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APPA, organized medicine, mourn untimely loss of Birmingham psychiatrist, Paul O'Leary, MD

Family, colleagues and friends gathered in Homewood on May 19, to honor the memory of beloved Birmingham psychiatrist, Paul O'Leary, MD, DFAPA, who unexpectedly passed away in his sleep on May 12.

He is survived by his wife, Malinda; his daughters, Sylvia and Sophia; his brother, Tobias; and parents Brian and Gerda. Each shared precious and sometimes humorous memories during the memorial service that highlighted "who" Dr. O'Leary was as a boy, man, psychiatrist, leader, husband, father and friend.

Dr. O'Leary considered his hobby to be "organized medicine" and was a passionate advocate for mental health. Alabama Rep. Neil Rafferty sponsored a House Resolution describing Dr. O'Leary as "a highly respected and beloved psychiatrist in Birmingham, who was also esteemed as an educator and community leader... He earned widespread respect among colleagues and the families of patients, and his legacy of competency and caring will long endure."

Dr. O'Leary was a member of several professional organizations, including APPA, the Medical Association of the State of Alabama and American Psychiatric Association.

Just last month Dr. O'Leary was elected vice speaker of the Medical Association's College of Counsellors and House of Delegates, and in 2018, he became the youngest Assembly Speaker of the APA.

APPA

Godehard Oepen, President of APPA – "With great sorrow and sad surprise did we learn that our dear friend and colleague Dr. Paul O'Leary has unexpectedly passed away on May 12th. As a former president of the Birmingham Psychiatric Society and current president of the Alabama Psychiatric Physician Association, I want to express my deepest respect and heartfelt condolences to his family and close friends, both personally and on behalf of BPS and APPA! Dr. O'Leary has been actively involved on many levels of administrative and clinical Psychiatry locally and nationally, and contributed many original ideas and services. His great sense of irony and humor, inexhaustible energy, and inspiring optimism made contact and cooperation with him a privilege. His many achievements are beyond what can usually be expected in the first half of life. He cannot be replaced, and will be sorely missed. However, his memory will continue to encourage and inspire all of us!"

Medical Association of the State of Alabama

Mark Jackson, executive director – "The Medical Association mourns the passing of our vice speaker, Dr. Paul O'Leary. His involvement with the Association spanned from his election as Young Physician Representative to our Board of Censors to his



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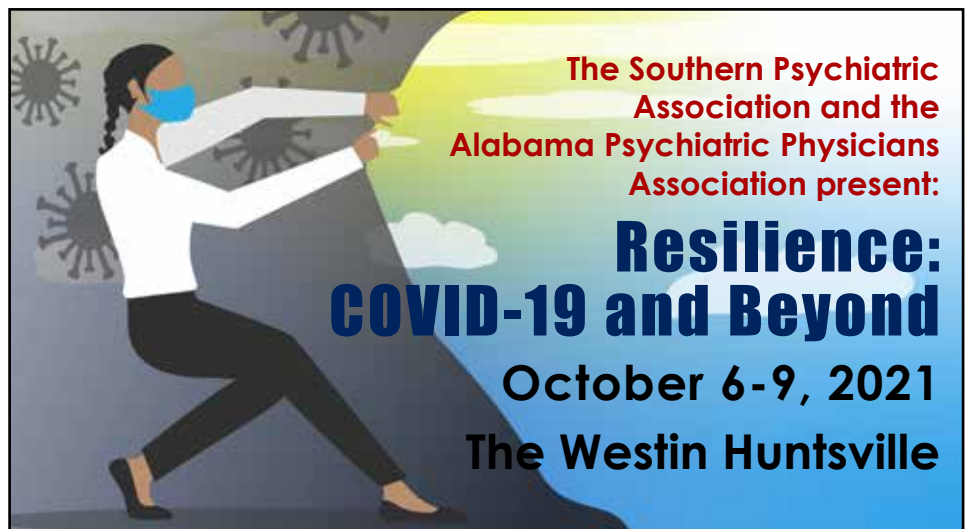
O'Leary, cont.

recent election as vice speaker of our College of Counsellors and House of Delegates. He faithfully attended our Governmental Affairs Conferences in Washington, DC, and was an incredible example of service for us all. We are forever grateful for his distinguished service to the Medical Association and the medical profession. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time."

