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# Meet the candidates for APA president-elect

## Voting begins Jan. 4

Rebecca Brendel MD, JD, is Director of the Master's Degree Program at and Associate Director of the Harvard Medical School Center for Bioethics. She bases her clinical work at Massachusetts General Hospital, where she is the Director of Law and Ethics at the Center for Law, Brain, and Behavior and practices clinical and forensic psychiatry. Her psychiatry, ethics, and law background drives her commitment to achieving parity for psychiatric care and reimbursement on par with other medical care, reducing practice burden, and supporting and growing the diverse membership of our APA.



Dr. Brendel has a distinguished record of service to organized medicine and psychiatry. Her APA leadership roles have included Chair of the Ethics Committee and Bylaws Committee, APA-AMA Delegate, and Parliamentarian to the Board of Trustees. She is past president of the Academy of Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry. Learn more and share your ideas about the future of psychiatry at: [www.rebeccabrendelforapa.com](http://www.rebeccabrendelforapa.com).

See page 3 for a full list of candidates and a link to election details.



UAB Professor Emerita and past APPA president, **Jacqueline Maus Feldman, MD, DLFAPA**, has been nominated as a candidate for the 2021 APA President-elect position.

Noting that society faces historic mental health inequities and that patients, providers, and systems of care are overwhelmed, Feldman believes the APA must respond, providing leadership committed to practical solutions.

She brings with her a history of multiple leadership roles where problem-solving, engagement, partnership and advocacy have translated vision and intent into action.

In her position statement she underscores the APA must address:

- ▶ Racism and social injustice
- ▶ Stigma and parity for patients and providers
- ▶ Limited workforce by developing practical strategies to increase the numbers of providers to meet the needs of every person living with mental illness
- ▶ Unengaged psychiatrists in the APA by demonstrating value (e.g. MOC) and listening to their constituency.

Further information can be found at her website: [www.drjackieforapa.com](http://www.drjackieforapa.com).

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## WHAT'S UP AROUND THE STATE...

### Lynn Beshear retires as Alabama Mental Health Commissioner

Governor Kay Ivey announced in late November that Lynn Beshear would retire as Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) effective Dec. 16, 2020. Beshear served as commissioner since July 2017.

While leading the ADMH, Commissioner Beshear spearheaded many initiatives to increase access of services for Alabamians with mental illness while navigating complexities of delivery by the department and community providers.

"It is been an honor to serve as the Commissioner of the department," ADMH Commissioner Lynn Beshear said. "I am stepping into the next chapter of my life proud of the accomplishments of the department and am incredibly honored to have worked with such dedicated individuals who are committed to improving the lives of others. I profoundly thank Governor Ivey for her trust in me these last three years and have no doubt the department will continue to change the lives of the people of Alabama for the better."

Under Commissioner Beshear's leadership, the ADMH launched Stepping Up Alabama, which uses the national model to reduce the numbers of individuals in jails with mental illness. Alabama is the only state to expand the goal to include ERs and substance use disorder. It is anticipated that a case management component of Stepping Up will be in place in all 67 counties by the end of the 2022 fiscal year.

Also, three mental health crisis centers were announced as crisis diversion centers in the 2020 fiscal year with the goal of individuals receiving "the right care, at the right time, in the right place."

Expansion of school-based mental health, hiring a housing coordinator for individuals' stabilization plan, expansion of infant and early childhood services and autism services are examples of the ADMH's expansion of services during Beshear's tenure.

Gov. Ivey appointed **Kim Boswell** to be the new Commissioner effective Dec. 16, 2020. Boswell has more than 36 years of experience working with individuals with mental illness, substance abuse disorders and developmental disabilities.

She currently serves as chief of staff for Commissioner Beshear and has been both associate commissioner for administration as well as director of human resources for the Alabama Department of Mental Health. During her career, she has worked as a planner to improve human service delivery systems, a program evaluator, a School to Work transition coordinator, and has also served as the state office administrator for the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. 🌐



### Physician Finder: Huntsville

Huntsville Hospital seeking BC/BE Psychiatrist for inpatient hospital coverage to include ED, medical floor consults and follow ups, with average of 15 patients per provider. Coverage of pediatric consults required. Monday through Friday position, call requirements of weekend call 1:4 and weekday call of 2-3 days per month. [Tina.baker@hhsys.org](mailto:Tina.baker@hhsys.org) 256-265-7073. 🌐

# District Court issues injunction against UBH for failure to cover mental health/substance use disorders

[alert.psychnews.org](http://alert.psychnews.org)

A federal district court has ruled that United Behavioral Health (UBH) must use medical necessity criteria and assessment tools developed by mental health and substance use disorder specialty organizations when making coverage-related determinations.

The ruling was part of a 10-year injunction against UBH issued by Judge Joseph Spero of the United States District Court for the Northern District of California in *Wit v. United Behavioral Health*. The injunction also includes a requirement that UBH personnel be trained in the use of the court-ordered medical necessity criteria and that UBH reprocess nearly 67,000 mental health and substance use disorder benefit claims over the next year. UBH is the country's largest managed behavioral health care organization.

The injunction requires UBH to use the Level of Care Utilization System (LOCUS), Child and Adolescent Service Intensity Instrument (CASII), and Early Childhood Service Intensity Instrument (ECSII) – assessment tools developed by the American Association of Community Psychiatry (LOCUS) and the Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (CASII and ECSII) – as well as criteria developed by the American Society of Addiction Medicine.

