcomed everyone to San Francisco where, he noted, both he and Seeth Vivek, MD met their eventual spouses when they both attended the APA Annual Meeting in 1993. Several candidates who ran this past year or currently hold national offices in the APA have served in the Assembly. We have an extremely full agenda with 46 Action Papers and 16 Position Statements, but he assures us that he has a plan to get us through the entire agenda.

Treasurer Report — Gregory W. Dalack, MD

APA had a net loss in 2018 compared to a net gain in 2017. Most of the losses were attributed to investments. Several income centers still managed to have net gains, but net expenses were also higher in 2018. Similarly, APA Foundation had net losses in 2018 compared to net gains in 2017. Current financials in 2019 are ahead of pace for 2018, led by increases in APA Annual Meeting registrations. Based on the Action Paper approved by the Assembly requesting report out on APA and APAF investment in fossil fuels, this information is available in our Assembly packet. The Investment Oversight Committee is studying the Assembly's proposal to divest of fossil fuel investments and will be making its recommendations to the BOT later this year. There is a complete report in the Assembly packet.



APA President-Elect — Bruce Schwartz, MD



Dr. Schwartz reported that the Council on Healthcare Systems and Financing, in response to an Action Paper passed by the Assembly last year, has begun to develop a tool to assess the level of treatment intensity required for adequacy of care. Also, given the outcome of the recent landmark case in California of [Wit v. UnitedHealthcare](#), the Council on Quality of Care is also developing standards of acuity of patient care. The psychiatrist workforce deficit is getting worse as older "baby-boomer" psychiatrists move toward retirement. In the next decade, the shortage of psychiatrists is expected to exceed 15,000. This will adversely impact efforts to achieve and maintain parity of psychiatric care. Innovations will improve access to care, but will fall short of resolving it. As the problem grows, expect non-MD providers to seek greater autonomy and increased scope of practice toward prescriptive authority.

APA President — Altha Stewart, MD

Dr. Stewart has worked closely this year in collaboration with Dr. Batterson. The actions taken recently by the APA Assembly challenge APA leadership to be better as leaders. Her legacy as APA President has been to encourage and mentor young psychiatrists to become more active in the organization in the past year. MOC remains a problematic issue for many members. APA is working hard to resolve issues with the ABPN. Being president of the APA for the past year has been one of the top five highlights of her life. Dr. Stewart offers her thanks for the support of the Assembly and for the work we do.



American Psychiatric Association Foundation — Saul Levin, MD, MPA, Chairperson/Chief Executive Officer and Medical Director & Daniel Gillison, Jr., Executive Director



The APAF remains committed to funding APA fellowships. This year drew 69 fellows, including 48 women and 21 men, from 43 institutions for a total of 108 fellows currently. Foundation activities at this year's APA Annual meeting include a historical training track, several video recording booths offering attendees a chance to share their views on psychiatry, hosting the APA Mind Games, including a special 175th Anniversary edition, and of course, the APA's 175th Anniversary Gala at San Francisco's City Hall. APAF now offers several ways to donate, including texting 'APAF2019' to 44321, a silent auction to be held during the Annual Meeting, or you can always [Adopt-A-Book](#) at the APA Library in Washington, DC. APAF remains a platform for [activism](#).

APA Political Action Committee — R. Scott Benson, MD, Chair

APAPAC spent \$315.5K in 2018, still well behind other specialty group PACs. In 2019, the PAC has raised \$172K from 900 members' contributions so far. As of the start of the May Assembly, 44% of Assembly members have contributed so far this year (compared to 93% last year). BOT and AEC members are near 90% participation. Area 4 leads the way with \$13.8K, while Area 1 lags behind with \$288. PAC funds are used to support parity, suicide prevention, and opioid use-related issues.



Royal College of Psychiatrists — Adrian James, MB BS FRCPsych MSc, Registrar

Dr. James is a guest of the Assembly and attending the APA Annual Meeting. He observes that issues affecting psychiatry in the US are similar to those in the UK. However, with tongue in cheek, he notes that the UK has had difficulty in giving direction to the US historically. The Royal College of Psychiatrists has a touching video that invites viewers to ["Choose Psychiatry"](#).

Assembly Committee on Procedures — A David Axelrad, MD, Chair

The Assembly approved amendments to the election procedures for nominating of officer candidates to replace those nominees who withdraw from the election. The Association of Medicine and Psychiatry's application to be part of ACROSS was also approved.

