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2021 Legislative update

Public Health

The Vulnerable Child Compassion and Protection Act (HB1 & SB10) would make it a felony for physicians to treat transgender youth with hormonal therapy and puberty blockers to help their transition. More specifically, the bills would prohibit the use of puberty-blocking drugs, hormonal therapy and surgery to treat transgender minors. Violators could face up to 10 years in prison. The Alabama Senate has passed SB10 and the House Judiciary Committee approved the House version of the bill and has sent it to the full House of Representatives for consideration.

Emergency Timeframe & Authority (SB97) limits the timeframe for which a state of emergency can be declared (by the State Health Officer or Governor) to only 14 days. The bill also gives the Legislature the sole authority to extend such declarations. SB97 was discussed in the Senate but ultimately did not receive a vote.

Abolishing MLC & Restructuring BME (SB239) is brought by Sen. Jim McClendon and would abolish the Medical Licensure Commission, have the Board of Medical Examiners take on the duties of the Commission, and forbid leaders of any physician specialty organization from serving on the new board. By consolidating the two separate agencies into a single regulatory body, this legislation overhauls the current congressional representation requirements, revokes the appointment powers of the Lt. Governor and Speaker of the House, and decreases the board composition by more than half.

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APPA Committees

Participating in a committee is a great way to grow your involvement with APPA. To learn more about a committee contact APPA Executive Director Meghan Martin at mmartin@alamedical.org.

Distinguished Fellow

The distinguished fellowship committee approves selection of the society's nominees for APA Distinguished Fellowship each year in accordance with APA guidelines. Its members must be Distinguished Fellows or Distinguished Life Fellows. Members are W. Bogan Brooks, MD, DLFAPA, and Tarak Vasavada, MD, DFAPA.

Legislative and Public Affairs

The legislative and public affairs committee works to monitor events in the Alabama General Assembly, to lobby legislators on pertinent issues, and to bring about effective legislative changes that benefit mental health in Alabama. Members are Nelson Handal, MD, DLFAPA, and Paul O'Leary, MD, DFAPA.

Scientific Review

The scientific review committee reviews abstracts submitted by residents and students for the poster contest conducted in conjunction with the society's educational conferences. Members are Dan Dahl, MD; Nina Kraguljac, MD, FAPA; Paul O'Leary, MD, DFAPA; and Praveen Narahari, MD, FAPA. 🌐

APPA's Spring Conference approved for CME

April 23-24, 2021 • Embassy Suites, Montgomery

See page 4 for details.

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Legislative update, cont.

Abolishing State Health Officer & Restructuring State Board of Health (SB240) is brought by Sen. Jim McClendon and would abolish the State Board of Health, the State Committee of Public Health, the County Boards of Health, and the position of the State Health Officer (among other things). With the two boards and physician oversight no longer existing, the bill creates a new State Health Advisory Board made up of a list of individuals who have some type of relationship to healthcare. County Boards of Health are instantly gone, too, turning such over to the determination of the County Commission. Strangely enough, the State Health Officer position would not exist, but two roles take its place, with the highest, Secretary of the Alabama Department of Public Health, to be appointed by the governor with no requirement that he/she be a physician. It passed the Senate Healthcare Committee and awaits consideration from the full Senate.

Medical Marijuana (SB46) by Sen. Tim Melson, MD (R–Florence) would authorize medical marijuana in the state. The House Judiciary Committee, the first of two House committees expected to vet the bill, have conducted a public hearing. Rep. Mike Ball (R–Madison), a Judiciary Committee member and retired law enforcement officer, is shepherding the bill in the House.

Lawsuits & Liability

COVID-19 Liability Protection (SB30) provides liability protection to physicians, health facilities, and businesses from claims arising from COVID-19 and the state's response to the pandemic. The Medical Association, with the help of Starnes, Davis, Florie, LLP, worked with Sen. Arthur Orr in drafting this bill. SB30 has been signed by the Governor.

