

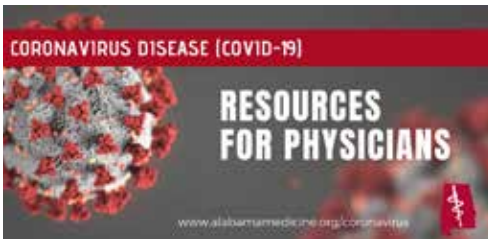


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COVID-19 Vaccine update

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) has confirmed a shortage of available COVID-19 vaccines in Alabama. The state has only received 370,000 doses

for the approximately 2 million people eligible to receive the vaccine.

ADPH has no input into the quantity allocated and is typically notified less than 24 hour before the vaccine is shipped. The quantity and timing of the shipments vary from week to week, making it difficult to form a concrete plan.

The Medical Association of the State of Alabama provides updated information on the COVID-19 vaccine and its availability in its *Vaccine Toolkit* that includes:

- Comparison the Pfizer and Moderna Vaccines
- Vaccine Availability for Physicians

continued on page 3



Save the Date for APPA's Spring Conference April 23-24, 2021 • Embassy Suites, Montgomery

APPA's executive council is moving forward with having the 2021 Spring Conference in-person provided that all attendees have received at least their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Social distancing and sanitizing measures will be taken. A virtual option will be available in addition to the in-person meeting. Details coming soon to www.alabamapsych.com.

APPA 2020-2022 Executive Council Spotlight: J. Luke Engeriser, MD, FAPA



APPA Immediate Past President J. Luke Engeriser, MD, FAPA, is the program director for the University of South Alabama Psychiatry Residency and Addiction Medicine Fellowship

and is an associate professor at the USA College of Medicine. He attended medical school at Northwestern University in Chicago, Ill., and completed psychiatry residency training at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Dr. Engeriser served in the Army at Fort Benning, Ga., where he held the position of chief in the Department of Behavioral Health. After separating from the Army, Dr. Engeriser was medical director of Mid-Coast Mental Health Center/Pen Bay Psychiatry in Rockland, Maine. Prior to attending medical school, he completed a master of arts in divinity at the University of Chicago and taught English at the Teacher Training College in Torun, Poland.

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WHAT'S UP AROUND THE STATE...

APPA mourns loss of Tolulope "Tolu" Aduroja

Tolulope Aduroja, MD, MPH, age 53, of Hoover, passed away on Nov. 28, 2020. He is survived by his wife Ayodele, two daughters, Naomi and Hannah, and a host of other relatives and friends.

Dr. Aduroja was a long-time member of APPA and a Distinguished Fellow of the APA. He served as an associate professor in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at UAB College of Medicine. The Rhoja Fund, Inc., has been created to further Dr. Aduroja's passions for medical missions and scholarships for indigent students. 🌍



APPA partners with Medical Association to advocate on behalf of Alabama psychiatrists and their patients

General Legislative Policies Supported

APPA and the Medical Association support:

- The physician-led health team model and maintaining the highest standards for medical care delivery.
- Physician autonomy in patient care and medical practice decisions, as well as fair reimbursement for services.
- Reducing the administrative tasks required of physicians by insurers, which increase annual health spending and negatively impact patient health.
- Reforming step therapy protocols and ending non-medical switching and co-pay accumulator programs.
- Increasing health insurance options for Alabamians, including expanding Medicaid.
- Increasing access to quality mental health care and continued state funding for the Maternal Mortality Review Committee and the Infant Mortality Review Committee.

Specific Legislative Priorities Supported

For the 2021 Legislative Session, the APPA and the Medical Association support:

- Legislation to provide physicians and medical practices "safe harbor" from COVID-related lawsuits.
- Legislation prohibiting deceptive health care advertising and requiring health professionals identify their license to patients.
- Recommendations of the Rural Health Taskforce, including increased funding for the Board of Medical Scholarship Awards and broadening the rural physician tax credit.
- Continued physician compounding and dispensing of drugs.
- Same standards and reimbursements for telehealth as for face-to-face visits, and expanding broadband initiatives to facilitate increased use of telemedicine.

