

MPS NEWS

Volume 37, Number 7

Editor: Heidi Bunes

November 2023

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Deadline for articles is the 15th of the month preceding publication. Please email heidi@mdpsych.org.

MPS News Design & Layout
Meagan Floyd

The MPS Council will meet by videoconference on November 14 at 7:30 PM. All members welcome!

President's Column

Gratitude and Change: A Thanksgiving Reflection on Climate Change

On November 23, 2023, we celebrate Thanksgiving. As an adult immigrant, my introduction to U.S. federal holidays involved embracing new traditions and letting go of familiar ones, like Spain's long weekend around the Day of Immaculate Conception, which signaled the beginning of the ski season. Among the American holidays, my favorite one has always been Thanksgiving. It is welcoming, inclusive, and universal. Whether you are an immigrant or not, religious or secular, everyone is invited to celebrate. Unlike the sharp reminder of family absences during Christmas or the pressures of unmet New Year's resolutions, Thanksgiving is always a calm and gentle reminder to enjoy the present moment and show gratitude.

Historically, Protestant Christians celebrated days of fasting in response to events that signaled God's judgement, and days of thanksgiving for events believed to be signals of God's Mercy. Modern science is showing the health benefits of these old traditions. For example, scientists have recognized the health benefits of fasting and now the general public is beginning to practice fasting outside of religious customs.

Likewise, gratitude has proven to be beneficial for mental health. Psychologists Emmons and McCullough conducted a study in which they compared 3 groups of people, one was asked to write a few sentences about things they were grateful for, another one wrote about things that were unpleasant, and another one that wrote about things that happened to them, regardless of their negative or positive con-

notations. They found that after 2 months of weekly writings, those who had focused on gratitude felt better about their lives, exercised more, and had fewer doctor visits than those who focused on irritating events. Gratitude even enriches relationships and boosts happiness, as studies by Dr. Martin Seligman have shown.

Sometimes, breaking away from our routines makes us more aware of the things in life that we are accustomed to experience and have forgotten to appreciate. Recently, after several days of travel and re-encounters with friends at our annual meeting of child and adolescent psychiatry in NYC, I have felt gratitude for the time spent with old and new friends. Returning home, I was thankful for my family. Surprisingly, I also felt gratitude for the Baltimore rainy days and the smell of autumn. Record temperatures in October brought people to walk in shorts and sandals. It is nice to have seasons in Baltimore, even if sometimes they seem to happen all in one day. But temperature changes and changes in seasonality are becoming a reality in much of the world, and a reason for concern about the changing climate.

Eco-anxiety or *climate anxiety* is a growing phenomenon, especially among younger generations. While we may think climate change is beyond psychiatrists' concerns, the reality is that our patients are at higher risk for the negative consequences of climate change. This is true for patients with underlying pathologies that can be accompanied by heat regulation difficulties, like schizophrenia, and who may have difficulties coping and adjusting to changing temperatures. It is also true for those tak-

Continued on next page

ing psychiatric medications that have effects on temperature regulation. Extreme weather events can also have social consequences that affect most harshly certain groups that are vulnerable due to age, location and income.

This year, we surveyed MPS and WPS members to understand their views on climate change. The majority of those who completed the survey were concerned about climate change and their patients' mental health, but recognized that time constraints and doubts about their ability to make a difference were important barriers to engaging in action. Most of the people who completed the survey supported MPS and WPS's engagement in activities related to this topic. Overall, the survey reflected a potential role in teaching our students and trainees about the possible effects of climate change on our patients and in addressing climate change-related responses in our patients.

To address climate change anxiety, recommended interventions involve some type of action. Perhaps it is time for us psychiatrists to help our patients venture beyond the traditional therapeutic interventions, advocating for change as a form of treatment. Gratitude for our environment paired with the drive to protect it might be the perfect prescription. What is a nobler cause than safeguarding everyone's health and home?

Carol Vidal, M.D., Ph.D.

2024 MPS Dues Notices

The 2024 MPS dues invoices were sent in October via email and USPS. To pay your MPS dues:

- Send your check to the NEW! MPS office (1211 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD 21201), which reduces our credit card processing costs.
- NEW THIS YEAR! Pay via Zelle: 410-625-0232 which also helps to reduce credit card processing costs.
- You can also pay dues via credit or debit card or PayPal at www.mdpsych.org (Select "Contact" and scroll to the "Pay Now" button).

Please email mps@mdpsych.org with questions or call the office at 410.625.0232. Thanks for your continued support of the Maryland Psychiatric Society!

Staff Changes at the MPS

As of November 1st there are some exciting changes happening at the MPS office! [Meagan Floyd](#) will become MPS Executive Director. [Heidi Bunes](#) will stay on part time through mid-2024 as Associate Director and we are pleased to welcome our new hire, [Jora Hritz](#) as MPS Membership Meetings and Publications Coordinator. Check out upcoming editions of *The Maryland Psychiatrist* for more about Jora, and the rest of the MPS staff.

MPS Best Paper Awards

The MPS established annual "best paper" awards to recognize outstanding scholarship by young psychiatrists in Maryland. Previous winners are listed [here](#). The Academic Psychiatry Committee is currently soliciting nominations for the 2023 Paper of the Year Award in two categories:

Best Paper by an Early Career Psychiatrist Member (ECP): Eligible psychiatrists are ECP members who are first authors of papers published or in press in 2023. Thanks to generous funding from the Maryland Foundation for Psychiatry, the winner will receive a **\$200 cash prize** as well as a complimentary ticket to the MPS annual dinner in April 2024.