CEO/Medical Director of the APA — Saul Levin, MD, MPA



With nearly 39,000 members, APA membership is the highest in the past 20 years. The APA website has had a 700% increase in traffic. It includes over 200 diversity activities, [Find-a-Psychiatrist](#), and several areas focusing on innovation and toolkits for member use. In 2018, APA has been awarded several research grants, including CMS Transforming Clinical Practices initiative (TCPI) Support Alignment Network (SAN) – \$2.9M/4 years, CMS Quality Measure initiative – \$5.4M/3 years, SAMHSA Clinical Support System for SMI (CSS-SMI) – \$14.2M/5 years, and SAMHSA STATES Technical Assistance Team Education and Support through AAAP – \$442K/2 years. A draft of updated [Practice Guidelines on Treatment of Patients with Schizophrenia](#) are online. Please review and give your feedback. APA Publishing is planning to release 30 new book titles in 2019, 85 titles for 2019-2021. An Alexa app is in development for abstracts of Psychiatric News articles. And new ["Psychiatry Unbound"](#) podcasts with Dr. Laura Roberts are being released. APA's Annual Meeting is expecting 12,000 attendees, 252 exhibitors, and 288 allied group meetings scheduled. Media requests to APA have increased 115% since 2015. An APA Leadership Cascade will provide timely and targeted messages to all levels of APA leadership. Efforts at strategic communication have increased quality of connection to members as evident by increased number of emails opened, and fewer email opt-outs. APA can also be found on social media, including [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#),

[Linkedin](#), [Youtube](#), the [APA App](#), and [Instagram](#). Dr. Levin can also be found on social media at [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Linkedin](#).

APA Position Statements

The following Position Statements were approved by the Assembly:

Proposed Position Statement for a Neuroscience-based Nomenclature (NbN) Project

Proposed Position Statement: Supporting Implementation of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act

Proposed Position Statement: Civil Commitment for Adults with SUDs

Revised Position Statement Against use of cannabis for PTSD

***Retained** Position Statement: Cultural Psychiatry as a Specific Field of Study Relevant to the Assessment and Care of All Patients

***Revised** Position Statement: Carve Outs and Discrimination

***Revised** Position Statement: In Opposition to Cannabis as Medicine

***Revised** Position Statement: Substance Use Disorders

***Proposed** Position Statement: Use of Opioid Medications with Terminally Ill Patients

***Revised** Position Statement: Sexually Transmitted Infections Including HIV Infection Among Older Adults

***Revised** Position Statement: The Role of the Psychiatrist in Nursing Facilities

***Revised** Position Statement: Need to Maintain Intermediate and Long-Term Inpatient Care Access for Persons with Serious Mental Illness

***Revised** Position Statement: Abuse and Misuse of Psychiatry

***Revised** Position Statement: Hospital Privileging of Psychologists and Other Non-Psychiatrist Mental Health Professionals

Action Papers/Items

Among the Actions taken during this session, the Assembly voted:

To Oppose Requirements to Prescribe Dangerous Quantities of Psychotropic Medications

To Promote Prominent and Appropriate Documenting of Substance Use History in Medical Records

*To Improve Payment Models for Telepsychiatry and C/L Services, Increasing Access to Quality MH Care

To Approve a Position Statement on Universal Health Care Coverage in the United States

To Adopt a New Position Statement on Scope of Practice for Prescription of Medications to Psychiatric Patients

To Explore Increasing APA Support for DB Central Billing and PAC Fundraising

To Improve Psychiatric Training in Family Medicine Residencies

To Develop a Position Statement Requiring Medical Supervision of Psychiatry Residents and Fellows

To Develop a Public Relations Campaign for Improving Public Understanding of Psychiatry

To Conduct a Feasibility Study to Find an Alternative Process for Specialty Certification

To Advocate for a National Opioid Use Disorder Screening and Awareness Day

To Advocate for CME Credit for Psychiatrists Participating in Maintenance of Certification (MOC)

*To Provide Article Based Assessment for Maintenance of Certification (MOC) for Free to APA Members

To Create a Workgroup to Update and Amend [Federal Standard 42 CFR §8.12](#) for Opioid Treatment Programs

To Create a Workgroup to establish a media response and talking points on climate mental health impacts

To Conduct a Research Assessment of Climate-Related Psychiatric Service Needs

To Develop Recommendations for Lowering Prescription Drug Prices

To Request from APA an Annual Strategic Report on Access to Quality Mental Health Care

To Create a Position Statement Promoting the Terms “Physician”, “Psychiatrist”, and “Patient” over the Terms “Provider” and “Client” in Psychiatric Practice

To Develop and Disseminate Model Curricula on Climate Change and Mental Health

To Explore an Environmental Sustainability Partnership as a Benefit for APA Members

To Reduce Stigma of Substance Use in Athletic Organization Policies by eliminating the Term “Abuse”

*To Promote Expansion of Psychiatry Residency Positions

To Develop a Leadership Training Course for Psychiatrists
 To Develop Programs to Eliminate Workplace Bullying at the VA
 *To Advance Gender Equality of Compensation in Medicine
 *To Develop Sustainable Funding for Early Recognition and Treatment of Psychotic Disorders in Youth
 To Improve Safe Prescribing of Controlled Substances Nationwide Through State PDMPs
 To Oppose Rescheduling and Monitoring of Medical Marijuana Prescriptions
 For APA to Become a Partner with [TIME'S UP Healthcare](#)
 For APA to Urge Health Plans to Comply with BH Network Adequacy to Improve Access to Care
 *To Protect Government-Employed Psychiatrists from Political Pressure
 For APA Recognition of International Women's Day
 To Consider a Reduction of Dues for Members with Joint APA and ACROSS Organization Memberships
To Oppose One Member-One Vote for APA Assembly Elections
 To Enhance Members' Ability to Ethically and Legally Respond to Online Reviews
 To Improve Transparency of Cost Estimate Analysis on Action Paper Submissions
To Oppose Creation of a Council on Advocacy and Patient Safety (CAPS)
 To Develop a Position Statement on the Use of Emotional Support Animals (ESAs)
 To Develop and Promote Criteria for Support of Psychiatrists as Department Leaders
 To Develop a Nationwide APA RFM Merit Award Modeled on the Area III RFM Membership & Leadership Development Innovations
 To Include Territorial Acknowledgments in APA Meeting Programming

