

Pennsylvania Psychiatric Society

Accomplishments & Major Initiatives

June 1, 2025 – May 31, 2026

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

- Launched a **modern monthly e-newsletter** with a new editor-in-chief, Dr. Selarnick, improving communication across the society. Monthly message by president to increase society engagement. Call to action to help grow society
- Implemented innovative strategies to **grow social media presence**, including Facebook private group, Instagram, LinkedIn, and a multi-platform posting tool (PUBLER).
- Early Career Psychiatrist (ECP) and Resident-Fellow Member (RFM) representatives boosted engagement among younger members through WhatsApp communications and “Town Hall” talks on relevant topics.
- Streamlined committee structure; **formed the Membership Engagement Committee by merging Membership and Media/Communications**, focusing on recruitment, retention, and streamlined communications. Co-chaired by Drs. Chakrabarti and Selarnick, with Dr. Mosam Naik added to support younger members.
- Continued welcoming new members by mailing membership certificates and welcome letters from the District Branch President.
- **Membership growth/retention actions:** Since the APA published the 2026 potential drop list, the society reduced the original list by 62% through outreach efforts, with ongoing work to retain remaining members.
- Increased outreach prior to the APA conference to encourage member participation and engagement.
- Program Directors’ Special Interest Group (PD-SIG), led by Drs. Ahmad Hameed and Gary Swanson, continues to provide valuable networking for residents, supporting

early involvement and long-term affiliation; a Residency Career Fair is planned for Aug 2026

- Approved and launched outreach for NAMI Walks in October, with communications distributed via e-blast, newsletter, and social media.
- **The Keystone Psychiatric Forum**, scheduled for October 9–11, 2026, was established to attract members, early career psychiatrists, residents, fellows, and families, Planning includes multiple subcommittees/workgroups (marketing, sponsorship, education, resident poster competition), a poster competition, exhibit hall, and Women’s Networking Reception; “save-the-date” postcard mailed; sponsorship package distributed (Dec 18) and resent (Jan 6);
- Launching a new website on a modernized platform, enhancing society visibility and accessibility
- **Member Recognition**
 - Newsletter spotlighted members across categories (RFMs, chapters) and added private practice/addiction psychiatry columns plus a monthly government relations update.
 - Women’s History Month legacy feature: highlighted PaPS women presidents (1978–2026).
 - Strengthened awards: developed objective criteria for the annual PaPS Presidential Award.
 - Established a new Community Impact Award honoring Dr. Richard Silbert (with past DB President Dr. Gail Edelson).
 - Compiled a centralized, member-ready list of chapter, statewide, and APA/Assembly awards for ongoing updates on the new website.
 - Recognized 60+ PaPS members giving 141 presentations at the APA annual meeting .
 - Recognized and supported applications for new APA Fellows and Distinguished Fellows and a Life Fellow (20 total).

ADVOCACY, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, AND COLLABORATIONS

- Government relations and advocacy impact strengthened: achieved ongoing wins through the Government Relations Committee in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Medical Society and other specialty Mental Health organizations
- **Annual Advocacy Update webinar (March 4):** Government Relations Committee hosted its annual “Advocacy Update” as part of the monthly PaPS webinar series, featuring Representatives Mike Schlossberg (Chair of House Mental Health Caucus and Democratic Whip) and James Flick (Republican Chair of the Human Services Subcommittee on Drugs and Alcohol) who answered questions on an array of topics of importance to our field.
- **Psychology prescribing (anticipated state senate bill):** Senator Gene Yaw has a draft senate bill to extend prescription privileges to psychologists. Members were encouraged to educate senators—especially those on the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee—about: (1) psychiatrists are physicians trained in physiology and medication effects; (2) psychologists are trained in psychological processes and not medication use; (3) shortages exist across mental health professions and prescribing privileges do not address access; (4) in jurisdictions with these privileges, fewer than 280 psychologists nationwide obtained certification over ~30 years; (5) better access solutions include robust collaborative care models between psychiatrists and primary care without risking patient safety.
- **Gambling: PaPS collaborated with PSAM** on a position statement with recommendations for harm mitigation related to internet gambling; concern emphasized for impacts on citizens, particularly young adult (and younger) males. Executive Council approved the joint position statement (Feb 25, 2026), noted press release pending, forwarded to HR Joint State Commission for review, and an APA Action Paper submission in progress.
- **Artificial intelligence:** Legislative efforts underway to regulate AI in mental health (e.g., HB2100, SB1113). The committee expressed concern that current chatbots may harm vulnerable individuals; cautioned that absolute bans could restrict valuable adjunctive tools; plans to monitor legislation. Executive Council separately approved written testimony on AI in Mental Health (Feb 22, 2026; financial impact none).