Best Paper by a Resident-Fellow Member (RFM): Eligible psychiatrists are Resident-Fellow members who are first authors of papers that were written, in press, and/or published in 2023. Thanks to generous funding from the Maryland Foundation for Psychiatry, the winner will receive a **\$200 cash prize** as well as a complimentary ticket to the MPS annual dinner in April 2024.

Best Paper by a Medical Student Member (MSM): Eligible students are Medical Student Members who are first authors of papers that were written, in press, and/or published in 2023. Thanks to generous funding from the Maryland Foundation for Psychiatry, the winner will receive a **\$200 cash prize** as well as a complimentary ticket to the MPS annual dinner in April 2024.

Scholarly work of all kinds (e.g., scientific reports, reviews, case reports) will be considered. If you would like to nominate a paper and author, including your own, please email the paper to either of the co-chairs below by **January 31**. Please include a brief explanation of why you believe the work is worthy of special recognition.

*Matthew Peters, M.D. mpeter42@jhmi.edu
Traci Speed, M.D., Ph.D. speed@jhmi.edu
Academic Psychiatry Committee Co-Chairs*

Poster Contest for Residents & Fellows

The MPS poster competition for our Resident-Fellow Members will be held again this year, with all entries displayed at our annual meeting in April 2024! Thanks to generous funding from the Maryland Foundation for Psychiatry, the winner will receive a **\$200 cash prize** as well as a complimentary ticket to the meeting. Two finalists will also be selected and will receive **\$100 each** in addition to complimentary tickets.

Winners in past years are listed [here](#). Please [click here](#) for complete details about the process and requirements. **The deadline to enter is January 31**. Electronic copies of posters are due **February 10**. For more information, or to apply [please click here](#).

October 10 Committee Chairs Meeting Highlights

Attendees introduced themselves and talked about their committees' activities:

Community Psychiatry & Diversity led by Drs. Balis and Hackman is partnering with Black Psychiatrists of America to reach out to medical students at the planned Morgan State University school to encourage them to consider specializing in psychiatry. The first class is expected in 2025 so this initiative is in an early stage. CPD connected with the Indo-American Psychiatric Association and collaborates with other MPS committees, for example the recent CME on the Sequential Intercept Model.

Legislative chaired by Drs. Young and Hanson finalized the annual MOU review with Washington Psychiatric Society that outlines how we will coordinate the voice of psychiatry with the General Assembly and pay for representation by Harris Jones Malone. Several issues of interest to psychiatry were prominent in [2023](#) and MPS is working before the next session in a group developing prior authorization legislation.

Editorial Advisory Board with Dr. Hershfield as Editor publishes two issues of [The Maryland Psychiatrist](#) per year and welcomes articles submissions from committees, members, and others. The next issue will be out this fall. In response to the [survey](#) question about what topics are of interest, members requested personal stories, interviews with psychiatrists, case studies and clinical services at institutions.

Program & Continuing Medical Education led by Drs. Nestadt and Chiappelli is holding virtual programs based on member preferences from the survey. A [psychopharmacology update](#) is planned for November. Depending on the topic, MPS will consider including psychologists and other physicians among attendees. When possible, junior researchers are being asked to present to assist early career members in their professional development.

Membership chaired by Drs. Dionesotes and Balis reported that MPS has lost members because of the last dues drop. Increased connections are planned, for example individual outreach, leadership and advocacy skills, and virtual events. MPS needs to work on its value statement for ECPs.

Ethics co-chaired by Drs. Brandt and Means is now working with a new APA procedure. To improve consistency of how APA Principles of Ethics are applied across the country, complaints against members are now considered by the APA committee, which will forward them for investigation to the District Branch where the member belongs if warranted. The committee is considering a CME on dual agency.

Dr. Vidal noted that to address a member's dissatisfaction with representation of subspecialties within MPS, a new Subspecialty Committee will be established to facilitate ex-

change of information and collaboration.

Dr. Vidal then reviewed the role of committee chairs and the MPS [Vision, Mission & Values](#). She noted the continuing [MPS Strategic Priorities](#) and the [2023 MPS member survey results](#) and asked how the organization can continue to work toward the priorities while also responding to the survey input. Some of the ideas include:

- Hold an MPS "community day" where members join together once a year to address a need via an event or activity planned by the MPS.
- Podcast interview series featuring psychiatrists.
- Expand the career fair to include psychiatrists in interesting roles who share their experience with attendees.
- Reach out to a larger group of members to involve them in grass roots lobbying, especially when their legislative priorities are at stake.
- Hold 1-2 general membership meetings annually where members can hear quick committee updates and discuss 1-2 topics.
- Send a warm welcome email to new members from someone in leadership.
- Start a "Member Shoutout" recognition program where anyone can request that MPS publicize a member's accomplishment or good work, such as great clinical care for a particular patient, publication of research, etc. [[See page 7](#) for the first of hopefully many of these.]

Dr. Vidal then reviewed [MPS Goals for Addressing Structural Racism and Inclusion](#) and asked each chair to revisit with their committee the initial goals that it set and either affirm or update them. The website will be updated, including the current chairs. This is part of the continuing process of MPS examining its practices and addressing structural racism as an organization. If committees have already accomplished what they set out to do, they can consider expanding on that or branching out into new areas.

MPS Membership

The following individuals have applied for membership. Unless any current members have evidence that an applicant does not meet the criteria for ethical and professional standards, these actions will be approved 14 days after publication.

Christoffel E. Le Roux, M.B.B.Ch
Andrea P. Watkins, M.D., MPH

Reinstatement of Membership
Aderonke O Omotade, M.D.