Medicaid False Claims Act (SB241) is brought by Sen. Jim McClendon and prohibits certain fraudulent activities affecting the Alabama Medicaid program. Furthermore, liability for violations of these prohibitions include a civil penalty of \$5,500–\$11,000 per claim, and treble damages. These prohibitions and penalties are different and much more drastic than what current Medicaid and Medicare law provides, creating very serious liability and monetary concerns for physicians. The Senate Judiciary Committee discussed the bill but, due to opposition from Sen. Larry Stutts, MD, Sen. Roger Smitherman, and others, it did not receive a vote.

Finance & Taxation

Cares Act Tax Exclusion (SB98 & HB170) exclude any money received from the CARES Act or other similar COVID-related relief measures from Alabama income tax. "We are not going to tax any of the stimulus monies that came in for businesses, for individuals, for anyone," said Sen. Dan Roberts (R–Mountain Brook). This legislation was signed by the Governor.

Federal Legislation

Medicaid Expansion (The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021), signed by President Biden, includes a number of key provisions that strengthen both public and private health insurance coverage. Among its Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provisions, the American Rescue Plan encourages states to finally take up the Medicaid expansion by offering even more favorable financial incentives than those already in place and allows states to provide longer postpartum health coverage for new mothers. 🌐

COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Information



The Medical Association of the State of Alabama has updated their *Vaccine Provider Toolkit* to include information on the vaccine from Johnson & Johnson. Find the toolkit and other COVID resources for physicians at www.alabamamedicine.org/coronavirus/. 🌐

why RENEW?

April 1 is the deadline to renew your membership with APA and APPA!

Renewing your membership means you will continue to have access to a myriad of benefits exclusive to the APA and APPA.

Membership means joining more than 36,000 colleagues nationwide, and the largest psychiatric organization in the world, fighting to protect the psychiatric profession, advancing the treatment of mental illness, ensuring access to care for patients, and fighting for patients' rights.

You've already invested in your career. Your membership in APA and APPA is a vital continuation of that investment.

Newsletters and Alerts


Not only do APA members receive a subscription to the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, but APPA members receive a monthly e-newsletter and e-mail blasts of the top news and events affecting Alabama's psychiatrists. 2020 was a particularly challenging year as we provided members with regular COVID updates, including information on the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act.

Education

Even amid the pandemic, APPA conducted our 2020 Fall Conference as scheduled, and simply moved to a virtual platform. Our 2021 Spring Conference will be in person AND virtual to meet the needs of all of our attendees. (See details on page 4.)

As always, Early Career Psychiatrists, Resident Fellow Members and medical students receive free meeting registration. Find details on our website at www.alabamapsych.com.

Don't lose your connection!

Log on to <https://my.psychiatry.org> to renew your membership today. 

my.psychiatry.org

APA Membership Promotions

Congratulations to the following members on their promotion to a new membership category for 2021. Each member will be recognized for their accomplishment during APPA's Spring Conference, April 23-24, in Montgomery.

Distinguished Fellow

Stephen Taylor, MD, MPH, Vestavia

Fellow

Irena Bukelis, MD, Birmingham

Life Members

Daniel Dahl, MD, Birmingham

John Langlow, MD, Alabaster


Michael McManus, MD, Dothan

General Membership (Promoted from Resident Fellow Members)

Connie Chang, MD, Birmingham

Brian Gawronski, DO, Birmingham

Griffin Gibson, MD, Montgomery

Katherine landry, DO, Hoover 

Members eligible to apply for membership advancement in 2021

Members in good standing may apply for the distinction of Distinguished Fellow of the APA (DFAPA) or Fellow of the APA (FAPA). These honorary statuses reflect your dedication to APA and your allegiance to the psychiatric profession. Find more information at the following links: [Distinguished Fellow](#) or [Fellow](#).

The following members are eligible to apply for Distinguished Fellow (*) or Fellow (^) in 2021. **Distinguished Fellows must be nominated by APPA.** The deadline for applications to be received by APPA is June 1, with a final submission deadline of July 1. **Fellow applications must be submitted directly from the member to APA by Sept. 1.**

Watch your mail for more information on how to apply.