APA

Saul Levin, MD, MPA, CEO and medical director – "Paul O'Leary meant so much to APA, me, and organized medicine. He is truly a person that used his voice to have a positive impact on the lives of those with mental illness and substance use disorders. When we sent the notification to the Assembly that he'd passed, in the outpouring of grief there also came so many fond and deeply touching memories. Many shared that his positive approach to leadership and inclusiveness was exceptional and contagious. What I will remember about Paul is his humor, his wonderful infectious laugh, and his kindness."

View the full obituary and find a link to the memorial service at <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/homewood-al/paul-oleary-10192601>. Donations may be made in Dr. O'Leary's name to either the Birmingham Zoo the Creative Montessori School. 🌍



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.peopleadmin.com/postings/8381>.

Physician Finder: Huntsville

WellStone, a non-profit community health system, seeking Adult Psychiatry physicians:

- Directly manage clinical and patient outcomes
- Monday-Friday, Office hours
- Support team of nurse practitioners, nurses, and social workers
- Guaranteed salary of \$300,000 with performance bonus potential
- Sign-on bonus and relocation available

Contact Kyri Ioannou, Enterprise Medical Recruiting at (800) 467-3737 or kipreferred@enterprisemed.com. 🌍

Gov. Ivey signs medical marijuana legislation

by *Kim Chandler, Associated Press*

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey signed medical marijuana legislation Monday as conservative opposition to the issue gradually faded after decades of debate.

The program will allow people with one of 16 qualifying medical conditions, including cancer, a terminal illness and depression, to purchase medical marijuana with the recommendation of a doctor. The approval came eight years after a medical marijuana bill in 2013 won that year's so-called "Shroud Award" for the "deadest" bill of the year in the House of Representatives.

Ivey called signing the bill an "important first step" and thanked the sponsors, of the bill for their work. While the bill takes effect immediately, the bill sponsor estimated it will be about 15 months or so before medical marijuana is available in the state.

"This is certainly a sensitive and emotional issue and something that is continually being studied. On the state level, we have had a study group that has looked closely at this issue, and I am interested in the potential good medical cannabis can have for those with chronic illnesses or what it can do to improve the quality of life of those in their final days," Ivey said.

The bill was sponsored by Republican Sen. Tim Melson, an anesthesiologist. It was handled in the House of

Representatives by Republican Rep. Mike Ball, a former state trooper and state investigator. The approval came after a number of lawmakers shared stories of loved ones and their illnesses.

"Hopefully, we are going to help some people," Melson said Monday night.

Melson said for people who have tried other treatments without success, that people will have "another option to treat themselves and get some relief." The state Senate approved the bill in February by a 21-8 vote after just 15 minutes of debate. But the House of Representatives had traditionally been more skeptical of medical marijuana proposals and sent the bill through two committees before approving it 68-34.

The bill would allow the marijuana in forms such as pills, skin patches and creams but not in smoking or vaping products.

Representatives voted to name the bill after the son of a state Democratic representative, Laura Hall. She had first introduced a medical marijuana bill over a decade ago after her son Wesley 'Ato' Hall had died of AIDS.

Ball, who shepherded the bill through the House, said last week that "hearts and minds" were slowly changed on the issue.