The Maryland Psychiatric Society presents:

Psychopharmacology Update: 2023

Thursday November 16
7:00PM
A Virtual CME Activity

- Robert Buchanan, M.D.
Updates on Long-Acting Injectable Antipsychotics
in Treatment of People with Schizophrenia
- Frederick Nucifora, M.D.
Clozapine: Overcoming the barriers to increase use
- Paul Kim, M.D., Ph.D.
Ketamine for Depression: Advances in Clinical Treatment

Agenda:

7:00-7:45 Frederick Nucifora, M.D.

7:45-8:15 Paul Kim, Ph.D., M.D.

8:15-8:45 Robert Buchanan, MD

8:45-9:00 Question and Answer Session

FREE FOR MPS MEMBERS!
\$25 for Non-Members

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information including registration.

Thank you to Maryland Foundation for Psychiatry and Janssen Pharmaceutical for their financial support.

MPS Endorses American Psychological Association Statement on Violence in Middle East

We at the Maryland Psychiatric Society are appalled by the violent and deadly attack by Hamas on Israel over the week-end. The resulting war has already killed thousands, including many families, children, and other civilians. We feel helpless over these acts that claim so many lives and destroy so many communities. We endorse the following statement by the American Psychological Association and share the concerns of our colleagues about the ongoing and far-reaching effects of this war.

APA warns of psychological impacts of violence in Middle East

The psychology community stands in solidarity with all who are working to protect and safeguard human life during this conflict.

The American Psychological Association has condemned in no uncertain terms the recent violent attack by Hamas on Israel.

We also are deeply disturbed by the crisis of human suffering and loss of life and liberty for civilians who are caught in this escalating conflict.

We recognize that the situation is complicated, but there can be no justification for acts of indiscriminate violence. There can be no justification for holding people hostage. There can be no justification for cutting off access to basic necessities, such as electricity, food and medicine.

APA is gravely concerned for the physical safety and mental health of the millions of Israelis and Palestinians affected by this growing surge in violence. APA deplores the human cost of aggression, including violations of human rights, adverse humanitarian consequences, deep psychological distress, and the loss of dignity and freedom. All individuals deserve to live free of fear and violence so that their mental health and well-being can flourish.

We also condemn the rise of anti-Jewish and anti-Arab rhetoric as a result of this most recent conflict.

There is much research outlining the immediate and long-term psychological impacts of violence and trauma on the people who are targets, especially civilians.

Psychological science tells us that fear, anxiety and traumatic stress have long-term effects on health and well-being. These impacts are also being felt by people around the world who have families and friends in the region, as well as those concerned about the effects of war everywhere.

The psychology community stands in solidarity with all who

are working to protect and safeguard human life during this conflict. Psychologists are experts in the science of human behavior. Problems cannot be solved without understanding their root cause. Prevention of violent conflict is imperative for a world in which mental health and well-being are the norm, and to achieve peaceful, sustainable societies. We call for peace, dialogue and conflict resolution as a pathway to ending the conflict, which is necessary for us to begin the work to prevent the suffering that will continue to result from ongoing violence.

<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2023/10/middle-east-violence-statement>

Approved by MPS Council October 13, 2023

Nominations for Anti-Stigma Advocacy Award

The [Maryland Foundation for Psychiatry](#) presents an annual award to recognize a worthy piece published in a major newspaper or on public media that accomplishes one or more of the following:

- Shares with the public their experience with mental illness in themselves, a family member, or in the community.
- Helps others to overcome their inability to talk about mental illness or their own mental illness.
- Imparts particularly insightful observations on the general subject of mental illness.

The article should be published or produced during the period from January 15, 2023 to January 9, 2024. A Maryland author and/or newspaper or major media outlet is preferred. [Click here](#) for past winners and published articles.

The award carries a \$500 prize, which is given at the Maryland Psychiatric Society annual meeting in April. Please send nominations to mfp@mdpsych.org by **January 10, 2024**.

The MFP is organized for educational and charitable purposes. For more information, please visit the [website](#).

MPS Comments on the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act

In October the MPS submitted comments regarding the requirements of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act: Proposed Rule, File Code 1210-AC11. Please [CLICK HERE](#) to read the letter.

Maryland News

PBHS Provider Compliance Alert

Optum posted the first of anticipated quarterly Public Behavioral Health System (PBHS) [alerts](#) regarding common issues with state and federal requirements that can result in funding retractions and/or licensing action. [Please click here to read the alert.](#) Some excerpts include:

- Failure to document services accurately, as required by regulation
- Failure to obtain documented informed consent (signature) from the participant
- Refusal to allow designated auditors to examine records, or failure to provide records on request
- Independent practitioners in private/group practice who allow non-licensed students/interns, provisionally licensed (LG/LM), and/or other fully licensed individuals to provide services and bill Medicaid for those services under their Medicaid provider number
- Providers who use a checklist in lieu of actual notes, such as are found in some EHR's
- Billing 99214 and 99215 E&M codes routinely and not based on complexities of the service provided in the individual case

Summary of Maryland Data from NORC Survey

NORC, an independent, non-partisan research institute at the University of Chicago, conducted a survey of parents to understand their experiences in accessing mental health and/or substance use care. The Survey used convenience sampling across 26 behavioral health consumer organizations and provider groups that distributed the survey link via email, website, and/or social media at various periods between December 2021 and April 2022. In total, 2,794 responses to the Survey were received from patients who needed care between January 2019 through April 2022.

Click here to see results for [all respondents](#) to the survey and, separately, [respondents from Maryland](#). The total sample size of Maryland respondents was 246.

Multiple studies, including analyses of insurance claims and surveys of employers and providers, have demonstrated that in-network health insurance coverage for treatment of mental health and substance use conditions remains inadequate and not "on par" with access to in-network health insurance coverage for somatic care.

