

MPS NEWS

Volume 38, Number 10

Editor: Meagan Floyd

February 2025

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Deadline for articles is the 15th of the month preceding publication. Please email jhritz@mdpsych.org.
MPS News Design & Layout
Jora Hritz

The MPS Council will meet by videoconference on February 11 at 7:30 PM. All members welcome!

President's Column

Join Us for an Important Meeting: Strengthening Advocacy for Healthy Maryland Communities

Date: February 11, 2025
Time: 7:30 PM
Location: by Zoom

As mental health professionals dedicated to providing care to our community, it is essential that we come together to address the challenges and opportunities that may lie ahead in 2025. We invite you to join us for a [General Membership Council Meeting](#) on February 11 at 7:30 PM. This meeting will be a unique opportunity to hear directly from members of the organization about the priorities of the work of MPS. It is also a chance for you to voice your suggestions and concerns as we plan for the year ahead.

Why Your Voice Matters

This year, we're facing a range of challenges, and we need to be proactive in ensuring the integrity of mental health services in Maryland. As we navigate a quickly changing landscape of health and mental health policy and funding, it is critical that we remain proactive in the face of possible shifting government regulations and policies.

We know that some in our community may have questions and anxiety about the continuation of services and what may come from government actions. It's up to us to address these concerns head-on. We need to be facile in finding solutions and strong, informed advocates. Our goal is to foster trust and confidence, not only in the services we provide but also in the science behind our work.

[This meeting](#) is a crucial opportunity for us to come together and address these

concerns. By engaging with each other, sharing insights, and continuing our priorities in legislative advocacy we can continue to strengthen the goals of MPS.

What We'll Discuss

- **Organizational Updates:** Learn about the work of the council, committees, and efforts we are taking to support mental health care in our community
- **Open Dialogue:** Discuss ways we can actively advocate for policies that protect and promote community health and mental health care, while reassuring our community about the continuity and quality of services.

Don't miss this opportunity to be part of this critical conversation. We look forward to seeing you on [February 11 at 7:30 PM!](#)

Theodora Balis, M.D.
MPS President

Expand Your MPS Engagement

MPS Interest Groups: [Interest Groups](#) are a way to connect with other psychiatrists around areas of mutual interest. Most communication occurs over email, but other options are possible. MPS members can opt in indefinitely to receive information and the opportunity to share news, ideas and concerns with participating members. Be sure to check out our new Collaborative Care Model interest group! Email jhritz@mdpsych.org to join

Engage with Digital Options

To stay informed, visit the [MPS website](#) regularly and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X, formerly Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

Slate for 2025 MPS Election

President-Elect (1-year term)
Tyler C. Hightower, M.D., M.P.H.

Secretary-Treasurer (1-year term)
Michael Young, M.D.

Council (2-year term, 4 vacancies)
Kim Bright, M.D.
Mary Cutler, M.D.
Traci Speed, M.D.
Taylor Scott, M.D.
M. Haroon Burhanullah, M.D.
Sushma Jani, M.D.
Gulafsheen Quadri, M.D.
Stephanie Knight, M.D.

Resident-Fellow Member Councilor (1-year term)
Matthew Brandt, M.D.

ECP Councilor (2-year term)
Melissa Lavoie, M.D.

APA Assembly Representative (3-year term, 1 vacancy)
Adefolake Akinsanya, M.D.
Mark Komrad, M.D.

Nominations & Elections Committee
(3-year term, 2 vacancies)
Andrew Angelino, M.D.
Mark Ehrenreich, M.D.
Marsden McGuire, M.D., MBA
Carol Vidal, M.D., PhD, MPH

2025 MPS Dues Notices**Members who have not yet paid
2025 dues are at risk of being dropped
from both MPS and APA!**

Reminder: Payment Options for your MPS dues:

- Send your check to the MPS office (1211 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD 21201), which reduces our credit card processing costs.
- Pay via Zelle: 410-625-0232 which also helps to reduce credit card processing costs. (See QR code on this page.)
- 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!

Attention Sheppard Pratt Employees

If you are a Sheppard Pratt employee who is eligible to have your MPS and APA dues paid by your employer, please note the change in processing payment of your 2025 MPS and APA invoices. For 2025 employees must now submit dues payments to MPS directly and you will then be reimbursed by SHPS. Once you submit your payment for MPS dues please submit proof of payment receipt to [Lauren Hopper at SPHS via email](mailto:Lauren.Hopper@SPHS) and she will process your request.