"I think we just educated them as much as anything. This wasn't done on emotion. This was done on science," Melson said. 🌱

Qualifying Medical Conditions:

Qualifying medical conditions include any of the following conditions or symptoms of conditions, but only after documentation indicates that conventional medical treatment or therapy has failed unless current medical treatment indicates that use of medical cannabis is the standard of care:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Cancer-related cachexia, nausea or vomiting, weight loss, or chronic pain
- Crohn's Disease
- Depression
- Epilepsy or a condition causing seizures
- HIV/AIDS-related nausea or weight loss
- Panic disorder
- Parkinson's disease
- Persistent nausea that is not significantly responsive to traditional treatment, except for nausea related to pregnancy, cannabis-induced cyclical vomiting syndrome, or cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Sickle Cell Anemia
- Spasticity associated with a motor neuron disease, including Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis
- Spasticity associated with Multiple Sclerosis or a spinal cord injury
- A terminal illness
- Tourette's Syndrome
- A condition causing chronic or intractable pain in which conventional therapeutic intervention and opiate therapy is contraindicated or has proved ineffective.

Medical marijuana bill establishes Medical Cannabis Commission

SB46, the "Darren Wesley 'Ato' Hall Compassion Act, included a provision to create the Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission. The commission will consist of the following members, with initial members appointed not later than July 1, 2021:

- Three members appointed by the Governor, one of whom is a physician licensed to practice medicine in this state; one of whom is a licensed pharmacist; and one of whom has experience in agricultural lending or banking.
- Three members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor, one of whom is a physician licensed to practice medicine

in this state certified in the specialty of pediatrics; one of whom is licensed to practice law in this state who specializes in health law; and one of whom is a biochemist.

- Two members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, one of whom is a physician licensed to practice medicine in this state certified in the specialty of oncology; and one of whom has experience in multiple crop development and agricultural practices.
- Two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representative, one of whom has a background and experience in mental health or substance abuse counselling and treatment; and one of

whom has professional experience in agricultural systems management.

- One member appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries who is experienced in agricultural production or agronomic or other horticultural practices.
- One member appointed by the State Health Officer.
- One member appointed by the Attorney General, who shall be a nonvoting advisory member.
- One member appointed by the Secretary of the Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency, who shall be a nonvoting advisory member. 🌱

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

May Course of the Month – “Doctor, Are You Sure I Am Bipolar?” Challenges in the Differential Diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder

May’s course focuses on providing the practicing psychiatrist with key elements necessary for the correct identification of BD patients. Critical aspects of the clinical history and mental status exam will be discussed, with a particular emphasis on atypical presentations of BD and their differential diagnosis with other conditions, such as major depressive disorder, borderline personality disorder, attention-deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and substance-induced mood disorder. [Click here to access the Course of the Month.](#)

APA opposes legislation restricting delivery of gender-affirming care

APA joined with 5 other medical organizations representing nearly 600,000 physicians and medical students in releasing a statement opposing recent legislation that would restrict delivery of gender-affirming care for gender-diverse patients, specifically for children and adolescents. The groups oppose any legislation that interferes in or criminalizes patient care. Read more: [Frontline Physicians Oppose Legislation That Interferes in or Criminalizes Patient Care.](#)

APA continues work to end structural racism

APA released a leadership statement on the conviction of the murderer of George Floyd, with resources for psychiatrists on structural racism, the impacts of viewing violent racist attacks in person or on social media, as well as treating patients from different backgrounds. Read more: [On the Conviction of the Murderer of George Floyd, What Is Next?](#)

Help APA Fight for Better Reimbursement for YOU – Take our Insurance Survey!

APA advocates on behalf of psychiatrists to increase reimbursement and decrease administrative burdens from public and private payers, legislators and regulatory agencies. To ensure APA is well-equipped to fight for better payment for clinical services, we need to know about our members’ experience with outpatient insurance participation. Your responses to questions regarding the nature of your outpatient practice & your experience with participating in health plan networks will help strengthen our arguments for appropriate reimbursement. [Complete the survey here.](#)

APA posts new video blogs on Telepsychiatry during COVID-19

APA has uploaded 3 new video blogs to the Telepsychiatry Toolkit: College Telepsychiatry, First-time Telepsychiatry and Inpatient Telepsychiatry. [Access the video logs here.](#)

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