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Medical Association honors Mobile psychiatrist with Ira L. Myers Service Award



During their annual Awards and Inaugural Dinner, the Medical Association of the State of Alabama honored Ronald D. Franks, MD, DLFAPA, Mobile, with the Ira L. Myers Service Award.

Dr. Franks is acting chair of psychiatry at the University of South Alabama, where he also served as vice president for Health Sciences. His past academic affiliations include the University of Colorado, University of Minnesota-Duluth, and College of Medicine for East Tennessee State University.

Throughout his academic career, Dr. Franks continued to practice psychiatry, valuing his work with patients as one of his greatest privileges.

The award is named for Ira L. Myers, MD, Alabama's State Health Officer who served from 1963 to 1986. 🌐

Legislation introduced to tackle doctor shortages

U.S. Reps. Terri Sewell (D-AL) and John Katko (R-NY) have introduced legislation that would take critical steps towards reducing nationwide physician shortages by boosting the number of Medicare-supported residency positions. The Resident Physician Shortage Act (H.R. 1763) would support an additional 3,000 positions each year for the next five years, for a total of 15,000 residency positions.

“We need to act now to train more qualified doctors,” Sewell said. “Increasing the number of Medicare-supported residency positions means ... giving hospitals and health centers the tools they need to increase access, lower wait times for patients and create a pipeline of qualified medical professionals to serve Americans’ health needs.”

To become a practicing doctor in the United States, medical school graduates must complete a residency program. However, for the past two decades gaps exist between students applying and the number of funded positions. The United States faces a projected shortage of up to 120,000 physicians by 2030.

When it comes to psychiatric care, an October 2018 report by the University of Michigan School of Public Health Workforce Research Center lists Alabama in bottom five states with the lowest ratio of psychiatric providers at 12.64 per 100,000 people.

The report makes a connection between the maldistribution of psychiatrists with the location to graduate programs and residencies. Six of the top ten graduate psychiatry programs are located in north east – all located within the top 20th percentile of “psychiatrists per 100,000 population” rates.

“Multiple studies have shown that young physicians are more likely to begin practice in a community close to where they finish their medical training,” said APPA President J. Luke Engeriser, MD. “It can be difficult to recruit physicians to Alabama from other parts of the country, so one of the best ways for us to strengthen our medical and psychiatric workforce is to expand residency training opportunities in our state. This bill would help to increase the availability of residency training in Alabama.” 🌐

WHAT'S UP AROUND THE STATE...

Birmingham



BIRMINGHAM PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY



For more information about the Birmingham Psychiatric Society contact BPS President Paul O'Leary,

MD, at dr.paul@me.com.

Central Alabama

For More information about the Central Alabama Society, contact Linda Teel at (334) 288-9009 ext. 207 or linda.teel@mpa1040.com.



Mobile Bay



For information on the Mobile Bay Psychiatric Society e-mail wbrooks@altapointe.org.

Tuscaloosa

If you live in the Tuscaloosa area and would like to get connected with your fellow colleagues, check out the Tuscaloosa



Chapter of APPA. Contact Thaddeus Ulzen, MD, at tulzen@cchs.ua.edu for more information. 🌐

Montgomery ECP re-elected to Medical Association leadership

Amanda Williams, MD, of Montgomery, was re-elected to the position of secretary-treasurer for the Medical Association of the State of Alabama at their annual meeting in April.

Dr. Williams received her medical doctorate from the University of South Florida and trained at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center's Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, one of the largest and most reputable psychiatry residency programs in the country. While here she was the chief resident of inpatient services and completed a one-year fellowship in Community Mental Health. She is now an esteemed board-certified psychiatrist at Gardenia Cove Mental Health, PC.



This is Dr. Williams' second term as secretary-treasurer, and she is looking forward to lending her experience as a physician to her role as vice president.

"I'm honored and excited to have this opportunity within the Medical Association," she said. "The practice of medicine faces many challenges right now, and I'm eager to take part in creating solutions in Alabama." 🌐

Dothan psychiatrist's innovative technology featured in *Forbes* magazine

Nelson Handal, MD, of Dothan, was recently featured in *Forbes* magazine for using high-tech data to improve mental health treatment. The assessment tool, CliniCom, started receiving attention after Handal published an article in *Psychiatric Research* in July of 2018.

The online tool is much more than a simple "yes or no" questionnaire patients receive at most doctors' offices. It is dynamic software using approximately 35 algorithms developed to evaluate patients.

Answers to questions about a patient's personal demographics and health, help CliniCom generate additional questions specific to each user using logic programmed by software developers and mental health care professionals on Handal's team. Each answer can prompt more questions. Answers are displayed in multiple choice, yes/no, scaled, or short answer formats.