Optum Maryland CMO Office Hours

A new opportunity for discussing clinical issues is open to all PBHS providers. Optum Maryland Chief Medical Officer (CMO) **Steve Daviss, M.D.** will hold a weekly "office hours" call on **Wednesdays at noon** to discuss clinical mental health and SUD issues, e.g., medical necessity criteria, documentation, how to receive authorizations, staff training, etc., not claims issues. [Click here](#) for details and a meeting link.

Maryland Network Adequacy Consumer Fact Sheet + FAQs Now Available

[Making Substance Use and Mental HealthCare More Affordable and Accessible: New Health Care Protections in Maryland:](#) People with state-regulated private health insurance have a right to timely and accessible addiction and mental health care. Private health insurance plans must have enough providers in network to allow patients to get care within a reasonable appointment wait time and travel distance.

[FAQs on Maryland's Provider Network Standards for Substance Use and Mental Health Care in Private Insurance:](#) Maryland has updated its private health insurance provider network standards to improve access to substance use disorder and mental health care. These new rules will help make addiction and mental health treatment covered by private insurers more affordable and accessible by requiring reasonable appointment wait times and travel distances.

New MDH Funding to Support Veterans

Maryland Department of Health (MDH) [announced](#) new funding for Maryland nonprofits to establish and expand community behavioral health programs for service members, veterans and family members. Services to be provided by awardees include:

- Screening
- Delivery of trauma-informed, culturally competent, client-centered and evidence-based mental health and substance use disorders treatment services including complementary and alternative therapy services (such as art, music and animal-assisted therapies)
- Case management and care coordination services
- Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Services
- Telehealth and/or telemedicine services

Total available funding is \$2.4 million from January 1 to June 30, 2024. **Applications must be submitted by November 6.** [Click for more details.](#)

Maryland News

Give Feedback for Overdose Data Improvements

The [Opioid Operational Command Center](#) (O OCC) is working with the Maryland Department of Health's [Overdose Data to Action](#) initiative to improve the Maryland [Overdose Data Dashboard](#). O OCC requests feedback on what dashboard data would be most useful for your overdose prevention and response efforts. Please share ideas for improving how this information is made available to local partners by responding to a [survey](#) by **November 17**.

CMS Medicaid Transportation Coverage Guide

On September 28, CMS sent a 43-page [guidance to State Medicaid Directors](#) for current and new transportation policy, providing a comprehensive source for federal requirements and state flexibilities. Medicaid transportation is a critical service that assists beneficiaries with accessing covered Medicaid services and has a direct impact on health outcomes. CMS encourages states to consider how to fully operationalize transportation policy and regularly monitor it for improvements. CMS encourages states, managed care plans, and transportation providers to work collaboratively to ensure beneficiaries are educated and informed about their transportation options.

MedChi HOD Meeting

The MedChi House of Delegates met Saturday October 28 to consider a long list of resolutions on wide-ranging topics, including:

- Health insurance market concentration
- Medicare rates in Maryland
- Payment transparency
- Insurance coverage for telehealth mental healthcare
- Prescription drug affordability
- Physician workforce shortage

MPS Delegate Enrique Oviedo, M.D. will report in the next issue, but in the meanwhile [click here](#) for more information.

5K Supports Unhoused Baltimoreans

[Rock Your Socks 5K](#) is a family-friendly event that welcomes all ages. Grab your most colorful socks and join the run to end homelessness in Baltimore. The event will be held Saturday, **November 4** at Patterson Park (Pulaski Monument) in Baltimore. Learn more about [Health Care for the Homeless](#).

MACS Buprenorphine Survey

As part of an ongoing effort to understand the landscape of buprenorphine access, the Maryland Addiction Consultation Service (MACS) is surveying prescribers across the state. Please complete this voluntary survey at [THIS LINK](#), which includes instructions to return the survey via mail or fax. MACS provides free support to prescribers and their practices in addressing the needs of their patients with substance use disorders and chronic pain management. [See below.]

Maryland Addiction Consultation Service

Do you have questions about best practices in treating patients who are living with substance use disorders? Call the Maryland Addiction Consultation Service (MACS) warmline at 1-855-337-MACS (6227) Monday-Friday 9AM - 5PM with your clinical questions. MACS is a free, grant-funded program that provides phone consultation for clinical questions, resources, and referral information. Appropriate questions include initiation, maintenance, or termination of buprenorphine, diagnostic questions, alternative medication treatment, pain management clinical concerns, co-occurring disorders, and discuss technical assistance needs. For inquiries, email MACS@som.umaryland.edu. To learn more, click [here](#).

BHA Behavioral Health Equity Listening Sessions

[Behavioral Health Equity Listening Sessions](#) will be held in person on **November 8 from 10 AM to noon** at MD Dept. of Transportation in Hanover and virtually for statewide input on **November 15 from 10 AM to noon**. The Behavioral Health Equity Workgroup promotes equity across all behavioral health services for underrepresented and marginalized groups. It aims to overcome social and structural determinants of health to ensure equal access to care for all populations, including access to prevention, treatment and rehabilitation services. [Click for more information or to register](#).

Open Enrollment Starts November 1

Compare plans on MarylandHealthConnection.gov and click [Get an Estimate](#) to browse plans from Aetna, CareFirst, Kaiser Permanente and UnitedHealthcare. Most people who enroll through Maryland Health Connection get financial help to pay for their plan. Many young adults ages 18-37 can get special discounts for 2024 health plans on top of other savings. Those who qualify for Medicaid may enroll any time of year. Others can enroll November 1 through December 31 for coverage beginning January 1.