*(Items with a * were approved by consent. Items in bold invited greater debate and may be worthy of further discussion with DB and Area Council members.)*

A draft summary of actions taken by the Assembly can be found [here](#).

Final version of all Action Papers can be found [here](#).

You can view all current and previous Action Papers and track their current status on AITS [here](#).

Presentation of Assembly Awards Committee — Daniel Anzia, MD, Chair

The **DB Best Practices Award** for large DB went to the [Colorado Psychiatric Society](#). Honorable mention went to [Northern California Psychiatric Society](#). For small DB, the award was given to [Mississippi Psychiatric Association](#). Honorable mention went to [Georgia Psychiatric Physicians Association](#).

Award for Area Voting in Elections went to [Area3](#) with 21% voter turnout. For DB voting, the award went to **North Dakota Psychiatric Association** with 33%.

The **Warren Williams Awards** for Outstanding Contributions in Mental Health were presented to **Bhasker Dave, MD (Area 4)** who was recognized for his lifelong work in public sector psychiatry, outstanding contributions, service, teaching and lifelong commitment to MH Services. and **Charles Herndon, MD – Alaska (Area 7)**, who was recognized for his focus on treating people with SUDs, especially physicians, for which he was described as a "doctor's doctor", for his service to others, colleagues, with compassion, humility, and a great sense of humor.

The **Excellence in Service Award** was given to **Monica Taylor-Desir, MD, MPH - North Dakota (Area 4)** who developed and expanded services in a clinic serving indigenous communities, developed programs to serve rural communities, reduce suicide by creating "zero suicide" policies, and for her tremendous compassion for the people with whom she works.

The **Profiles in Courage Award** was given to **Jeffrey Geller, MD**, who, against the advice of his training program chair, left a teaching position at Beth Israel Hospital and Harvard Medical School for Worcester State Hospital in Western Massachusetts in 1978, where he quickly became medical director and fought local political influences to prevent releasing persons with SMI into inadequate community based residential care. Dr. Geller has argued for extending involuntary care for a subset of SMI individuals as well as for outpatient treatment commitment. He takes on important issues and controversy even if it is politically ill-advised. Dr. Geller invites all of us to retort to all of those nay-sayers of 40 years ago to "stuff it".



Assembly Elections

The Assembly held its annual election of Officers for the coming year. For Speaker-Elect, the Assembly elected [Joseph Napoli, MD](#) (Area 3), and for Recorder, the Assembly elected [Mary Jo Fitz-Gerald, MD](#) (Area 5). Congratulations to all the candidates on a well-fought campaign.

Reports and Next Steps from the Assembly Committees/Work Groups

Committee on MOC - Russell Pet, MD

- ABPN has been named in a class-action lawsuit. A motion for dismissal will be heard later in May
- There are two other lawsuits pending against ABIM and ABMS
- See [full report](#) for details

Committee on Psychiatric Diagnosis and the DSM

- Procedures for changes to DSM 5 include submissions to the [website](#).
- There are several changes pending for the next edition, which will be DSM-5-TR
- Persistent grief disorder, personality disorders, and suicide behavior disorder will be moving from Section 3 to Section 2.

Committee on Public and Community Psychiatry – Isabel Norian

- Issues included discussion on the future of IPS
- Leslie Gise, MD presented a summary report on [healthcare reform](#)

Committee on Access to Care - Eliot Sorel, MD

- The committee examined results of surveys of the DBs, Area Councils, NAMI, and National Business Purchasers of Healthcare Coalition
- Among the many achievements include 4 Action Papers produced for this session of the Assembly
- See [full report](#) for complete summary of accomplishments and data sets analyzed

Workgroup on increasing voter turnout – Edward Thomas Lewis, MD

- Only 3 people showed up to the Committee
- APA voter turnout numbers are similar to those of other membership organizations
- It remains a problem the workgroup intends to address.

Hail and Farewells:

The Assembly bids farewell to several members who are finishing up their terms after this session. Of particular note are the departures of Daniel Anzia, MD (Area 4), Seeth Vlivek, MD (Area 2), and Jeff Akaka, MD (Area 7). Cumulatively, these 3 Assembly members have amassed nearly 70 years of tenured experience with the Assembly.

Your influences have been profound and your wisdom and guidance will be cherished and missed.

Did you know....?

This Assembly plowed through 49 action papers (though several were eventually withdrawn) and 16 position statements and still had 18 minutes to spare at adjournment on Sunday? Applause to Drs. Batterson and O'Leary for facilitating a productive and efficient Assembly meeting!