- **School mental health:** Discussed proposals including statewide secondary-school screening tools (co-sponsorship memo by Aeron Abney) and mental health days (HB 1648; as much as two days every two weeks). Concerns noted: screening quality, consent, privacy, and follow-up for students screening positive; questioned whether additional time off school is the best intervention.
- **Reviewed Governor's budget:** Proposed budget begins the process of determining state priorities over the next year. Important things for psychiatry to note are proposed legalization (and taxation) of recreational cannabis use by adults and regulating and taxing "skill games" (difficult to distinguish from slot machines). These two proposals are expected to help generate revenue, but at what cost remains to be seen. Notably, the budget does not meaningfully increase funding for mental health care; even maintaining current levels will be challenging amid impending Medicaid changes. This reflects a troubling pattern: expanding addictive products while failing to invest adequately in treatment and prevention.
- **Broader collaborations and inclusion related work:** Continued liaison work with mental health organizations including the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Leadership Council (PPLC) to develop/support a PA-wide Racial Justice Learning Collaborative with all PA psychiatry residency program directors, focusing on recruitment/retention of Black residents and inclusive curriculum/training; discussions ongoing to enhance APA Minority and Diversity Fellowships across Pennsylvania.

BUDGET/FINANCE IMPROVEMENTS

- **Developed a strategic scope** involving chapter leaders and full council with management Next Wave Group to proactively address universal budget and growth challenges, ensuring the long-term success of our society
- Focus on **Increasing Non Dues Revenue** and **Sustainability**
 - Management contract with Next Wave Group to provide association management and program services was reviewed by full Council on December 13, 2025. Minimal increase of 2% in association management fees negotiated with dedicated projects – **Membership Growth and Sponsorship projects** added to NWG scope to increase society numbers and non dues revenue. Re-evaluation for an additional increase in June 2026 depending on effectiveness of these 2 projects.
 - Sponsorship project liaison with NWG charged with implementing sponsorship plans from diverse business and industry partners - approx. \$50k raised for KPF and \$18K from PRMS
 - Voluntary Donation Letter Distributed to Dues Exempt Members: thanked for generous contributions and expanding efforts to include other dedicated members in this project
- Adopted budget/sponsorship guidelines for inclusion in Policies & Procedures;
- Initiated a wealth advisor search for the investment account to potentially lower advisory fees and improve strategy support;
- Moved APA dues receivables accounting to a modified cash basis (all other reporting remains accrual) to improve transparency and timing of available revenue;
- Approved moving from Club Express to AMO to better serve membership and provide additional resources for communications and engagement while saving on fees; AMO's fee structure is significantly less and offers additional services.
- Reviewed renewal options for Commonwealth Compliance Solutions, PaPS PAC Management services: reduced services and reduced annual retainer fee from \$6,000 to \$3,600.

EDUCATION

- Continued free monthly webinar series for members: engagement continues to increase with an average of 70 attendees per session. Attendees are eligible to claim 1.0 CME credit hours for each webinar and 12.0 free CME credits per year
- Recruited top-tier speakers including APA President Dr. Theresa Miskimen (January 2026)
- Developed speaker honorarium
- Patient Safety and Risk webinar conference
- **The Keystone Psychiatric Forum, PaPS' statewide conference**, will provide 10.5 CME/CE credit hours over a two-day conference. A poster competition, exhibit hall, and Women's Networking Reception will add to the value of the conference.
- PaPS' educational events are open to non-PaPS members. Area 3 members can go to the PaPS website to view and register for virtual and in-person events.

GOVERNANCE

- strengthened the Chapter President Coalition to enable direct collaboration among chapter presidents and the Executive Committee with quarterly meetings to make sure chapters felt heard
- DB president to meet with Chapter presidents to discuss smooth transition to next leaders
- Held a leadership retreat that generated key action items of establishing our first PaPS statewide conference to both increase membership engagement and increase chapter revenue – the Keystone Psychiatric Forum - scheduled for October 9–11, 2026 at Kalahari Resorts/Convention Center (Pocono Manor).
- Created a Small Chapter Coalition/Collaborative to bring virtual events and increase collaboration statewide with further development planned in 2026;
- Nominating Committee developed a reader friendly document to clearly define roles and responsibilities for potential new chapter and state leaders including expectations and specifics for District Branch committees and full council meetings

ASSEMBLY

- Represented our members through our hardworking and dedicated APA assembly representatives and committee leaders through their several action papers and insightful input for our national organization.
- Submitted two RFM candidates for this year's Area 3 Resident Awards. Dr. Mosam Naik and Dr. Radhika Patel are in training at St. Luke's University Health Network and active in the DB's Lehigh Chapter.
- Strengthening Our Voice: Area 3 (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, and Washington DC) and the May 2026 Assembly
- Bridging the Communication Gap The Area 3 communication committee's new strategy focuses on building a more transparent and fluid communication infrastructure. A key priority is developing WhatsApp groups and a formal communication policy to facilitate "up and down" discussion from the Assembly to district branches, local chapters, and general members. To address the disconnect some feel with the national organization, the committee's goal is producing brief, digestible summaries of APA bills and actions, translating complex policy into plain-language explanations that show why these wins matter to your practice. Additionally, a proposed new Member Spotlight program will launch to recognize your achievements, pairing these features with brief "advocacy victory" callouts to highlight our collective impact.
- Leading Through Action Papers