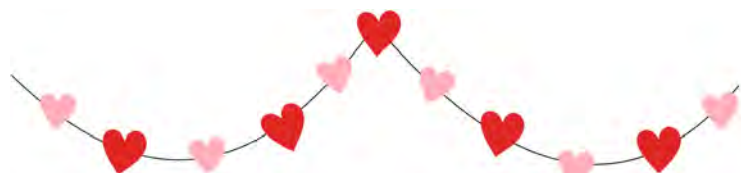
Thank You!

The following members paid additional MPS dues for 2025.
We appreciate your support of the Maryland Psychiatric Society!

Thomas E. Allen M.D.
Virginia L. Ashley M.D.
Joanna D. Brandt M.D.
Mark J. Ehrenreich, M.D.
Lisa S. Hovermale M.D.
Archana Leon-Guerrerom M.D.
Geetha Jayaram, M.D.
Jill Joyce M.D.
Jenima A. Kankam, M.D.
John William Kasckow M.D., Ph.D.
Jay A. Phillips M.D.
Miles S. Quaytman M.D.
Debbie Weaver, M.D.

MPS ADVOCACY DAY IN ANNAPOLIS

On February 4th from 8:30AM—1PM, we invite all MPS members to join us in Annapolis to meet with House and Senate leadership to discuss current and future legislation affecting psychiatry and mental health in Maryland. There are many new legislators this year! MPS lobbyists help with talking points and protocol. Contact Meagan Floyd (410-625-0232) or [email](mailto:meagan.floyd@mdpsych.org).



January 14 Council Minutes

Dr. Vidal noted the Council Minutes for the November meeting, the psychopharmacology CME report and the Executive Director's Report were included in the consent agenda. After a few moments of review, Dr. Vidal asked if there were any concerns or comments. Hearing none, the consent agenda was approved unanimously.

Support for Strategic Priorities

Dr. Vial provided an update on activities that support MPS Strategic Priorities. She reported that since November the MPS:

- Distributed information on APA Fellowships to RFM members
- Scheduled and advertised MPS Advocacy Day for 2/4/25
- Scheduled RFM trivia night for January
- Held legislative training meeting with WPS members
- Held November CME meeting
- Advertised MPS paper and poster contest to RFM and ECP members
- Planned ethics CME event for winter 2025
- Worked to nominate two residents for the Area 3 RFM award

Executive Committee Report

Dr. Balis presented the Executive Committee report. She reported that regarding member support, the MPS has published information regarding license renewals, Optum transition updates and more in recent editions of the MPS News. The Executive Committee met with Behavioral Health Administration officials and Meagan Floyd attended and reported back on the Behavioral Health Coalition's meeting with Alyssa Lord. The Executive Committee continues to monitor the unfolding situation at Perkins and sent an email to BHA letting outlining concerns and called for transparency when the report is finalized.

Regarding MPS efforts to unify the voice of psychiatry in Maryland, Dr. Balis noted members of the Executive Committee continue to schedule collaborative meetings with other Maryland stakeholders. In December the MPS signed onto an affordable housing support letter drafted by Health Care for the Homeless. The letter voiced support for preference given to permanent supportive housing (PSH) for households exiting homelessness. The MPS also signed onto a letter from NAMI Maryland in support of the removal of the fail first requirement, and endorsed a letter from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) supporting the mental health parity and addiction equity act (MHPAEA).

The Executive Committee is developing a new climate psychiatry interest group/committee, members will receive more details, including how to join later this month. She reminded Council that the MPS is hosting Advocacy Day in Annapolis on February 4th and encouraged them to attend. She concluded her report by stating that staff is working on closing out the year end accounting to prepare for the CPA review, fourth quarter financials, as well as the CPA's report will be presented at the Council meeting in March.

The February Council meeting will include a 45-minute open membership meeting from 7:30-8:45. This is a time for members to get updates from Committee Chairs, ask questions, etc.

Membership Committee Report

Ms. Floyd shared a request for dues relief that was submitted by a current member. After reviewing the request, Council agreed to approve the request, and recommends that APA does the same. Ms. Floyd will notify the member and APA of the Council's decision.

Nominations and Elections Report

Dr. Hackman presented the proposed 2025 election slate and asked for any additional nominations. Hearing none, Council closed the nominations and voted unanimously in favor of the proposal. Please see [page 2](#) for the election slate.

