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APPA Spring Conference Wrap-up

Attendance at APPA's Spring Conference was split almost evenly between in-person and on-line participants. Speakers presented remotely and in-person, making for a nice blend of technological and person-to-person interaction.

Membership Advancements

The following members were recognized for their membership advancement in 2021:

- Steven M. Taylor, MD, MPH, Vestavia – Distinguished Fellow
- Irena Bukelis, MD, Birmingham – Fellow
- Daniel C. Dahl, MD, Birmingham – Life Member
- John R. Langlow, MD, Alabaster – Life Member
- Michael J. McManus, MD, Dothan – Life Member

Sponsors/Exhibitors

APPA depends on the support from vendors to make our conferences more affordable for attendees. A special thank you to these companies for their support of the 2021 Spring Conference:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Abbvie | Professional Risk |
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Dwight Kemp, MD, resident in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurobiology at UAB, presents "Social and Racial Disparities in Mental Health."



Attendees enjoyed the face-to-face interaction in the exhibit hall.

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.

Disaster Committee

The Disaster Committee works to keep members current with disaster psychiatry information and prepares disaster response plans. Serving as chair of the committee is Lalleh Adhami, MD.

Diversity and Inclusion

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee advocates for integrating the elements of diversity into the society by acting as a liaison to other community organizations with related interests, both clinically and academically. Serving as chair of the committee is Stephen Taylor, MD, MPH, DFAPA.

Ethics

The Ethics Committee reviews ethical dilemmas in psychiatric practice, and provides leadership and guidance to members. The committee also has the responsibility of investigating ethical complaints against members following action by the Board of Medical Examiners. Members are J. Luke Engeriser, MD, DFAPA; Marc Feldman, MD, DFAPA; Janaki Nimmagadda, MD, FAPA; Godehard Oepen, MD, PhD, DLFAPA; and Rocksheng Zhang, MD, MHS.

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WHAT'S UP AROUND THE STATE...

Birmingham psychiatrist elected vice speaker of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama

Congratulations to **Paul J. O'Leary, MD, DFAPA**, upon his election as vice speaker of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama's College of Counsellors and House of Delegates. Dr. O'Leary is a clinical and forensic psychiatrist at SHKO Medicine, LLC, and works as a psychiatric forensic expert, testifying in civil, criminal, and military trials, as well as, teaching forensic psychiatry to residents at both University of Alabama-Birmingham and the University South Alabama. Dr. O'Leary served as speaker of the Assembly of the American Psychiatric Association for 2018-2019. 



Spring Conference wrap-up, cont.

Congratulations to our 2021 Spring poster winners!

APPA received 15 entries into the Spring 2021 poster contest. All abstracts and posters were posted online along with a short introductory video by each presenter. All of the entries are available on APPA's website: <http://www.alabamapsych.com/2021-virtual-poster-contest-submissions/>. Conference attendees were invited to view the entries and vote on their top three:



1st Place: Manasa Enja, MD

21-1-14: Burnout and depression
Among Residents And Faculty in a
Single Academic Medical Institution -
A Pilot Study



2nd Place Tie: Kelly Chen MS3

21-1-01: Medical and Psychiatric
Management of Prader-Willi
Syndrome



2nd Place Tie:

Angela Y. Chieh, MPH

21-1-06: Systematic
review investigating the
relationship between
autism spectrum disorder
and metabolic dysfunction




Resilience During a Pandemic

Coming to Huntsville

Oct. 6-9, 2021

Physician Finder: Huntsville

UAB Huntsville Regional Medical Campus is seeking a BC/BE Psychiatrist for a full-time physician faculty position. Will provide psychiatry services in both inpatient and outpatient settings. Candidates must have proven clinical expertise; love for teaching; qualify for Alabama licensure and privileges at Huntsville Hospital. Qualified applicants please apply at: <http://uab.opleadadmin.com/postings/8381>. 

2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE

Public Health

The Vulnerable Child Compassion and Protection Bill (HB1 & SB10) would make it a felony for physicians to treat transgender youth with hormonal therapy and puberty blockers to help their transition. Violators could face up to 10 years in prison. The Alabama Senate passed SB10 and the House Judiciary Committee approved the House version of the bill and sent it to the full House of Representatives on March 16.

The Patient's Right to Choose Bill (SB227) would prevent pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) from steering patients to use mail-order pharmacies and would prevent price discrimination. It would also require the PBMs to act as a fiduciary to clients and would prevent them from stopping pharmacists from disclosing prices. The bill passed the House and was sent to the Governor.