Maryland News

BHA-MedChi Webinars

The Behavioral Health Administration and MedChi webinar series, *Helping the Helpers and Those They Serve*, is for behavioral health and medical providers of all disciplines in both community and hospital settings. They enhance health care worker self-care and the care they provide by addressing the pandemic, social justice issues, and other stressors. **CME credits are free.** Recordings and slides are archived on the BHA/MedChi [webinar page](#). The programs run from **5 to 6 PM**:

November 9:

[Overcoming Self-Doubt and The Imposter Syndrome](#)

Alex Chan, Ph.D.

MDH Awarded \$2.5M for Alzheimer's

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) [announced](#) it has been awarded a five-year, \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to expand Alzheimer's and related dementias prevention and care programs in the state. The grant period is from September 30, 2023 to September 29, 2028. The funds will support continued collaboration with the [Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council](#) to track and report activities in the [Maryland State Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias](#) and build upon its [Healthy Brain Aging awareness campaign](#) to increase early detection and diagnosis and promote healthy brain aging.

Program on Microaggressions

MPS members are invited to join virtually on **November 16th from 6 to 7:30 PM** when the MD/DC Chapter of the Indo-American Psychiatric Association will present a virtual event, *Strategies to Overcome Microaggressions in the Workplace and in Life*. Presenters include:

- Ranna Parekh, MD, MPH, Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer at University of Texas MD Anderson
- Dhruv Gupta, MD, MS, Attending Forensic Psychiatrist at NY State Office of Mental Health
- Karuna Poddar, MD, MS, Attending Psychiatrist at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital
- Rohit Chandra, MD, Attending Psychiatrist at Mass General Hospital

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83952103425?pwd=RjFNcjZBRC8yZFV0dEVFTnRIRnpuUT09>

Meeting ID: 839 5210 3425

Passcode: 448228

2023 MDH Parity Compliance Report

The [2023 Compliance Report](#) issued October 1 by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) presents its analysis of the State's Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program's (CHIP) compliance with the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA) and the Affordable Care Act. MDH has updated this report annually since 2018. MDH found that in nearly all areas addressed by this analysis, MH/SUD benefits are being delivered and managed in a comparable and no more stringent manner to the way M/S benefits are managed. However, MDH recognizes that the provider rate setting methodology is an NQTL type that is subject to parity analysis, but has not been addressed.

Further, MDH has historically identified two potential parity violations with respect to the delivery of outpatient benefits: Data Collection and Service Limits (SL). Medicaid and BHA have ongoing discussions on how to incentivize data collection going forward now that it is no longer required as a condition of authorization and payment to providers, and are seeking guidance from CMS. Most MCOs impose all the coding edits called for under the National Correct Coding Initiative (NCCI), which results in the use of a significant number of quantitative coverage edits on M/S benefits that are analogous to the SLs in place for MH/SUD services.

Free CME on Artificial Intelligence

On **November 14 at 6 PM** the Baltimore City Medical Society will present the Furlong Lecture on Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare. The in-person/virtual event will be held at the MedChi Office, 1211 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD 21201 (parking lot at 1204 Maryland Avenue) and carries up to 1 CME credit. Dinner will be provided for in-person attendees. Please [click here](#) for objectives and to [register](#).



Maryland News

Public Meetings of Note

State Advisory Council on Quality Care at the End of Life

On **November 9**, from 10 AM to noon, the State Advisory Council on Quality Care at the End of Life will meet at the Maryland Office of Health Care Quality in Columbia and via videoconference. Members of the public are welcome to attend either in-person or virtually. [Click here](#) for the video conference link as well as other details about the Council.

MDH Medicaid Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee

On **November 2**, from 9 AM to 1 PM, the Medicaid Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee will conduct a public meeting virtually by webinar. The [P&T meeting page](#) and [agenda](#) provide more details, including classes of drugs and specific drugs to be reviewed. Submit questions to mdh.marylandpdlquestions@maryland.gov or contact Deborah Washington at (410) 767-1455.

Member Publications

Congratulations to **Akira Sawa, M.D.** who is one of the authors of [Microglial cannabinoid receptor type 1 mediates social memory deficits in mice produced by adolescent THC exposure and 16p11.2 duplication](#) published October 25 in *Nature Communications*. The research found that the active ingredient in cannabis, THC, impacts the immune cells of the brain, microglia cells. For mice with a pre-existing genetic vulnerability for psychiatric disorders, the drug led to deficits in memory in adulthood.

Kudos to **Denis Antoine, M.D.** who is a co-author on [Within subject, double blind, examination of opioid sensitivity in participant-reported, observed, physiologic, and analgesic outcomes](#) published September 1 in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence Reports*. In a study of variation in how people experience pain treatment, they found 21% of 123 people were insensitive to opioid hydromorphone in a moderately high dose, which could have implications for a personalized approach to unique patient needs.

Congrats to **Elizabeth Prince, D.O.** who is first author of [The Complex Association of Daily Opioid Dose with Visits for Pain in Sickle Cell Disease: Tolerance or Treatment- Refractory Pain?](#) published in June 2023 *Pain Medicine*. The paper reports that switching from typical opioid treatment to buprenorphine improved functioning in 13 patients.

Member Shoutout

For this inaugural MPS Member Shoutout, we recognize a few MPS members at Johns Hopkins.

Fernando Goes, M.D., DFAPA, Director of the Stanley and Elizabeth Star Precision Medicine Center of Excellence in Mood Disorders, will lead the Hopkins effort as one of six institutions launching the BD² Integrated Network, a new platform for bipolar disorder research (*BD²: Breakthrough Discoveries for thriving with Bipolar Disorder*).

Lindsay Standeven, M.D. and **Sarah Collica, M.D.** whose skill and compassion so impressed a patient's family that the family decided to pledge \$1 million to Johns Hopkins to express their gratitude for the care team, including the nurses, the physicians, the social worker, and the entire staff.