New Business

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the ongoing challenges of nurse practitioners taking jobs from Maryland psychiatrists. This continues to impact MPS members, and how they practice. Council discussed ways to help the public and legislators become more aware of the vast training differences between the two professions. One continued obstacle is the physician shortage that continues to impact not only the state of Maryland, but the entire US. Dr. Komrad shared the link to a recent article in an AARP publication about the physician shortage, and how it impacts patient care.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Council voted to adjourn at 8:25PM.

February General Membership Meeting: All MPS Members Welcome!

During the first 45 minutes of the February 11th MPS Council meeting (via Zoom) the MPS will hold a general membership meeting for members to get updates about MPS happenings, ask questions, connect with leadership and more. MPS Committee Chairs will provide an update about that work that their committee has done over the past year, and what they are working towards for 2025. We would love you to attend! You can send any questions, or comments prior to the meeting to Mfloyd@mdpsych.org – or join the meeting and ask your questions in person. Please see the meeting link below – Hope to see you February 11th!

MPS Membership & Council Meeting
Time: Feb 11, 2025 at 7:30 PM

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 419 237 9446
Passcode: MDPSYCH

Best Paper Award Deadline Extended: February 14

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 2024 Paper of the Year Award in three 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 2024. The winner will receive a **\$200** cash prize as well as a complimentary ticket to the MPS annual dinner in April 2025. Dinner ticket funding courtesy of the Maryland Foundation for Psychiatry.

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 2024. The winner will receive a **\$200** cash prize as well as a complimentary ticket to the MPS annual dinner in April 2025. Dinner ticket funding courtesy of the Maryland Foundation for Psychiatry.

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 2024. The winner will receive a **\$200** cash prize as well as a complimentary ticket to the MPS annual dinner in April 2025. Dinner ticket funding courtesy of the Maryland Foundation for Psychiatry.

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 **February 14**. 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*

NEW ECP WhatsApp Group

MPS has created a WhatsApp group, just for our Early-Career Psychiatrists (members within 7 years of completing training)! [Fill out this form to join](#) and, once approved, we will send an invite link for access to the group.

Purpose of the Group

- Peer Support: Provide a safe space for members to share experiences, challenges, and successes, and fostering camaraderie.
- Resource Sharing: Facilitate the exchange of valuable resources, including articles, tools, and strategies for clinical practice and professional development.
- Case Discussions: Create a platform for discussing clinical cases, ethical dilemmas, and treatment approaches, encouraging collaborative problem-solving and learning.
- Networking Opportunities: Build connections that may lead to collaborations, referrals, and job opportunities within the psychiatric community.

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.

New Member

Asjad Bashir, M.D.

Jerry Sayers, M.D.

Andris Lyann Dominicci Torres, M.D.

Elizabeth Gerber, M.D.

Liam Guenther, M.D.

Melissa Scott, D.O.

Reinstatement

Evaristus Nwulia, M.D.

Denise Richardson, M.D.

Kathleen Patchan, M.D.

Richard Haber, M.D.

Transfer Into Maryland

Rachel Talley, M.D.

Nina T Ballone, M.D.

Poster Contest for Residents & Fellows Deadline Extended: February 14

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 2025! 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. Dinner ticket funding courtesy of the Maryland Foundation for Psychiatry.

Winners in past years are listed [here](#). Please [click here](#) for complete details about the process and requirements. **The deadline to enter is February 14**. Electronic copies of posters are due **February 24**. For more information, or to apply [please click here](#).

Eating Disorders Awareness Week

February 26th through March 3rd is National Eating Disorders Awareness Week. The National Eating Disorder Association's (NEDA) goal is to educate the public about eating disorders, spread positivity and hope to those with an eating disorder, and provide treatment to individuals. This year they are asking you to **"Get in the Know"** and learn about eating disorders, get involved in raising awareness, and share information and resources. [Visit NEDA for more information.](#)

An MPS Ethics Committee CME:

Introduction to the Maryland Physician Health Program and Dual Agency Conundrums

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27 2025

FREE for MPS Members

2 CME Credits

7:00PM TO 9:00PM

Presentations from

Arthur Hildreth, MD | Margaret Ann Kroen, LCSW-C | Martin Rusinowitz, MD

at The Maryland Physician Health Program

&

Jeffrey Janofsky, MD on Dual Agency in Psychiatric Practice

Program Objectives:

Develop an awareness of programs available to assist physicians who have issues that affect their ability to practice medicine. Differentiate between voluntary and court-ordered programs.

Identify situations in which a psychiatrist serves two different roles with potentially conflicting interests.

