

APA Assembly Notes

November 2018

This digest of events during the November Assembly meetings held in Washington, DC 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 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.](#)



EDITOR'S NOTE: I invite the reader to respond to any of the Action Items described in this edition, or any other topic(s) of interest. Please give voice to your reactions and opinions by contacting your DB and Area leadership and Assembly representative and drafting an Action Paper for the next meeting of the Assembly. You may support an existing policy, practice, or position, oppose it, or develop something completely different. What you may not do is to remain silent. Please let us know your thoughts on these and any other topics of interest or concern to you. –A.N.

Speaker's Welcome and Introduction of New Members — James R. Batterson, M.D.



Dr. Batterson opened the Assembly session on a somber note of grief for the loss of life last week at the Etz-Chayim ("Tree of Life") Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA. Among those who died tragically was Dr. Jerry Rabinowitz, friend and colleague of Assembly rep Melvin Melnick, MD. A patient of Dr. Rabinowitz' noted: "He held a lamp to light the way", being one of the first clinicians in Pittsburgh to physically connect with patients who had been diagnosed with AIDS in the 1980's, when others still feared contagion of the disease. Dr. Saul Levin, CEO and Medical Director of APA, observed that such tragedies traumatize not only those impacted in the local communities, but everyone everywhere. Dr. Batterson also shared his experiences of the [wreath-laying ceremony](#), held the day before the opening of the Assembly at the Vietnam Memorial. This event was inspired by an Action Paper passed by the Assembly last year to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. Dr. Batterson invited us to tour the brand new headquarters for the APA followed by an APA-PAC reception on the penthouse floor. Finally, Drs. Batterson, O'Leary, and Vivek welcomed incoming new members to the Assembly. Those with more experience are encouraged to seek out new members to offer mentorship.

Report of the APA President — Altha Stewart, MD

Dr. Stewart prefaced her comments by noting the APA's improvements in communication technology and infrastructure. Dr. Stewart tells us that we have a responsibility, as psychiatrists, to address a growing public trauma, provoked by divisive rhetoric and violent acts of terror at this moment. These problems are where we "live" as psychiatrists, and demand that we respond. APA continues to address matters of importance to all psychiatrists, including MOC, safe prescribing, and disparities in compensation and access to care. Efforts to expand leadership of RFMs and ECPs have led to an increased number of submissions to the scientific program for the upcoming APA Annual Meeting in 2019 by first-time presenters. In addition, APA's "footprint" is expanding in children's mental health, criminal justice, and other areas of mental health of social importance. Dr. Stewart shared her sense of honor to have participated in the [wreath-laying ceremony](#) at the Vietnam Memorial yesterday.



Treasurer's Report — Gregory W. Dalack, MD, Treasurer



Information presented was for the first 8 months of 2018 (as compared to the same time period last year). Overall, revenues appear to have declined, mostly due to investment performance. However, membership revenue is up, due to earlier dues payments this year. Annual meeting revenues increased, while DSM revenues declined, as expected. The budget anticipates using about \$2.2M of reserves. Revenues did exceed costs in Annual Meeting, DSM, Dues, Publishing,

and Discretionary projects, leaving our overall financial status quite sound. The APA Foundation has assets this year comparable to last year. APAF had success in obtaining federal grants. Also, expenses requested by the BOT were much less than funds available, giving the APAF strong financial status as well. A financial audit of APA, APAF, 401(k) and pension funds resulted in a “clean opinion”. Full report is available in the Assembly Packet.

Report of the Assembly Nominating Committee — Theresa Miskimen, MD

The Nominating Committee selects as candidates for Assembly Officers:

Speaker-Elect: [Seeth Vivek, MD](#) (Area 2) and [Joseph Napoli, MD](#) (Area 3)

Recorder: [Mary Jo Fitz-Gerald, MD](#) (Area 5), [Vincenzo Di Nicola, MD](#) (Area 1) and [Adam Nelson, MD](#) (Area 6)

Congratulations and good luck to all the candidates!

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

 Dr. Levin attended the [wreath-laying ceremony](#) at the Vietnam Memorial, which he described as “one of the best things I’ve ever seen the APA do.” There were several touching moments at the event marking the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War and was initiated by an Action Paper from the Assembly. Also in attendance were several veterans and their families. APA was one of only 3 awardees of a CMS Quality Measure Development Grant for managing mental illness and substance use disorders. The grant will forge a partnership between APA and NCQA. This year’s federal budget includes a \$2B increase in NIH funding through HHS appropriations, and \$584M increase to SAMHSA, including a \$206M increase for opioid state response grants. The Minority Fellowship Program was also retained despite the Trump administration initially threatening to “zero” this budget item. APA priorities continue to be Telehealth, CURES state targeted opioid grants, CHiP parity, Medicaid for substance-use disordered inmates, NIH opioid pain management research, establishing best practices for opioid prescribing and pain management, and defense of the ACA. APA filed a joint suit (with NAMI and MHA) against short-term limited insurance (www.stopjunkinsurance.com). AMA, ACP, AOA, AAFP, AAP, ACOG, HIV Medicine Association, and Medical Society of District of Columbia all filed Amicus Briefs in the case. APA was one of the first organizations to oppose the Trump administration’s immigrant family separation and detention policies. APA signed a coalition letter to Congress opposing policies of separating refugee children from their parents at the US border and submitted comments opposing proposed modifications to the Flores settlement. APA is excited to be celebrating its 175th Anniversary at the Annual Meeting in San Francisco in May 2019. In addition, the BOT has approved the purchase of the top 3 floors of the building where now is housed the APA Headquarters, and where a reception is being held this weekend. Finally, Dr. Levin reminds us that this has been a week of tragedy. With the murder of a black couple in Louisville, KY, 11 Jews and first responders in Pittsburgh, PA, and children of immigrants and refugees who remain separated from their families, it is most important for each of us to vote on Election Day!