(The above were initially publicized in Dr. Potash's weekly Cheers from the Chair email.)

During the recent committee chairs meeting, MPS leaders decided to start a "Member Shoutout" recognition program where anyone can request that MPS publicize a member's accomplishment or good work, such as great clinical care for a particular patient, publication of research, etc. Please submit your own or others' activities for MPS publication to mps@mdpsych.org – don't be modest!

Member Spotlight

Earlier this year, **Arman Taghizadeh, M.D.** presented a TEDx talk at Grand Canyon University on the pressures that students (and athletes) face with managing school, sports, family, friends, etc. and the direct impact on mental health and productivity. By focusing on the things within our control, we can create a process to be happier and more successful. His motivation and inspiration for the talk was to recognize and pay tribute to those who have played an active role in his personal success, including his late father, mentors, colleagues, patients, and his own family. This resource can educate, inspire, and empower everyone to be their best. Here is the link: [TEDx: Control the Controllables](#).

Thank You!

The following members paid additional MPS dues for 2024 even though they qualify for reduced dues because of their Rule of 95 life status. **We appreciate your support of the Maryland Psychiatric Society!**

Tom Allen, M.D.
Anita Everett, M.D.
Art Hildreth, M.D.
Jill Joyce, M.D.

APA News & Information

October 6 APA BOT Meeting Highlights

APA reports and briefings of Congress included:

- Shortage of stimulants
- Medicaid enrollees' support; funding for collaborative care models/ support and research into social determinants of care
- Insight into HHS smoking cessation framework and improvement
- Response to request for comments regarding factors the FDA should consider when it reviews a proposed risk mitigation and evaluation strategy for patients and including the input of care providers for care continuity.
- Several CMS proposals support APA advocacy efforts including continuing to reimburse telehealth services provided to patients in their home at the same rate as in-person care; allowing virtual supervision, including virtual supervision by teaching physicians when the resident furnishes Medicare telehealth services in all residency training locations through the end of 2024
- Proposed increased funding for mental health and substance use disorder services
- APA successfully lobbied congressional champions to include in key telehealth legislation a provision removing the 6-month, in-person requirement for tele-mental health services.
- APA members Drs. Nancy Byat and **Denis Antoine** moderated and served as SUD issue experts respectively, to inform Congress about key maternal health legislation, including the Moms Matter Act and Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act.
- Other briefings included those on climate change, parity, collaborative care, state workforce legislation and safe prescribing.

Membership trends follow a similar path to what is noted in District Branches and marketing efforts are being made to enroll residents, international members and reinstating members who had dropped out.

The APA Foundation continues to fund research efforts, fellowships and presentations by junior investigators.

The APA has published a [perinatal mental health toolkit](#).

PsychPro report

Continued efforts to increase participation and engagement of members to promote diversity and equity, through education, outreach and advocacy. Many YouTube presentations organized by Regina James are being tracked for # of views.

Workforce diversification

APA continues to focus on diversifying the psychiatric workforce pipeline through active engagement with APA mem-

bers and organizations to increase the number of diverse candidates who apply to the fellowship, medical, student, and pre-medical student programs.

Public Education

The President's theme on addictions will be launched as a campaign and a lot of work has gone into shaping the education of psychiatrists and patients. A remarkable effort has been made to educate the public, post informational materials for consumers and families, resulting in a phenomenal 14.5 million page views. Our social footprint grew to nearly 1.2 million followers. APA Foundation Executive Director Rawle Andrews has been very successful at obtaining funding and partnerships for research and marketing initiatives, and several learning series and postings.

Fiscal status

The balance sheet remains strong with unrestricted net assets increasing by \$7.3 million over 2022. However there is a decrease in revenue from the Annual meeting, sales of books and membership dues, which are being actively worked on. Digital sales are \$212K above budget. There is a proposal to shift from books to email communications with posted digital content, with a revenue stream from pharma and non-pharma companies.

Assembly report

- The APA Administration agreed to review and revise the Area Council Budget and Meeting Planning
- Guidelines based on the feedback from the AEC. The AEC was also cautioned that the 2024 budget may be impacted due to a deficit.
- Registrations for the Oct 12-14 Mental Health Services conference at the Capitol Hill Hilton are down thus far compared to previous years.
- There are actions taken to reduce the carbon footprint of the APA.
- Psychiatry will see a small increase in federal reimbursements for services via CMS with an add-on code for complexity.
- Tele-mental health visits will be paid at the same rate as in person visits through the end of 2024.
- A pool of individuals of extremely diverse backgrounds will be interviewed shortly for the APA CEO and Medical Director position. The search committee has been alerted to our concerns about requiring this individual to be a psychiatrist. The highest number of interested applicants are psychiatrists.

Geetha Jayaram, M.D., Area 3 Trustee

APA News & Information

Town Hall on AAPI Mental Health

On **November 8th, from 5:30 to 6:45 PM**, the APA Foundation will host a virtual town hall: Mental Health and Culturally Competent Care in the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Community. The town hall will highlight APA's Asian American Trailblazers in Psychiatry exhibit and raise awareness of mental health issues faced by the AAPI community. Speakers will include Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY) and Drs. Edmond Pi, Dora-Linda Wang, Francis Lu, Seeba Anam, and Wil Wong. Topics will include the historical context and experiences of the AAPI community, the intersection of culture and mental health, and the importance of culturally competent care. Resources for AAPI mental health and well-being will be provided. [Click here to register.](#)

APA Supports the TEAMS Act

On September 28, APA CEO and Medical Director Saul Levin, M.D. M.P.A., provided a quote in support of [S. 2966](#), the Targeting Emotional and Mental Stability (TEAMS) Act introduced by Sens. John Boozman (R-AR) and Cory Booker (D-NJ). This bill would call for school-based initiatives supporting the mental health needs of college athletes to be eligible for the Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant Program. The TEAMS Act would allow this funding to be used for school-based mental health programs such as mental health care services, peer-to-peer counseling, 24/7 crisis lines, training for students and staff on how to respond to students exhibiting signs of mental distress, and campus-wide measures to address the stigma associated with seeking care. The press release is [here](#).