Incorporate techniques to ethically manage psychiatric treatment with competing roles outside the doctor-patient relationship that might impact the relationship.

This Program is Sponsored by



Accreditation and Designation Statement

In support of improving patient care, this activity has been planned and implemented by American Psychiatric Association (APA) and The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS). APA is jointly accredited by the American Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

The APA designates this live activity for a maximum of 2 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Register Here

Maryland News

Moore-Miller Administration Proposes 2026 Budget

The Moore-Miller Administration released its FY 2026 budget last month which included an increased Medicaid rate for physicians. The budget represents an overall \$67.3 billion operating budget for the State of Maryland. In assembling the FY 2026 budget proposal, however, the Administration had to grapple with a \$3 billion budget deficit.

The State is constitutionally required to pass a balanced budget each year, so the full amount of the \$3 billion budget deficit must be addressed. The Administration's budget proposal is the start of the budget negotiation process and will next be considered by the Maryland General Assembly which can make further additions, cuts, and other changes. Therefore, the Administration's proposals may be significantly altered. The House of Delegates will first consider the budget this year, and the House version will then go to the Senate for further consideration.

MedChi is reviewing the Administration's budget proposal to identify any enhancements or reductions that may impact physicians and patients. We are pleased to report that the Administration's budget restores E&M payment rates to 100% of Medicare. The rates had been reduced to 98% of Medicare in mid-FY 2025.

Gene Ransom III MedChi CEO
MedChi News

ABA Authorization Request Requirements

Carelon is providing guidance for ABA authorization requests to help expedite approvals. **All** ABA requests require the [ABA Authorization Request Form](#) to be submitted.

Authorization requests for ABA initial assessments, first-time requests, initial treatments, and concurrent requests all require the following:

1. An ABA Authorization Request Form.
2. Diagnostic evaluation (CDE) for first time requests to Carelon Behavioral Health. This should be done by a qualified diagnostician (e.g., DO, MD, PsyD, License Clinical Psych or RNP), include the assessment results that led to the diagnosis of ASD, and the diagnostician's signature.
3. Recommendation, [referral](#), or prescription (Rx) for ABA participants six (6) months or younger.
4. The [Continuity of Care form](#) (CCF) provided if the participant is diagnosed before 3 years of age, and it has been more than two years since diagnosis.

In addition to all of the above, authorization requests for ABA initial treatment and concurrent treatment **also require** an [ABA treatment plan](#) using the provided template. All ABA forms and guides can be found on the [Carelon website](#).

BHSB Legislative Priorities

In January Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) hosted their annual legislative briefing to discuss the potential impact of shifting policy priorities and national politics on Maryland's public behavioral health care system and discuss their legislative priorities. For more on Maryland's policy landscape, please read [BHSB's 2024-2025 policy priorities](#) and their [2024 legislative scorecard](#).

PRMS New Year's Resolutions For Psychiatrists

PRMS' Risk Managers have once again composed a series of [New Year resolutions](#) for psychiatrists to consider throughout the year. These resolutions offer three key components of providing good clinical care: collecting information, communicating, and carefully documenting. We hope you find these tips useful as you navigate the year ahead!

CMS Approves Amendment to Maryland HealthChoice

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) approved an [amendment](#) to the "Maryland HealthChoice" section 1115 demonstration. Approval of this amendment provides the state authority to establish a reentry demonstration initiative. Under this initiative, the state will provide limited pre-release demonstration coverage to certain incarcerated individuals under Medicaid who have also been assessed and determined to have substance use disorder (SUD), are diagnosed with serious mental illness (SMI), or both, based on specific criteria, for up to 90 days prior to release from state managed prisons and jails. In addition, this approval allows the state to expand the existing Assistance in Community Integration Services (ACIS) pilot program by increasing the number of participant spaces within the program.

This demonstration is effective through December 31, 2026. This [amendment](#) and other administrative documents can be found on the [Medicaid.gov demonstration page](#).

Black History Month

During Black History Month - and all year - Mental Health America is highlighting Black and African American contributions to the mental health movement. Systemic racism in the mental health system and movement harms Black communities. [Click here](#) for a non-exhaustive list of Black and African American mental health resources.

Maryland News

Maryland Bills of Interest for MPS Members

The 446th session of the Maryland General Assembly convened in Annapolis on January 8 and will continue through April 7. As of the end of January, more than 1600 pieces of legislation have been filed. The MPS Legislative Committee has been hard at work since December (looking through pre-filed bills) screening bills, preparing testimony, etc. To date the committee has reviewed more than 50 bills. Several bills of interest are noted below.