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

This year’s Assembly Profiles in Courage Award is being awarded to Jeffrey Geller, MD. As Dr. Geller is one of the candidates running this year for APA national office, the Awards Committee has decided to postpone presentation of the award until the May Assembly.

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



APA Foundation is commemorating the 175th anniversary of APA this year with planned Gala in San Francisco at the Annual Meeting in San Francisco, as well as exhibits at the APA offices and headquarters. The APAF Substance Use Disorders de-stigmatizing campaign is underway, coordinating with several international groups. Two PBS documentaries are also in the works, one being produced by Ken Burns. Look for them soon. APAF provided support for the wreath-laying ceremony earlier this week and the post-ceremony reception held afterwards. This coming year, the APAF Board will be more active in soliciting contributions. New Board members are Gabrielle Shapiro, Bruce Schwartz, Greg Dalak, and Lou Krause. Dan Gillison exhibited a [promotional video](#) from APAF. Fundraising for 2018 of \$122K has far exceeded the \$93 raised in 2017. The Annual Fund, which provides assistance to programs and initiatives that are most in need, is currently at 78% of its goal for the year. The Melvin Sabshin, MD Library and Archives, housed at APA Headquarters, has an Adopt-A-Book Program to preserve, digitize, expand, maintain, and acquire new additions to its collection. More information is available at www.apafdn.org. A copy of the slides from this presentation can be found [here](#).

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

The Assembly approved editorial changes to the Assembly Procedures recognizing the [Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedures](#) as the new guidebook on rules of conduct during the Assembly.

Report from the APA Political Action Committee — R. Scott Benson, MD, chair

Dr. Benson congratulates Area 7 for 100% of Area Council members contributing to the PAC. Area 6 was slightly behind with 94%. Also 100% of the AEC has contributed to the PAC, while only 83% of the BOT have contributed. APAPAC continues to address issues of Mental Health Parity, Access to mental health services, healthcare reform, suicide prevention, and the opioid crisis. In addition to contributing to the PAC, Dr. Benson urges all of us to join the APA [Congressional Advocacy Network](#) (CAN).



APA Position Statements

The following Position Statements were approved by the Assembly:

- ***Proposed** Position Statement on Role of Psychiatrists in Palliative Care
- ***Proposed** Position Statement on Utilization of Measurement Based Care
- Proposed** Position Statement on Core Principles for Alternative Payment Models for Behavioral Health
- ***Revised** Position Statement on Screening and Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders During Pregnancy and Postpartum
- ***Proposed** Position Statement on Physician Health Programs in the Treatment of Addiction and Substance Use Disorders in Physicians
- ***Proposed** Position Statement on Conversion Therapy and LGBTQ Patients
- ***Proposed** Position Statement on Mental Health Equity and the Social and Structural Determinants of Mental Health
- ***Proposed** Position Statement on Human Trafficking
- Proposed** Position Statement on Police Brutality and Black Males
- Proposed** Position Statement on Safe Prescribing (**)
- ***Retire** 1981 Position Statement: Confidentiality of Medical Records: Does the Physician have a Right to Privacy Concerning His or Her Own Health Records?

- ***Retain** 2013 Position Statement on Legislative Intrusion and Reproductive Choice
- Revised** Position Statement on Consistent Treatment of All Applicants for State Medical Licensure
- ***Retain** Position Statement on Residency Training Needs in Addiction Psychiatry for the General Psychiatrist
- ***Retain** Position Statement on Neuroscience Training in Psychiatry Residency Training
- ***Retire** Position Statement on Therapies Focused on Attempts to Change Sexual Orientation (Reparative or Conversion Therapies)
- ***Revised** Position Statement on Elder Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation
- ***Retire** Position Statement: 2007 Reactive Attachment Disorder
- ***Retain** Position Statement: 2007 Family Planning
- Proposed** Position Statement on Separation of Immigrant Children and Families

*(A proposed Position Statement on PDMP's was NOT supported by the Assembly. The approved Position Statements will go to the BOT for final approval. The PS on Safe Prescribing (**) has already been approved by the BOT.)*