Nominees for APA Council on Women's Mental Health

The APA Board of Trustees approved the creation of the Council on Women's Mental Health, which will become an official APA component in May 2024, replacing the Committee on Women's Mental Health.

Members with expertise in the content area are invited to nominate themselves or a colleague to serve. **Nominations are being accepted through November 15**, using the [online nomination form](#). Appointees will be notified in March 2024. All new appointments will be effective at the conclusion of the 2024 Annual Meeting. For questions, contact appointments@psych.org.

APA Responds to Congressional RFIs

On September 22, APA [submitted a response](#) to a Senate request for information on the ethics, regulation, and future of artificial intelligence in health care. APA also [submitted a response](#) to an additional RFI on health data protection strategies that includes how to improve health outcomes through data and technology while still protecting patient privacy. In addition, APA [responded](#) to a House RFI regarding rural health care and how to address ongoing health care workforce shortages.

Apply for 2023-24 Fellowships

The [APA/APAF Fellowships](#) application cycle begins **November 1st**. Fellowships provide psychiatry residents experiential learning, training and professional development to become leaders in the field. Fellows receive mentorship from APA member experts, get exclusive opportunities to be a part of APA leadership councils, and network with APA members from around the country. Fellowships include:

- APA/APAF Leadership
- Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- Community Diversity
- Diversity Leadership
- Edwin Valdiserri Correctional Psychiatry
- Jeanne Spurlock Congressional
- Public Psychiatry
- Psychiatric Research
- SAMHSA Minority

apafdn.org/futureleaders

Unequal Impact of the Opioid Epidemic in the African American Community

Join APA on **December 7th at 7 PM** for the next installment in [The Looking Beyond Series: Mental Health Equity Fireside Chats](#). African Americans are experiencing rising opioid-related overdoses, with the third highest opioid-related overdose death rate compared to other race/ethnicities, largely driven by synthetic fentanyl and heroin. Disparities and inequities are exacerbating this crisis as evidenced by the higher rate of overdose deaths in U.S. counties with greater income inequality. This panel will unpack the complexities of the unequal impact of opioids in the African American community and evaluate the role of implicit bias, stigmatization, and cultural stereotypes in shaping perceptions, diagnoses, and treatment approaches.

FREE APA Course of the Month

Each month, APA members have free access to an on-demand CME course on a popular topic. [Click here to access the Course of the Month and sign up for updates about this free member benefit.](#)

Medicare Updates

Update on Billing and Coding

CMS updated its Medicare coverage document [Billing and Coding: Psychiatric Codes](#) effective **October 1**. The document was revised and published on 10/26/2023 effective for dates of service on and after 10/01/2023 to reflect the Annual ICD-10-CM Code Updates. The following ICD-10-CM codes have been deleted and therefore were removed from the article: G20, G37.8. The following ICD-10-CM codes have been added to 'Group 1 codes': G20.A1, G20.A2, G20.B1, G20.B2, G37.89.

APA Collaborating with AMA to Update Medicare Physician Payment

The AMA Physician Practice Information (PPI) [Survey](#) is underway, and APA urges all selected psychiatrists to actively engage in this effort. The intent is to collect updated and accurate data on practice costs which are a key element of physician payment. [Mathematica](#) is coordinating this effort. Your practice may receive an email (from ppisurvey@mathematica-mpr.com) and an USPS priority mail packet from Mathematica that contains a link to the survey and supporting information. In addition, in the coming weeks or months, your practice, or Mathematica, may ask you to complete a brief survey on the number of weekly hours spent on direct patient care. We urge you to complete this two-minute survey. **Help us help you to update Medicare physician payment!**

Apply for MIPS Hardship Exception

Two [exception applications](#) are available in 2023 to be exempt from meeting specific Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) program requirements and reweighting for the final MIPS score. [See EUC exception top of column to the right] The MIPS Promoting Interoperability Performance Category Hardship Exception application allows you to request reweighting of the Promoting Interoperability performance category if you qualify based on small practice, decertified EHR technology, insufficient Internet connectivity, circumstances such as disaster, practice closure, severe financial distress or vendor issues, or availability of CEHRT. (Those already exempt from submitting Promoting Interoperability data don't need to apply. For example, [small practices](#) qualify for automatic reweighting of the Promoting Interoperability performance category to 0%.) The deadline to [apply for a hardship exception](#) is **January 2**.

MIPS Extreme and Uncontrollable Circumstances Exceptions

Apply by January 2 for Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) **Extreme and Uncontrollable Circumstances (EUC) Exceptions for 2023**. Eligible clinicians may apply to reweight any or all MIPS performance categories if they've been affected by EUC, which are defined as rare events entirely outside of your control and the control of the facility in which you practice. These circumstances must:

- Cause you to be unable to collect information necessary to submit for a MIPS performance category;
- Cause you to be unable to submit information that would be used to score a MIPS performance category for an extended period of time (for example, if you were unable to collect data for the quality performance category for 3 months), and/or;
- Impact your normal process, affecting your performance on cost measures and other administrative claims measures.

Please [click here](#) for EUC exception details.

2024 MIPS Virtual Group Election Period

A [virtual group](#) is one way clinicians can participate in the [traditional Merit-based Incentive Payment System \(MIPS\)](#). To receive approval to participate as a virtual group for 2024, submit an election e-mail to MIPSVirtualGroups@cms.hhs.gov by **December 31, 2023**. [Click here](#) for more information.