*^Ammar Alrefai, MD	*^Charles Hayden, MD	^Justin Parrott, MD
*^Srilata Anne, MD	*^Charles Hicks, MD	*Rita Patton, MD
*^Timothy Baltz, MD	*^A. Hodges, MD	*Peter Penhershki, MD
*^Martha Ban, MD	*Thomas Horvath, MD	*Heath Penland, MD
*^Pamela Barnett, MD	*Eddie Huggins, MD	^Tolulope Peters, MD
*Badari Birur, MD	*Elton Hurst, MD	*^Madison Redwine, MD
*^Winkler Bond, MD	*^Gauri Jain, MD	*^Anil Saini, DO
^Stephen Brackett, MD	*^Praveen Jetty, MD	*Armand Schachter, MD
*^Jorge Castro, MD	*^Rebecca Jones, MD	*^David Schaffer, DO
*^Gregory Ciaccio, MD	*Dinesh Karumanchi, MD	*^Donna Scott, MD
*^Mary Cohen-Colson, MD	*Richard Kennedy, MD	*^Sabin Sebastian, MD
*^Daniel Dahl, MD	*^Masood Khan, MD	*^Peter Sims, MD
*Susmita Dasgupta, MD	*^Huma Khusro, MD	*Christina Smith, MD
*^George DeMuth, MD	*^Jill Kimbrough, MD	*Nathan Smith, MD
*^Andrea Dickens, MD	*^Harry Kinnane, MD	^Jennifer Smith, MD
*^Regina Doody-Lundy, MD	*^Francis Kinney, MD, PhD	*Mary Strong, DO
^Ashley Dumas, MD	*Nina Kraguljac, DO	*John Strunk, MD
*^Matthew Ehrlich, MD	*^John Langlow, MD	^Steven Sugg, MD
*Leesha Ellis-Cox, MD	*Li Li, MD, PhD	*^Patrick Tapia, MD
*David Faber, MD	*Trevor Lindsay, MD	*^Andrea Thomas, MD
*^Rachel Fargason, MD	*^Lori Lowthert, MD	*^Stuart Tieszen, MD
*^Suk Fields, MD	*^Joseph Lucas, MD	*Ramakanth Vemuluri, MD
*^Karen Fitzpatrick, MD	*Sanjay Malhotra, MD	*^Padmaja Vennam, MD
*^Lisa Ford-Crawford, MD	*Jerlyn McCleod, MD	*^Jonathan Westfall, MD
*^Edward Green, MD	*^Lusanne McKenzie, MD	*^Timothy Whalen, MD
*^Joseph Gregory, MD	^Laurence McMillan, MD	*William Wilkerson, MD
*Gonzalo Gurmendi, MD	^Jeremy Moore, DO	*Anupama Yedla, MD
^Jennifer Hadley, MD, PhD	*^Teresa Moran, MD	*^Zyynniah Zafra, MD
*^David Hall, DO	*^James Morris, MD	*^Rusheng Zhang, MD 
^John Hammond, MD, PhD	*^Charles Nevels, MD	
*^Nathaniel Hansen, MD	*Janaki Nimmagadda, MD	



ALABAMA PSYCHIATRIC
PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION
A District Branch of the American Psychiatric Association

APPA 2021 Spring Conference

April 23-24, 2021

Embassy Suites, Montgomery

APPA's Spring Conference approved for CME

The Medical Foundation of Alabama has approved APPA's 2021 Spring Conference for 10 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits*[™]. See faculty profiles on page 4.

Accreditation Statement

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama through the joint providership of the Medical Foundation of Alabama and the Alabama Psychiatric Physicians Association. The Medical Foundation of Alabama is accredited by the Medical Association of the State of Alabama to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

Designation Statement

The Medical Foundation of Alabama designates this live activity for a maximum of 10 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits*[™]. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

In person and virtual meeting options available

APPA's executive council is moving forward with having the 2021 Spring Conference in person with a virtual option available for those who cannot attend in person. **The following precautions will be in place for the in-person meeting:**

- Seats in the meeting room will be placed to meet social distancing requirements.
- All food and beverage will be individually packaged and distributed by hotel staff to limit contact.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be located through the meeting space and exhibit hall.
- The Friday evening reception is canceled to limit contact.
- The Embassy Suites will require masks regardless of the status of the state-wide mandate.