Action Papers/Items

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

- *- For the APA to biannually review the World Health Organization's Essential Medicines List (EML) regarding psychotropic and substance use disorder medications.
- To improve Psychiatric Treatment in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Programs.
- To urge the APA to address the critical role of residents and fellows in the workforce.
- To have the APA evaluate states' best practices of behavioral health managed care.
- To simplify EHR required documentation under Medicare and Medicaid.
- To amend the APA Position Statement on Peer Support to include peer support services for families.
- *- To remove Medicare and Medicaid restrictions and other barriers to healthcare access in Puerto Rico.
- **For the APA to monitor media for misinformation disseminated by Scientology and develop a corrective message campaign with talking points for APA members to use.**
- **To protect the public mental health from effects of climate change by urging APA to divest from fossil fuel industry investments.**
- **To develop a Position Statement on unbiased and diverse expert panels for developing Treatment Guidelines particularly with regard to psychodynamic therapy and interpersonal therapy.**
- **To urge the AMA for add-on billing codes for suicide risk assessments in primary and emergency care settings.**
- To promote and support access to quality MH services to forcibly separated immigrant children and families.
- To develop and distribute to department chairs and residency and fellowship training directors a tool kit for use by psychiatrists and psychiatric trainees addressing racial discrimination.
- To develop a suicide prevention strategic plan with focus on underserved populations and other high-risk groups.
- To advocate for the necessity of keeping families intact while they are seeking asylum in the US.
- To offer digital versions of information update packets during Assembly meetings.
- To create a Position Statement from the APA on psychiatrist input for psychiatric facility Construction
- To create a Position Statement on the administrative burden of treatment plan documentation imposed by CMS, Joint Commission, and other third parties.
- NOT to support a proposed revision to the APA electoral process

*(Items with a * were approved by consent. Items in **bold** were more controversial and may be worthy of soliciting feedback from constituent members of your DB.)*

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](#).

Reports and Next Steps from the Assembly Committees/Work Groups

Assembly Committee on Public & Community Psychiatry – Isabel Norian, MD, chair

Topics discussed include tracking of Position Statements headed to the JRC on hospital-based care, national concerns about immigrants being potentially denied status if they enroll in Medicare or Medicaid, and a pilot project announced by Bob Cabaj, MD in San Mateo County, CA to address opioid addiction treatment.

Assembly Committee on Psychiatric Diagnosis & the DSM – Vincenzo Di Nicola, MD, chair

Topics discussed included new thinking process in upcoming DSM revisions, which are an ongoing process, on the use of “Z codes” in the military, a possible forensic dilemma as to whether the print or online version of the DSM should be regarded as the authoritative version, whether online screening tools for addiction disorders are ahead behind or ahead of the curve, an understanding of the distinction between a diagnostic manual (DSM) and a diagnostic classification system (ICD), and the importance of social and clinical responsiveness in development of future editions of the DSM, as well as a discussion regarding the overall use of diagnosis.

Assembly Committee on Access to Care – Dr. Eliot Sorel, MD, chair

Topics discussed included an aspect of the Committee’s mission to address issues raised by members and patients by using data, to wit, results of the first qualitative access to care survey distributed to all Area Councils will be available sometime after this meeting. Access is necessary, but not sufficient without parity. A bill on behavioral health parity is likely to pass in the District of Columbia in the near future.

Assembly Committee on Maintenance of Certification – Russell Pet, MD, chair

Topics discussed included the ABPN’s current MOC Pilot Program, of which there are about 5000 participants, a recent ABMS initiative to solicit feedback on MOC in which only 12% of MDs thought it was useful, while most other stakeholders were in favor of board certification, though not necessarily by ABMS. Different specialty boards apply different passage standards, some using minimal competence, while others use standard of excellence. DOJ is exploring competition among certifying boards.

Assembly Liaisons to the Committee on Practice Guidelines – John Shemo, MD, chair

A practice guideline on schizophrenia is nearing a first draft - look for a comment period by the end of the year.

Assembly Work Group on Increasing Voter Turnout – Edward Thomas Lewis, MD, chair

The group recognizes the chronic challenge of increasing voter turnout. They concluded that the more personal the invitation, the better the turnout.

Old Business

Action Paper 2018A1 12.G: Endorsing a Single Payer Nationwide Health Care System

- (At the May 2018 Assembly, the Assembly voted to postpone action on this paper until the November 2018 Assembly meeting.)
- This paper was withdrawn by the author. Input from APA’s Council on Healthcare Systems and Finances will be incorporated into a revised draft to be presented at a later time

Websites and Media:

Wreath-laying ceremony: <https://www.psychiatry.org/newsroom/apa-wreath-laying-ceremony>

APA Foundation promotional video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaoczZA_w4

The Unassembled Five: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/db6z4fiyn0lgjt/VID-20181104-WA0000.mp4?dl=0>
(Lyrics can be found at <https://app.box.com/s/dft8kss6k9zhkmtwaxtrwtkeztnnwzp>)