A virtual group must submit an election to CMS for each year it intends to participate in MIPS. If your virtual group was approved and intends to participate in MIPS again as a virtual group in 2024, the group must submit an election to CMS.

A virtual group is a combination of 2 or more Taxpayer Identification Numbers (TINs) consisting of:

- Solo practitioners (defined as the only clinician in a practice) who are [MIPS eligible](#); and/or
- Groups that have 10 or fewer clinicians (at least one clinician within the group must be MIPS eligible).
A group is considered to be an entire single TIN.

A virtual group has the flexibility to determine its own makeup; a solo practitioner or group can only participate in one virtual group per year. **Benefits of a Virtual Group include** collaborating, sharing resources, increasing performance volume to be reliably measured, and potentially increasing performance under MIPS. [Click here](#) for more information.

Second Temporary Extension of Telemedicine Flexibilities

In a second temporary rule, DEA and HHS are further extending telehealth exceptions to existing DEA regulations for new practitioner-patient relationships, through December 31, 2024. Under the [First Temporary Rule](#), if a patient and a practitioner have a telemedicine relationship on or before November 11, 2023, the same telemedicine flexibilities governing the relationship to that point would continue to apply through November 11, 2024. **This second extension authorizes all DEA-registered practitioners to prescribe schedule II-V controlled medications via telemedicine through December 31, 2024 without an in-person visit requirement**, whether or not the patient and practitioner established a telemedicine relationship on or before November 11, 2023. In other words, the first temporary grace period is subsumed by this second Rule, which continues the current flexibilities for all practitioner-patient relationships until the end of 2024.

The agencies will continue to consider revisions to the proposed rules dated March 1, 2023, as well as the views expressed during Telemedicine Listening Sessions on September 12 and 13, with a new regulatory proposal expected within a year. [Click here for details.](#)

Communicating Telehealth Privacy and Security Risks

The HHS Office for Civil Rights issued two resource documents to help explain telehealth privacy and security risks to patients. The documents aim to convey risks in plain language and help reduce risk via basic cyber hygiene practices.

- [Resource for Health Care Providers on Educating Patients about Privacy and Security Risks to Protected Health Information when Using Remote Communication Technologies for Telehealth](#)
- [Privacy and Security Tips for Patients](#)

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

Survivors of suicide loss come together to find connection, understanding, and hope through their shared experience on International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day, which is Saturday, **November 18**. [Click here](#) to search events and find out how loss survivors will be connecting in your area. If you have questions, please email survivorday@afsp.org.

CLASSIFIEDS

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Inpatient Medical Director at Brook Lane Health Services:

The Inpatient Medical Director will be responsible for providing clinical and administrative leadership to the inpatient program and partial hospitalization program under the direction of the Chief Medical Officer in order to provide the community standard in the care of our patients. The Medical Director will provide comprehensive psychiatric services, as leader of multi-disciplinary team, to patients and clients of Brook Lane and critical insight in the development of our role as a participating site for the proposed Meritus psychiatry residency. Brook Lane Health Services provides a continuum of mental health services for people throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. We offer a variety of services for all age groups, allowing for an individualized program of treatment. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information or to apply.

Clifton T Perkins Hospital Center (CTPHC) is recruiting for board certified and board eligible psychiatrists to work in this maximum security forensic setting. CTPHC is Maryland's only maximum security, forensic psychiatric hospital. Come lead a dynamic and growing multidisciplinary team providing inpatient psychiatric services to patients with major mental illnesses who have court involvement. Patients are deserving of excellent care, cases are interesting and often unique, and the work is professionally rewarding. The compensation package is generous, as are State of Maryland benefits. Please contact Dr. [Robert Wisner-Carlson](#), Clinical Director, at 410-724-3075. Applications can be placed on the [State of Maryland JobAps](#), noting Howard County work location.

OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE

Ellicott City/Waverly Woods/Columbia: Near Rt. 70, Rt. 32 and Rt. 29. Office and Group Room are in a beautiful suite ready for immediate occupancy. Daily and hourly rentals are available. Includes large fully furnished office with 2 windows, large beautifully decorated waiting room, receptionist/file room, 2 bathrooms, Kitchen and a warm community of other therapists who cross-refer. WiFi and fax available. Free ample parking. Contact Jenniferplassnig@gmail.com or 410-203-2411.

Ellicott City: Daily/Part-time/Full-time: Following CDC guidelines, Telehealth and in person. Includes Wi-Fi, copier, fax, staff kitchen, handicapped access. Convenient to route #'s: 40, 29, 32, 70 & 695. Contact [Dr. Mike Boyle](#) 410-206-6070 or 410-465-2500.



ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

for Psychiatrists at Sheppard Pratt

Applicants must be board certified or board eligible and have a current Maryland-issued license at the time of hire. Some positions require an on-call schedule.

Current openings include:

Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

Multiple Settings | Towson, MD

Psychiatrist

Inpatient Geriatric Unit | Towson, MD

Medical Director

CalvertHealth | Prince Frederick, MD

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- Cutting edge research and technology
- A generous compensation package with comprehensive benefits

For more information, please contact:

Emily Patrick, Director of Provider Recruitment at emily.patrick@sheppardpratt.org

About Sheppard Pratt

Consistently recognized as one of the top national psychiatric hospitals for more than 30 years, Sheppard Pratt is the nation's largest private, nonprofit provider of mental health, substance use, special education, developmental disability, and social services. We employ more than 95 doctors who all share a passion for providing the best care to those we serve. Visit sheppardpratt.org to learn more about our services. EOE.



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