Pennsylvania psychiatrists are spearheading a robust slate of Action Papers (APs) for the upcoming Assembly. These proposals address critical public health and professional issues, including:

- Public Health & Advocacy: We have an action paper focusing on de-escalation and sensitivity training for ICE officers to minimize trauma, while another seeks a formal APA position statement on gambling.
- Clinical Management: Two action papers (led by PAPS representatives) advocate for strengthening psychiatry's role in obesity management and improving access to inpatient care regarding EMTALA responsibilities.
- Professional Standards: Another action paper addresses the need for a position on age-triggered physician cognitive assessments, and another proposes an affiliate membership model for family physicians within district branches.

- By utilizing foundational data, such as email open rate analysis, the Area 3 communications committee aims to ensure these advocacy efforts and resources reach every member in Pennsylvania.
- See link for a new APA Communities video tutorial for the APA Communities website and the new Communities mobile app:
<https://www.psychiatry.org/Membership/Get-Involved/APA-Communities/Navigating-APA-Communities-A-Comprehensive-Guide>

CHAPTER ACHIEVEMENTS

Central

A new sponsor partnership was established resulting in support for an engaging resident poster night. Ongoing sponsorship as anticipated, could increase the chapter budget by approximately 60%. This enhancement would allow for improved event quality and facilitation of additional chapter events, expanded small-chapter collaborative initiatives, and movement towards annual established events.

Lehigh

The Lehigh chapter experienced growth in active membership, increasing from 108 members in June 2025 to 116 members by April 2026. Approximately 50% of the membership consists of resident-fellow members. Six new Distinguished Fellows and Six Distinguished Life Fellows will be honored at the May APA annual meeting. The chapter organized several successful events, including the Fall 2025 “Twisted Teas” social networking event featuring a golf simulator, yard games, billiards, and darts. The December 2025 Holiday Party at The Edge was fully sponsored by two industry partners. The Spring 2026 “Graduation Extravaganza” and Annual Chapter Meeting were held at the Steel Country Club to honor resident and fellow graduates. A membership survey regarding perspectives on pharmaceutical-sponsored educational events was conducted during the December gathering. The results were subsequently discussed in a PaPS monthly newsletter. The chapter concluded the 2025 calendar year with a surplus of \$1,600. The maximum registration fee charged to members for events was \$10. Resident Fellow Member engagement was strengthened by increasing representation to one resident per training program (three representatives total). Chapter members contributed several

articles to the newsletter throughout the year. President Dr. Howard Levin expanded the chapter's social media presence and serves as the PaPS Facebook administrator. Resident Fellow Member Dr. Mosam Naik co-chairs the Membership Engagement Committee and is the Instagram administrator. Dr. Christine Marchionni represented the chapter on the PaPS District Branch executive board as Secretary.

Northeast

Dr. Sanjay Chandragiri (former chapter president) was recognized as a finalist in the APA Mind Games trivia competition. The chapter recently held its most successful meeting in recent years, marked by strong attendance. Additionally, initial contact has been established with the Geisinger Residency in Scranton, with plans for residents and staff to participate in the next meeting.

Pittsburgh

The 2025 Resident Research and Awards Night transitioned to a new venue and experienced robust attendance. A record nine awards were distributed across three categories, including the newly established Mid-Career Award.

Chapter bylaws were revised to guarantee dedicated Resident Fellow Member representation from both local residency programs on council. For member development funding, approval was granted for a resident scholarship program via the Pittsburgh Foundation Fund, providing up to ten scholarships of \$500 each to facilitate participation at the fall Keystone Psychiatric Forum statewide conference!

June Networking Event is being advertised with early preparation starting for the November 2026 Resident Research Night.

Philadelphia

The Philadelphia Chapter invigorated its membership through a strategic emphasis on innovation, the preservation of longstanding traditions, and the cultivation of meaningful professional relationships.

Notable achievements during the year included the successful introduction of a morning case conference, a distinguished Awards Gala, an intellectually stimulating Scholars Colloquium, and a dynamic Women's Brunch, among other hallmark events.

By convening gatherings at prominent regional institutions, the chapter fostered unique opportunities for collaboration and the exchange of ideas, thereby encouraging new

perspectives and facilitating interdisciplinary engagement among members and community leaders.

Through regular in-person business meetings, the chapter unified general members and leadership, promoting substantive dialogue and innovative approaches. The establishment of new local networking groups further strengthened member engagement, supporting the development of professional relationships and collaborative initiatives.

Western

The chapter successfully hosted two well-attended events, aiming to foster further membership growth. Advocacy efforts included Dr. DiNunzio's engagement with local state representatives on behalf of the chapter. Notable progress was made in increasing resident membership. President-Elect Dr. Peter Coffman served as a proxy delegate at the Area 3 Assembly. The chapter also welcomed new officers and developed plans to sustain positive momentum.