General Legislative Policies Opposed

APPA and the Medical Association oppose:

- Scope of practice expansion for non-physicians, which could fracture the physician-led health team model and lower quality of care and increase costs for patients.
- Interference with the physician-patient relationship and attempts to reduce a physician's autonomy in patient care or medical practice decisions.
- Legislation or other initiatives that could increase lawsuit opportunities against physicians, including the establishment of statutory standards of care or any statutory dictums for medical care delivery.
- State-level increase of requirements for Maintenance of Certification.
- Tax increases disproportionately affecting physicians.

Specific Legislative Policies Opposed

For the 2021 Legislative Session, APPA and the Medical Association oppose:

- Expanding Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) access for law enforcement.
- Statutory requirements for mandatory Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) checks. 🌍

Meet the candidates for APA president-elect

Cast your vote before Feb. 1

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.



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.

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

New federal parity law: Federal and state impact

The COVID stimulus and omnibus funding package signed into law by President Trump on Dec. 27, 2020, contains language from the Mental Health Parity Compliance Act, drafted by the American Psychiatric Association (APA). This is an exciting and important win for mental health and also has implications for state parity legislation. The new law requires all insurers and group health plans to perform parity compliance analyses and submit them to federal and state regulators upon request.

According to the new law:

- Every insurer in every state must perform the parity compliance analyses set forth in APA's model state parity legislation; insurers can no longer object to performing the compliance analyses.
- The analyses must be provided to state insurance departments upon request starting Feb. 12.

While this action by Congress is largely equivalent to enacting APA's model parity legislation in every state, there is one exception. Even though the federal law now requires insurers to perform the analyses, it does not require state insurance departments to actually collect the analyses, review them, and correct the problems they may find. This requirement for states in APA's model state legislation was not included in the federal law. The new federal law also does not require Medicaid managed care organizations to perform comparative analyses to ensure compliance with the parity law. 🌐

Vaccine toolkit, cont.

- Pfizer Vaccine Allocation
- Moderna Vaccine Allocation
- Storage of the Moderna Vaccine
- How to enroll as a Vaccine Provider
- Billing/Coding the Vaccine
- COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions
- COVID-19 Talking Points
- Draft Social Media Posts
- Other Resources

For COVID-19 Testing Locations in Alabama visit <https://alabamamedicine.org/coronavirus/physician-resources/coronavirus-testing-locations/>. 🌐

For full voting information visit www.psychiatry.org. 🌐

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

January Course of the Month – The Effects of Loneliness and Social Support on Mental, Cognitive, and Physical Health

Loneliness is the latest behavioral epidemic, affecting adults of all ages and resulting in poor mental, cognitive, and physical health. This course presents cutting-edge research on the role of loneliness, social isolation and social support in late life and presents evidence on the assessment of loneliness through speech with natural language processing (NLP), Alzheimer's disease-related neuroimaging correlates of loneliness, and low social support as a predictor of early risk for nonresponse to psychotherapy for late-life depression using machine learning methods. Access the [Course of the Month](#) and sign up for updates about this free member benefit.

Residents/Students: Explore Fellowship Opportunities

APA Fellowships provide residents the experiential learning, training and professional development they need to be leaders in the field of psychiatry. The Fellowship programs offer opportunities to work with Congress on health policy, conduct research, expand access to care to minority and underserved populations, focus on child psychiatry or substance abuse, and much more. Visit the [application portal](#) to learn more about all Fellowships and how to apply. **The application deadline is Jan. 31, 2021.**

CPT Coding and Reimbursement Member Resources

Beginning on Jan. 1, 2021, changes are coming to the way psychiatrists bill and document office/outpatient evaluation and management (E/M) services. APA has created a collection of [resources](#) for its members on these changes. (Member log-in required.)

Changes to ICD-10-CM Codes for DSM-5 Diagnosis

The 2020 release of ICD-10-CM includes new, updated or deleted codes for medical conditions, which have been approved within the past year. A few of these changes pertain to mental disorders, and thus affect the coding of DSM-5 Disorders. [View the changes or download a quick reference.](#)

APA Applauds Congress for passing HR 7539

APA released a statement applauding Congress for passing the [Strengthening Behavioral Health Parity Act](#) (H.R. 7539) and including several key mental health and substance use-related programs in its combined \$1.4 trillion year-end appropriations and COVID-relief funding package. The package included \$6 billion for SAMHSA, \$600 million for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCHBC), and an increase in funding for the Substance Use Disorder Treatment Workforce Program, among other items. 🌍

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