Please indicate on the registration form if you will be attending in person or virtually.

Call for Abstracts: Deadline March 26

The deadline to submit abstracts for APPA's poster contest is March 26. The posters are assigned abstract numbers and are published on the APPA website so count as "Published Abstracts" on your CV. The posters will be judged at the conference and awards given to the highest ranking posters. Abstracts should be sent to [Luke Engeriser, MD](mailto:Luke.Engeriser@alabamapsych.com), by March 26 for consideration. See examples of abstracts at www.alabamapsych.com/abstract.

Accommodations

The APPA room rate at Embassy Suites (300 Tallapoosa St, Montgomery) is \$129 per night. [Reserve a room online](#). The deadline to reserve a room is April 5.

Registration

Register online at www.tinyurl.com/APPA2021SpringConference or print a registration form at www.alabamapsych.com/physicians.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the APPA 2021 Spring Conference, participants will be able to:

- Define mentalization, understand the development of typical mentalizing, the importance of parenting and attachment in mentalizing, its relevance in self injurious behaviors and how mentalization can go wrong in personality disorders.
- Name at least six examples of hemispheric asymmetry, and three examples of abnormal asymmetry in mental illness, and explain its clinical relevance.
- Apply the new criteria for evaluation and management (E/M) codes for outpatient/office visits.
- Identify the major concerns and opportunities focusing on Transitional Age Youth, especially early recognition of the first signs and symptoms, identifying risk and protective factors, and early and effective intervention for psychopathology and substance use.
- Describe current state of genetic testing in psychiatry, review the evidence for key pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic genes that impact medication tolerability and response.
- Review most recent recommendations for Behavioral and Psychological Treatments of Insomnia.
- Recognize legal, safety, regulatory, and security considerations as well as general standard of care issues when using telepsychiatry.
- Discuss a review of the literature of treating patients with substance use disorders who have co-occurring psychiatric illness.
- Recognize social/racial determinants of mental health. Discuss ways in which mental health advocacy can lead to structural change in health care policy.

APPA Spring Conference Faculty



Irena Bukelis, MD, is an assistant professor in the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurobiology at the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

She is a graduate of Kaunas University of Medicine in Lithuania, and spent a number of years as a center and research coordinator at the Kennedy Krieger Institute at Johns Hopkins Medical Center.



Charles D. Cash, JD, LLM, is associate director of Risk Management at Professional Risk Management Services, Inc., (PRMS) in Arlington, Va.

Prior to his legal career, Mr. Cash worked as a paramedic in the emergency services field and on the critical care transportation team of a major hospital.



Blessing Falola, MD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

Dr. Falola provides collaborative and evidence-based psychiatric care in her role as the UAB Student Health Psychiatrist. She engages her teaching passion through active involvement in the medical student, resident, and fellow education. She developed and implemented simulation lab curricula for psychiatry trainees, and other interprofessional trainees.



Anna Ivanenko, MD, PhD, is a clinical professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at

Northwestern Medicine Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago. She also practices pediatric sleep medicine at Suburban Lung Associates.

She received her medical degree from St. Petersburg Medical University, followed by residencies at the University

of Louisville School of Medicine. She received her PhD from the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow.



Dwight Kemp, MD, is a PGY3 in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Alabama-Birmingham. He received his medical degree in 2017 from Florida

State University College of Medicine in Orlando.

Dr. Kemp serves on the executive board of Teen Summit Success, a Tampa-based organization that provides a comprehensive program linking education, mentoring and counseling to at-risk and economically disadvantaged youth.



Matthew Macaluso, DO, DFAPA, is the Bee McWane Reid Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurobiology at the University of Alabama-

Birmingham. He also serves as director of Clinical Trials in the Office of Psychiatric Research and clinical director of the UAB Depression and Suicide Center.

