

May 2017

This digest of events during the May Assembly meetings held in San Diego, 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 may be distributed to Assembly representatives and to Area and District Branch Councils and members. It is best to download or read online, but may also be printed (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 considered to be considered unconscious (please forward to my analyst). Corrections may be sent to [Adam Nelson, M.D.](#)

EDITOR'S NOTE: In contrast to previous editions of the Notes, this edition has placed more emphasis on activity of the Assembly, including some of the controversies. I would like to offer readers, both Assembly representatives, and constituent members of local DBs and Area Councils, the opportunity to respond to any of the Action Items described in this edition, as well as any other topics of interest within or independent of these Notes. If you have an opinion, please give voice to it on your email list serve or by contacting your DB Council and Assembly representative to consider drafting an Action Paper for the next Assembly in November. You may support an existing action item, oppose it, or develop something completely different. What you may not do is to remain silent. Please let us know your thoughts and opinions on these and any other topics of interest or concern to you. –A.N.

Speaker's Welcome and Report — Dan Anzia, M.D.



Speaker Dan Anzia welcomed everyone to the fall 2016 meeting of the APA Assembly. Dr. Anzia called on Evan Eyler, M.D. and Manuel Pacheco, M.D., Area 1 Representative and Deputy Representative, respectively, to offer a few words in memoriam to Dr. Brian Benton, who recently passed away due to cancer.

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



Dr. Levin presented his report, much of which can also be found in the Assembly packet. Highlights include: 1) development of APA's new home in the Waterfront Project in the SW corner of Washington, D.C. due to open in 2018; 2) continued growth of membership, which now exceeds 37,000; 3) opposition to the AHCA bill recently passed by the US House of Representatives, and liaison with 13 influential Senators currently drafting their own bill; 4) [APA's registry](#) now accessible for QI and to increase CMS reimbursements for psychiatrists; and 5) celebrating appointment of [Elinore McCance-Katz, MD](#) as the country's first Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Abuse for HHS under the recently passed 21st Century CURES Act. Dr. Levin also emphasizes Assembly initiated APA accomplishments, such as the APA accreditation as a consulting NGO to the United Nations; creating new CPR codes for reimbursement; increasing diversity in membership in the Assembly; and Assembly led call for MOC reform, which has now led to at least 13 states proposing or passing removal of MOC legislation.

Assembly Committee on Procedures — A. David Axelrad, M.D.

The Assembly approved the following changes to the Procedures Code:

- 1) Allowing for Electronic Voting on APA Practice Guidelines
- 2) Allowing for a special meeting, to be held electronically, in the case of vacancy of an office of the Assembly.

Assembly Officers

The winners of the Assembly vote for new officers were: James R. Batterson, MD for Assembly Speaker-elect, and Steven Daviss, MD for Assembly recorder. As Dr. Daviss may have a potential conflict of interest, this will

be addressed by use of newly approved Assembly Procedure Code changes, if necessary. Congratulations to our new officers and commendation to all of the candidates for a hard fought and close election campaign.

Report from the APA President-elect — Anita Everett, M.D.



Dr. Everett presented a summary of her three main objectives for the coming year as President of the APA: 1) Aspiration; 2) Innovation; and 3) Physician Well-Being. She recently attended a meeting for [PsychSIGN](#), an organization for medical students aspiring to become psychiatrists. She has appointed a Workgroup on Access to Treatment through Innovation. She has also appointed a Workgroup on Physician Burnout. Expect to hear more about these efforts in the upcoming year.

Assembly Awards Committee — Jenny Boyer, M.D., JD, PhD



The Awards Committee presented the District Branch Best Practices Award this year to NY County DB. NCPS was the runner up. The Ron Shallow Award was presented to Laurence Miller, MD from Area 5 and to Ramaswamy Viswanathan, MD from Area 2. In addition, David Skasta, from Area 3 was awarded the Ron Shallow Award retroactively from 2016. Dr. Skasta proposed a change to the rules regarding this award which had glaringly omitted from eligibility for consideration members of ACROSS. Once this oversight was corrected, he was given the award for this and his many other pioneering efforts in the Assembly. Recognition for highest voting percentage of members in the last election went to Area 2 (24%) and to Mid-Hudson DB (32%).

AMA Report — Patrice A. Harris, M.D. MA, Chair, AMA Board of Trustees



Dr. Harris outlined Strategic Objectives for the AMA: 1) Accelerating Change in Medical Education – to create the Medical School of the future. 2) Professional Satisfaction and Practice Sustainability, including coping with professional burnout. Currently, >50% of US physicians experience burnout, many of whom are quitting the profession. Bureaucracy is a leading cause, including needless prior authorizations, when 95% are approved, Electronic Medical Records, which were largely created without physicians' input. 3) Improving Health Outcomes. While chronic disease accounts for most PCP visits and >75% of total healthcare spending, 90% of persons with diabetes aren't even aware of their diagnosis. AMA is developing online tools for the field with partners in innovation for the next generation in medical technology through partnerships including [Matter](#), [Sling Health](#), [Health 2047](#), and [Xcertia](#). In addition, AMA is devoting resources to improving the ACA, through efforts such as [Patients-Before-Politics](#). Finally, AMA 's Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse has led to reduced Opioid prescriptions and increased PDMP use.