Support:

[SB 509/HB 592: Prohibited Possession of Firearms - Assisted Outpatient Treatment Respondents](#): Prohibiting a person from possessing a regulated firearm, rifle, or shotgun if the person is currently a respondent subject to a court order to comply with certain assisted outpatient treatment; and requiring a court to promptly report certain information through a certain data portal if the court orders a person to comply with certain assisted outpatient treatment.

[SB 111/HB 382: Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Step Therapy, Fail-First Protocols, and Prior Authorization - Prescription to Treat Serious Mental Illness](#): Prohibiting the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and certain insurers, nonprofit health service plans, health maintenance organizations, and managed care organizations from applying a prior authorization requirement, step therapy protocol, or fail-first protocol for prescription drugs used to treat certain mental illnesses of certain insureds and enrollees.

[SB328/HB665: Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Annual Behavioral Health Wellness Visits - Coverage and Reimbursement](#): An annual behavioral health wellness visit (ABHWV) is an appointment with a medical professional to assess and promote overall well-being. The visit may include a discussion of symptoms, stressors, mood, sleep patterns, substance use, and current life circumstances. The mental health professional may also provide education, coping strategies, and resources to improve mental health and prevent future issues. During the visit, the provider will likely ask questions about the person's current emotional state, stress levels, and behavior patterns. This visit can help individuals identify potential mental health issues early on, allowing for prompt treatment and recovery.


[SB372/HB 869: Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2025](#): Repealing the limitation on the period during which the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and certain insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations are required to provide reimbursement for certain health care services provided through telehealth on a certain basis and at a certain rate; etc.

Oppose:

[SB 90/ HB 195 Criminal Procedure - Incompetency to Stand Trial Dismissal](#): Altering the time period after which a court is required to dismiss a certain charge against a defendant found incompetent to stand trial under certain circumstances; and requiring a court to provide a certain notice and provide an opportunity to be heard to the State's Attorney and a certain victim or victim's representative before dismissing a certain charge against a defendant found incompetent to stand trial.

[HB 312: Criminal Procedure - Incompetency to Stand Trial](#): This bill aims to alter the time period after which a court is required to dismiss a certain charge against a defendant found incompetent to stand trial under certain circumstances; and authorizing a victim or victim's representative to petition the court to extend the time for dismissal of certain charges against a defendant found incompetent to stand trial. An alleged (but not proven) victim could petition to keep misdemeanor charges for up to ten years, and it is problematic to have seriously mentally ill defendants sitting in jail while waiting for a hospital bed.

MEDCHI PHYSICIAN OF THE DAY
2025 MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION



Serve as MedChi Physician of the Day
in the Maryland State House's First Aid
Room in Annapolis during the 2025
Maryland Legislative Session

- Attend healthcare related hearings
- Meet with legislators
- Advocate for policy changes
- Nurse assists in first aid room

SCHEDULE

REGISTER 2025 Maryland General Assembly Session is held January 8 - April 7

Monday evenings 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Tuesdays to Friday 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Questions? Contact Hamida Mansaray at 410-878-9599 or by email at hmansaray@medchi.

Member Publications

Sarah Edwards, DO collaborated on an article in *The Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research* titled "[Patient-Level and Hospital Treatment-Level Characteristics Predicting Child Readmissions After Psychiatric Inpatient Treatment](#)," which explores the link between readmissions and different treatment characteristics.

Jimmy Potash, M.D., MPH, Fernando Goes, M.D., and Ray DePaulo, M.D. were authors on a recent paper titled "[Genomics yields biological and phenotypic insights into bipolar disorder](#)" published in *Nature*. They identified new genetic factors linked to bipolar disorder, revealing differences based on ancestry and subtype, and highlighting specific cell types involved in the disorder's biology.

Members Out & About

Ken Stoller, M.D. was on a *PBS News Hour* segment "[Opioid crisis renews focus on expanding access to methadone treatment](#)." He discussed how relying on a methadone prescription is not enough for people battling opioid addiction and that they benefit from the additional support that clinics often provide to address their social, medical, and mental health needs.

Member Shoutouts

Cynthia Lewis, M.D. was awarded the [Solomon Carter Fuller Award](#) which honors a Black citizen who has pioneered in an area that has significantly improved the quality of life for Black people. She will be presented with the award at the APA Annual Meeting in May during and will be giving a presentation on Maryland's passage of AOT and Advocacy. Congratulations on this honor!