He received his medical degree from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey School of Osteopathic Medicine.



Owen Muir, MD, is the chief innovation officer and co-founder of Brooklyn Minds Psychiatry, PC, in New York, and clinical assistant professor of

Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. In addition to serving as medical director of Brooklyn Minds, Dr. Muir oversees their groundbreaking deep Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (dTMS) program.

Dr. Muir is one of five official supervisors in North America for Mentalization-Based Treatment (MBT) for adults, but he has additional training in using MBT strategies with adolescents, families, and even teams and systems.



Dorothy O'Keefe, MD, is an associate professor of child and adolescent psychiatry in the Department of Psychiatry at Virginia Commonwealth

University. She also serves as a staff psychiatrist at Virginia Treatment Center for Children in Richmond. Since July 1999, Dr. O'Keefe has volunteered with Physicians for Human Rights offering pro bono evaluations of adults and adolescents applying for asylum in the United States.

She received her medical degree from SUNY Update Medical Center with a residency and fellowship at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.



Godehard Oepen, MD, PhD, DFAPA, joined Grayson & Associates in their Riverchase office in March of 2015. He is currently serving as president of the Alabama

Psychiatric Physicians Association.

He studied medicine in Marburg, Fribourg/Switzerland, and Freiburg. After his term in the military, he completed a residency training in neurology, obtained a PhD in clinical neurophysiology, and a second residency training in psychiatry at the Albert Ludwigs University in Freiburg, Germany, where he then served as senior clinician and associate professor.



Stephen Taylor, MD, MPH, DFAPA, is a certified medical officer in the Behavioral Health Division of Pathway Healthcare, LLC, in Birmingham. He also

serves as medical director of the Player Assistance/Anti-Drug Program of the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the National Basketball Players Association (NBPA), a program Dr. Taylor designed and implemented.

Dr. Taylor earned his medical degree from the Howard University College of Medicine, and then earned a master's degree in public health from the Harvard School of Public Health. 🌐

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Coming Attractions

2021 APPA Spring Conference

April 23-24 | Embassy Suites, Montgomery

2021 APPA Fall Conference in conjunction with SPA

October 6-9 | 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

March Course of the Month – Buprenorphine Update and Evolving Standards of Care

This course will describe recent changes in the epidemiology of opioid use disorder including the current epidemic of fentanyl, carfentanil, and other fentanyl analogs. The course will review:

- Recent regulatory changes and their effect on clinical practice and collaborative care models,
- The results of research studies comparing buprenorphine and extended-release naltrexone,
- The impact of new medication formulations, including injectable buprenorphine,
- Evolving standards of care for medication-assisted treatment including models for the management of opioid overdose and the efforts to reduce or eliminate barriers to admission to long-term medication treatment, and
- Plans to expand access to evidence-based treatment within the justice system.

[Click here to access the Course of the Month.](#)

Moving the Needle on Mental Health with APA's Access Agenda

APA has identified three areas of focus that the Biden-Harris administration can focus on to increase access to mental health care. The #APAAccessAgenda is designed to highlight areas where the administration and Congress can take immediate action so that more people can get the high-quality psychiatric care they need. These areas include, connecting patients to care and coverage, addressing inequities, and investing in mental health and substance use disorder services. You can read more about [#APAAccessAgenda](#) on APA's Blog.


New Schizophrenia Guideline Resources

New resources to accompany the *APA Practice Guideline on the Treatment of Patients With Schizophrenia* are now available: clinician guides (including a guide focused on tardive dyskinesia), a patient and family guide, and two CME-related activities, a Performance in Practice Assessment Tool and SMI Adviser webinar. [Learn more.](#)

Project N95 – PPE Now Available 24/7

You do not have to wait for group buying opportunities or worry about missing order deadlines. The [Project N95 Shop](#) allows you to purchase vetted PPE from verified suppliers online at any time.

Update on 2021 Office/Outpatient E/M Billing and Documentation

CMS has finalized changes to the way office/outpatient E/M codes (99202-99215) will be chosen and documented. APA has updated its [member resources](#) to help navigate these changes. 

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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.