APA Position Statements

The following Position Statements were decided on at the Assembly, including:

Retain:

- *Use of Stigma as a Political Tactic (2007)
- *Resolution against Racism and Racial Discrimination and Their Adverse Impacts on Mental Health (2006)
- *Discrimination against International Medical Graduates (2001)
- *Diversity (1999)
- *Psychiatrists from Underrepresented Groups in Leadership Roles (1994)
- *Resolution Opposing Any Restriction on the Number of IMGs Entering Graduate Medical Training (1994)
- *Affirmative Action (1977)

*Misuse of Psychiatric Examinations and Disclosure of Psychiatric Records in Sexual Harassment Litigation (1998)

*Adoption of AMA Statements of Capital Punishment (2008)

*No “Dangerous Patient” Exception to Federal Psychotherapist-Patient Testimonial Privilege (2010)

Revise:

*Role of the Psychiatrist in Long Term Care Setting (from 2003)

Abortion (from 1978) – **approved unanimously**

Use of the Concept of Recovery (2015) – **referred back to Council**

Retire:

*U.S. Military Policy of “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” (2009)

*Joint Statement on Anti-Substitution Laws and Regulations (1976)

*Doctors against Handgun Violence (2001)

Proposed:

Risk of Adolescents’ Online Behavior – **approved unanimously**

Role of Psychiatrists in Addressing Care for People Affected by Forced Displacement – **approved unanimously**

*Legislative Attempts Permitting Pharmacists to Alter Prescriptions

Action Papers/Items

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

- Develop a position statement on Involuntary Psychiatric Commitment for Individuals with Substance Use Disorders
- Oppose Psychologist Prescribing
- Promote the international Neuroscience-based Nomenclature (NbN) for medications
- Revise Nomenclature, Definition, and Clinical Criteria for PHP and IOP levels of Psychiatric Care
- Defeat (74 yea/101 nay) a proposal to survey the APA membership on Medical Aid-in-Dying as an Option for End of Life Care
 - o This issue generated strong arguments on both sides of the issue. Those in favor were largely concerned that this issue needed attention as more countries and jurisdictions are legalizing this controversial practice. Those opposed were concerned about potential bias in methods and results of a membership survey, but still feel the issue is in need of urgent attention of the APA.
- Provide Education and Guidance for the Use and Limitations of Pharmacogenomics in Clinical Practice
- *Expand Access for graduates of AOA Accredited Schools to ACGME Approved Psychiatry Subspecialty Fellowships
- Develop Educational Strategies to Improve Mental Illness Perceptions of Medical Students and Non-Mental-Health Medical Providers and Develop Training Opportunities to Foster Medical Student Interest in Psychiatry
- Urge the APA to Draft a Position Statement on Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs
- Urge the APA to Immediately Support the AACAP and AMA Positions on Solitary Confinement in Juvenile Detention Settings, and for the APA to develop a Position Statement of its own.
 - o This paper was originally changed to request a Position Statement by the APA by November 2017. The author refused to consider without also calling for immediate support for policies put forth by the AACAP and AMA as there were juveniles presently suffering the consequences of draconian practices of solitary confinement. The Assembly concurred.
- Take a leadership role to Address Physician Burnout, Depression, and Suicide among APA members and beyond and revise its Position Statement on Physician Wellness
- Urge the APA to Adopt the Position Statement: “Health care, inclusive of mental health care, is a Human Right.”
 - o Dr. Eliot Sorel noted that health is inherent to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Debate arose over the importance or danger of emphasizing mental healthcare as distinct

from healthcare, or as Dr. Renee Binder noted last year in Atlanta: “There is no health care without mental health care.”

- Urge the APA to improve member voting participation in APA Elections
- Support dues relief to APA members from Puerto Rico
- Streamline the Process for former APA Members to re-enter the APA
- Repair the broken APA Referendum Voting Procedure
 - o As the author noted, this is the fifth time this paper has been brought, and the fifth time the Assembly approved it. The past 4 times it failed to gain approval by the BOT.
- Move Assembly November meeting dates to avoid conflicts with national elections
- Approve the APA Practice Guideline for Pharmacological Treatment of Patients with Alcohol Use Disorder
- Ratify an Amendment to the APA Bylaws reflecting a new nomination and election process for the M/UR Trustee
 - o Dr. Binder reported on the recent finding of the APA Bylaws being out of compliance with Washington, D.C. law on equal opportunity for representation in an organization. To restore compliance, the Bylaws have been amended to reflect the appropriate change for M/UR Trustee nomination and election procedures. While both primary and secondary reference groups approved the proposed changes, the M/UR Caucus representatives to the Assembly were divided, slightly favoring ratification.

A full summary of all Actions of the Assembly may be found [here](#). Final Action Papers can be found by going to <https://goo.gl/jLvB6D>.

(Items with a * were approved by consent)

Reports and Next Steps from the Assembly Work Groups/Committees

MOC Committee - L. Russell Pet, M.D.: The Assembly **supported unanimously** the recommendation of the MOC Committee for the APA to adopt a position that decisions regarding licensure, hospital privileges, and credentialing and/or participation on insurance panels should not in any way be conditioned upon the physician's completion of or participation in MOC or Osteopathic Continuous Certification. This is consistent with the position of the ABPN and would significantly reduce physician burnout. The Assembly further **supported unanimously** that the position be brought to the BOT at the earliest opportunity (July 2017) for their approval on this position.

Farewells to the Assembly – Daniel Anzia, M.D.

Dr. Anzia oversaw formal farewells to those Assembly members who are stepping down as of the end of this session. Best of luck to all who are leaving. Your presence and your efforts have been appreciated and will be missed.