

## Single Payer, Scope, and Substance Abuse – APA Assembly 2018

The Assembly of the American Psychiatric Association met in May in New York City. We considered 24 action papers and 15 positions statements as well as receiving updates from within the APA. CEO Saul Levin MD encouraged all APA members to complete the APMB survey on MOC at <http://visioninitiative.org> -- this is the best way to get your voice heard.

The outgoing APA President Anita Everett MD again addressed physician wellbeing and encouraged everyone to visit the wellness section of the APA website <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/well-being-and-burnout> where there are TED talks as well as other resources. The data is coming in showing that younger physicians, women physicians, and minority physicians are all at greater risk of burnout.

Patrice Harris, MD, psychiatrist and past chair of the AMA Board of Trustees and candidate for AMA President spoke about ending the nation's opioid epidemic. She stressed the importance of access to treatment, using the state PDMPs, education, removing stigma, expanding access to naloxone, and safe storage and disposal of medication.

Rene Binder, MD, presented bylaw changes to the Assembly that would change the dues structure to remove the rule of 95 that has become increasingly problematic as the age of the average APA member is now 56 years old. The new simplified system will create a semi-retired and retired class of dues structure, and will grandfather anyone currently getting reduced dues (or would have qualified in the next couple of years).

Position statements encompassed a variety of topics from telemedicine and adolescents' online behaviors, to weapons in hospital settings and rights of involuntary patients to participate in research, and to racism, genocide and discrimination. The position statement that licensing agencies should only inquire into current impairment with regards to mental disorders was updated, and the policy on firearms access was updated to include support for restriction of large capacity magazines and firearms with features designed to increase their rapid and extended killing capacity.

This was the last Assembly meeting for Joe Mawhinney MD who has been the California representative to serve on the Assembly Executive Committee for the maximum eight years allowable. He and David Fogelson MD authored a pair of action papers advocating the APA study and endorse a Single Payer Nation Wide Health Care System. The Assembly postponed consideration of endorsement of single payer until the November meeting but agreed to study the issue.

All Action Papers passed by the Assembly will go through the Joint Reference Committee, may go to various APA committees for study, and go ultimately to the

Board of Trustees to be approved and so do not represent APA policy at this point, but the Action Papers passed included:

Creating a workgroup to create an action paper database to both follow up on the implementation of past papers from the Assembly as well as make past action papers searchable by the use of key words.

Increasing the number of periods per year the ABPN examination will be offered.

Improving coverage of depot antipsychotic coverage for service members and their families (apparently only Haloperidol and Fluphenazine are covered by TriCare at present).

Defending the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program

Advocating that ABMS and ABPN return to lifetime board certification.

Improving the APA website on appealing treatment denials to offer a user-friendly tool kit that describes steps to maximize the likelihood of an appeal being successful.

Joining the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the American Medical Association opposing any legislation or regulation at the state or federal level that would grant psychologists prescribing privileges. We oppose psychologist prescribing medication because training in psychology does not provide medical education that is essential for the appropriate and safe prescription of medications.

Asking the Council of Psychiatry and the Law draft a statement opposing psychiatry being considered separate from medical benefits.

Endorsing several AMA positions opposing unsupervised practice of non-physician practitioners, and developing a position statement about appropriate supervision as well as develop information comparing education of physician and non-physician providers.

Asking that all diagnostic codes for Substance Use Disorder be covered for billing for urine drug screens

Educating about mental health effects of racial discrimination, microaggression, race-based violence, racially motivated mass killings, and similar events through curricular guidelines for medical schools, residency training, and continuing medical education and media outreach.

Honoring the psychiatrists who served in Vietnam (we learned that there were two women psychiatrists- and one was our own Marcia Goin MD).

Supporting Medication Assisted Treatment of Physicians in Physician Health Programs.

Larry Malak MD is your incoming Area Assembly Executive Committee Deputy Representative and Barbara Weissman MD advances to Representative. You are all well represented by your district branch representatives at the Assembly, please contact them or us if you have questions about the meeting or ideas for future directions the APA should take.

Joe Mawhinney MD and Barbara Weissman MD