Emergency Timeframe & Authority Bill (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. A bill was substituted on the Senate floor with an increase from 14 days to 45 days. SB97 is on the House Health Committee agenda.

Abolishing State Health Officer & Restructuring State Board of Health Bill (SB240) 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. The bill creates a new State Health Advisory Board made up of individuals who have some type of relationship to healthcare. The State Health Officer position would not exist, but two roles would take its place, with the 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.

The Compassion Act (SB46) would authorize medical marijuana in the state. SB46 passed the House Health Committee and awaits consideration from the full House.

Lawsuits & Liability

COVID-19 Liability Protection Act (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 Bill (SB241) prohibits certain fraudulent activities affecting the Alabama Medicaid program. Furthermore, liability for violations of these prohibitions include (1) a civil penalty of \$5,500-\$11,000 per claim, and (2) treble damages. These prohibitions and penalties are different and much more drastic than what currently Medicaid and Medicare law provides, creating very serious liability and monetary concerns for physicians. The Senate Judiciary Committee discussed the bill but it did not receive a vote.

Finance & Taxation

The Cares Act Tax Exclusion Act (HB170) excludes any money received from the CARES Act or other similar COVID-related relief measures from Alabama income tax. This legislation was signed by the Governor.

Federal Legislation

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 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. Please join the Cover Alabama Coalition in supporting Medicaid expansion in Alabama. 🌐

APA opens opt-in for two new membership categories

Beginning in 2022, two new membership categories, "semi-retired" and "retired," approved by the Board of Trustees and Assembly in 2018, will be available. Qualified members can now opt-in online to these categories at my.psychiatry.org and click on the Retired Opt-in tab through July 31, 2021 for the 2022 membership renewal year.

A semi-retired member is defined as a general or life member who is near retirement age and works less than 15 hours a week in all administrative or clinical roles, including consulting. A retired member is defined as a general member who has reached retirement age and is fully retired from all administrative or clinical roles. Each category also has reduced dues rates for APA and District Branches.

These categories will replace the Rule of 95* starting with the 2022 renewal year. Those in the life category prior to 2022 can remain there or can move into one of the new categories. The Rule of 95 allowed members whose age and years of APA

membership equaled or exceeded 95 to become life members and pay dues on a graduated basis.

The new categories provide more flexibility for a more diverse and changing workforce and simplifies the membership structure. Life status will no longer be tied to the Rule of 95 but will be achieved by either being a member for 30 or more years or paying lump sum dues.

More information on these changes and the dues structure for the two new categories is available at psychiatry.org/retired.

**The Rule of 95/life membership, semi-retired and retired membership categories are not available for international memberships. 🌐*



SAVE *the* DATE

Coming Attractions

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

March 31- April 2 | Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort

2023 APPA Fall Conference

TBA

APA News Briefs

April Course of the Month – Pharmacological Approaches to Treatment-Resistant Depression

A significant proportion of patients who suffer from depression do not respond to standard antidepressant treatment. Unfortunately, it is unclear what, for a given patient, works best as a next step, pharmacological treatment. This course highlights the recent progress in identifying new therapies for depressed patients who have not responded to standard antidepressants, including atypical antipsychotics, as well as glutamatergic and GABAergic compounds.

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

APA issues statement on the shootings in Georgia

APA condemned racism and the negative mental health impact of gun violence in the wake of the tragic mass shooting that killed 8 people in Georgia. APA leadership offered condolences to the families of the victims and included resources for coping with trauma and disaster in the statement. You can [read the full statement here](#), and more on [our blog here](#).

APA praises inclusion of mental health funding and provisions in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

APA released a statement praising the inclusion of mental health funding in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Approximately \$4 billion in funding for programs that support prevention and treatment of mental health and substance use disorders was included in the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package passed by Congress. [Read more about the funding and provisions included in the relief package.](#)

APA Marks International Women's Day; Highlights Women Psychiatrists Whose Work Exemplifies Service to Disadvantaged Groups

APA marked International Women's Day by highlighting women psychiatrists whose work has exemplified service to disadvantaged groups, [learn more here](#).

APP Advisor – An American Psychiatric Association Initiative

The expanding use of mobile health (mHealth) technologies is unprecedented in the history of medicine. APA is helping psychiatrists and other mental health professionals navigate these issues by pointing out important aspects you should consider when making an app selection and determining whether an app works for you and your patients. The material provided covers: (1) why it is critical to assess an app, (2) how to evaluate an app, and (3) an opportunity to seek additional guidance on apps and/or the evaluation process. APA will host a monthly "Ask an APP Advisor" on the second Tuesday of each month. [Read more about the APP Advisor.](#) 🌐

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