CliniCom can assess patients for up to 52 psychiatric conditions in adults, adolescents, and children, simultaneously, the first in the world to do so in a single environment (without being sent to different web pages) according to Handal.

The tool is not used for self-diagnoses. New patients are sent an invitation to take the online assessment before their first visit. The information entered into CliniCom generates a report that delivers the data in a meaningful graphical format for physicians to interpret.

The patent-pending program is currently being used in the United States, Brazil, South Africa, Hong Kong and Spain. 🌐



Registration is open for APPA's Fall Conference.
Find details online at www.alabamapsych.com.



APPA's Spring Conference Wrap-up

Baytowne Conference Center, Sandestin

Congratulations to the winners of our Poster Contest!

Eleven abstracts were accepted for APPA's 2019 Spring Conference Poster Contest. The posters were judged at the conference and awards given to the highest ranking posters. The top three winners are pictured below with F. Cleveland Kinney, MD, PhD, and Tarak Vasavada, MD, DFAPA. Read all abstracts submitted at the fall APPA conference at <http://alabamapsych.com/abstracts>.



First Place – Abstract 19-1-05

First place poster winner is **Austin Luker, MD, UAB** (center), for his poster, "The Human Side of Medicine: Understanding Physician Burnout at UAB Department of Psychiatry."



Second Place – Abstract 19-1-07

Second place poster winner is **Taylor Ousley, USA**, for her poster, "Hyperglycemia-Induced Resistance to Antipsychotic Treatment."



Third Place – Abstract 19-1-06

Third place winner is **Jazmin Scott, USA**, for her poster, "Clinical Course of a Patient Undergoing Delayed Withdrawal from Alprazolam (Xanax)."

Members recognized for advanced membership status with APA

During the annual membership meeting of APPA, five members were recognized for achieving advanced membership status with the American Psychiatric Association. In addition to those pictured below, three members achieved "Life Member" status: **Martha Ban, MD, Kennedy**; **Peter Sims, MD, Birmingham**; and **Stewart Tieszen, MD, Birmingham**. Presenting certificates to those present was APPA President J. Luke Engeriser, MD, FAPA.



APPA President-elect **Godehard Oepen, MD, Birmingham**, was recognized for achieving Distinguished Life Fellow.



Stewart Waddell, MD, Birmingham, was recognized for achieving Distinguished Life Fellow.

Applications for 2020 Distinguished Fellows are due June 1

Distinguished Fellow is the highest membership honor the APA bestows upon its members. It is awarded to outstanding psychiatrists who have made significant contributions to the psychiatric profession in administration, teaching, scientific scholarly publications, volunteering in mental health and medical activities of social significance, community involvement, and clinical excellence.

Application for Distinguished Fellow is by invitation only. Letters and e-mails were sent in February to those eligible to apply. For more information contact Charlotte Morris at cmorris@alamedical.org.

SAVE *the* DATE

Coming Attractions

2019 APPA Fall Conference/Practice Manager Mini Conference

October 4-5 | Bohemian Hotel, Mountain Brook

2020 APPA Spring Conference

April 3-5 | Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, Florida

2020 APPA Fall Conference

October 9-10 | Prattville Marriott Legends

2021 APPA Spring Conference

April 23-24 | Embassy Suites, Montgomery

2021 APPA Fall Conference

October 8-9 | Westin Huntsville

APA News Briefs

May Course of the Month - Identifying and Engaging Youth with Early Psychosis Utilizing Internet and Social Medical Platforms

Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) is a team-based, multi-element treatment for first episode psychosis (FEP) that integrates medical, psychosocial, and rehabilitative interventions in a recovery-oriented, collaborative approach to care. This course presents cutting-edge research that informs broader adoption of CSC in U.S. settings, including strategies to proactively encourage early help seeking among FEP patients via online and social media-based resources. Presented by Michael L. Birnbaum, MD, The Feinstein Institute for Medical Research. [Click here to access the Course of the Month and sign up for updates about this free member benefit.](#)

Bills introduced to prevent overdose and increase patient safety

APA, as part of the Partnership to Amend 42 CFR Part 2, applauded identical bipartisan bills introduced in April in the House and Senate. The House version is the Overdose Prevention and Patient Safety Act, introduced by Reps. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Markwayne Mullin (R-OK), and the Senate version is the Protecting Jessica Grubb's Legacy Act, introduced by Sens. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) and Joe Manchin (D-WV). The bills are aimed at reforming privacy laws to combat the opioid epidemic. You can read more about the 42 CFR Part 2 bills in Congress [here](#). 🌐

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