The ruling is the “remedy” phase of the case resulting from the court’s decision signed on Feb. 28, 2019. The court held that UBH had illegally denied coverage for mental and substance use disorders based on flawed medical necessity criteria. Those denials impacted more than 50,000 UBH enrollees and involved 67,000 claims for coverage across four states: Connecticut, Illinois, Rhode Island, and Texas.

The ruling was the first time a major insurer was found to be relying on improper guidelines as a basis for denying health care services. In its 2019 decision, the court found that “[m]any mental health and substance use disorders are long term and chronic. While current symptoms are typically related to a patient’s chronic condition, it is generally accepted in the behavioral health community that effective treatment of individuals with mental health or substance use disorders is not limited to the alleviation of the current symptoms. Rather, effective treatment requires treatment of the chronic underlying condition as well.”

Reacting to the ruling, APA President Jeffrey Geller, MD, MPH, said, “We applaud Judge Spero for holding this major insurer accountable for discriminating against patients with mental illness by denying them the care they need and are entitled to by law.”

He said APA will continue to be vigilant whenever insurers fail in their duty to abide by laws requiring parity between coverage of general medical care and coverage for mental illness and substance abuse disorders. “We hope insurers will take note of this ruling and stop the discriminatory practice of denying or limiting coverage of treatment for mental illness and substance use disorders.” 🌍



## APPA 2020-2022 Executive Council Spotlight:

### Mark Haygood, DO, MS



Dr. Mark Alan Haygood is the CEO and practicing physician at New South Psychiatry, PC.

He completed his residency at the University of South Alabama after attending medical school at Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

During residency, Dr. Haygood served the American Psychiatric Association (APA) Assembly for Area 5 as the Resident and Fellow Member (RFM) Representative. While engaged in the APA leadership, he was elected as RFM Chair to the APA Assembly Executive Committee. He also served as the RFM Representative and ECP Representative during his APA Assembly tenure. He currently serves on the APA Membership Committee.

Dr. Haygood also serves on the Alumni Board for the class of 2009 of VCOM and is a founding faculty member of the VCOM branch campus located in Auburn.

Dr. Haygood’s professional interests include consultation/liason psychiatry. His favorite thing about being an outpatient psychiatrist is being able to take the time to get to know the patient’s he treats. 🌍

## APA Slate of Candidates

### President-Elect:

Rebecca W. Brendel, MD, JD  
Jacqueline Maus Feldman, MD

### Secretary:

Rahn K. Bailey, MD  
Sandra M. DeJong, MD, MSc

### Early Career Psychiatrist Trustee:

Elie G. Aoun, MD, MRO  
Tanuja Gandhi, MD  
Chandan Khandai, MD, MS  
Krysti (Lan Chi) Vo, MD

### Minority/Underrepresented Representative Trustee:

Oscar E. Perez, MD  
Felix Torres, MD, MBA

### Resident-Fellow Member Trustee-Elect:

Souparno Mitra, MD  
Lindsay M. Poplinski, DO  
Urooj Yazdani, MD

Voting will take place Jan. 4 - Feb. 1.

Visit [www.psychiatry.org](http://www.psychiatry.org) for details.



SAVE *the* DATE

## Coming Attractions

### 2021 APPA Spring Conference

April 23-24 | Embassy Suites, Montgomery

### 2021 APPA Fall Conference

October 8-9 | Westin Huntsville

### 2022 APPA Spring Conference

April 1-2 | The Lodge at Gulf State Park

### 2022 APPA Fall Conference

October 7-8 | Marriott Resort, Auburn-Opelika Grand National

### 2023 APPA Spring Conference

TBA

## APA News Briefs

### December Course of the Month – Paradise Lost: The Neurobiology of Child Abuse

Brain imaging, neuroendocrine and neurotransmitter studies have revealed the many long-term biological consequences of child abuse and neglect. These changes underlie the increased vulnerability to mood and anxiety disorders in adulthood. Presenters of this course will discuss their research on these findings in depth. Access the *Course of the Month* and sign up for updates about this free member benefit.

### New Resource for Patients & Family – Facts about Stigma, Prejudice and Discrimination Against People with Mental Illness

This new resource page, designed for patients and families and the public at large, reviews the facts on stigma, including the various types and their harmful effects, and then shares ways to address it. <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/stigma-and-discrimination>

### Psychiatric Services Podcast: From Pages to Practice

Tune in to Psychiatric Services: From Pages to Practice to learn about the latest mental health services research and why it is relevant. Recent episodes cover mental health disparities by race and ethnicity, smartphone apps for college mental health, and more.

<https://ps.psychiatryonline.org/podcast>

### APA Develops Model Telemedicine Language for States

The federal government, all 50 states, and the District of Columbia have taken action to further insurance coverage of telemedicine since the beginning of COVID-19. Some are concerned that certain positive changes, such as payment parity with in-person visits, might be revoked. In response, APA created model telemedicine language for states. <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/advocacy/state-affairs/model-telemedicine-legislation>

### Recent actions by the APA

APA issued a statement congratulating President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris on their electoral victory. In the statement, APA pledged to work with the incoming administration to advance mental health care, including the permanent expansion of telehealth. [Read the full statement congratulating the Biden-Harris administration.](#)

APA reasserted support for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) as the Supreme Court heard arguments in *California v. Texas*, a suit challenging the constitutionality of the ACA. APA joined the American Medical Association and 20 other health organizations in filing an amicus brief in the case, saying that the ACA is constitutional as it stands and should remain in effect. [Read more about the case and read the full amicus brief.](#) 🌐

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The Freudian Slip is published bimonthly. The articles contained in The Freudian Slip are meant to provoke thought and comment and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the members, Executive Council or staff of the Alabama Psychiatric Physicians Association. Comments and letters to the editor are welcome.