Cynthia Lewis, M.D. was recognized with the Johns Hopkins [MLK Jr. Award for Community Service](#) for her work to establish an assisted outpatient treatment program in Maryland. Kudos to Dr. Lewis for this important work!

New 30-Year and 50-Year Members

Congratulations to the following members who reach 30 and 50 years of MPS/APA membership in 2025!

NEW 30-YEAR MEMBERS

Marcelo Batkis, M.D.	Sarah Iacobovici, M.D.
Laura Gaffney, M.D.	Carolien Poblete, M.D.

NEW 50-YEAR MEMEBRS

Jay Phillips, M.D.	Michael Spodak, M.D.
Jesse Hellman, M.D.	William Wimmer, M.D.
Jonathan Book, M.D.	David Pickar, M.D.
Bruce Regan, M.D.	Robert Kolodner, M.D.
Cecilia Schocket, M.D.	

CLIMATE CORNER

The Maryland General Assembly is in full swing. Below are two environmental bills that could yield important public health benefits.

When talking about environmental health, it is important to recognize that communities that have been politically, economically, and socially excluded typically bear the brunt of the environmental and health harms, whether that be [Cancer Alley](#) in Louisiana or [Curtis Bay](#) in Baltimore. Senator Lam has introduced [CHERISH Act](#) (Cumulative Harms to Environmental Restoration for Improving Shared Health) to address these environmental injustices. Currently, when the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) approves environmental permits, it only assesses the expected pollution from that company. Unfortunately, we know that structurally marginalized communities already have multiple polluters in their community, and adding a new polluter would increase the cumulative impact on that community. The [CHERISH Act](#) requires consideration of the [environmental justice score](#) of underserved and overburdened communities in new permit determinations. Ask your legislators to support this bill by filling out this quick [action alert](#).

Transportation is the largest contributor (by sector) to greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland and the United States, partly because of car-centric state and urban planning. Car-centric transit also takes a toll on the environment and human health, as described in a new [report](#) written by [Healthy Climate Maryland](#) and the Maryland Public Health Association. It emits multiple air pollutants (including carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide, volatile organic compounds, PM2.5, and microplastics) that cause respiratory and neuropsychiatric harm. It encourages urban sprawl, lessening green spaces, increasing urban heat islands, and limiting opportunities for safe outdoor recreation and physical activity. Thankfully, the Maryland General Assembly wants to address this problem via the [Climate and Transportation Alignment Act \(HB 84/ SB395\)](#), which would require state and regional transportation agencies to mitigate the climate impacts of highway expansion projects costing over \$10 million; mitigation efforts can include expanding public transit, increasing bike infrastructure, expanding broadband access, and placing jobs near communities and transit centers. This bill is inspired by successful legislation in Colorado and Minnesota. Show your support by filling out this [action alert](#)—it takes one minute.

In last month's [column](#), I wrote about the Bottle Bill. If you would like to support it and were unable to write your own email message, feel free to use this [action alert](#) from the Sierra Club—it takes one-minute. And as always, you can call or email your representatives [directly](#).

Finally, if you want to learn more about climate and health advocacy, there is an upcoming national [conference](#) in Arlington, VA March 1-4.

THE MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY

2025 Annual Meeting

Join us as we celebrate our MPS achievements made this past year!

SHERATON BALTIMORE NORTH HOTEL

APRIL 24, 2025

6:00PM until 9:00PM

Help us turn over the gavel to Ronald Means, M.D., incoming MPS President and welcome Tyler Hightower, M.D., MPH as the MPS President-Elect and Michael Young, M.D. as treasurer.

PURCHASE TICKETS HERE

General Member Tickets: \$80
Early Career Psychiatrist (ECP) Tickets: \$45
Resident-Fellow Tickets: \$35

APA News & Information

Join APA Speakers Bureau

To diversify and broaden the APA's bench of public-facing experts, it is seeking members who would like to join its Speaker's Bureau. In addition to traditional media requests, the APA has other opportunities available for members who are willing to share their expertise. Members of the Speaker's Bureau, as an internal influencer group, will also be asked to amplify APA's voice by promoting public education initiatives via blogs and social media, providing testimony and more. Please email [James Carty](mailto:James.Carty@apa.org) for more information.

APA Joins Coalition

APA has joined with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Physicians, and the American Osteopathic Association [to voice concern](#) over President Trump's recent executive order to withdraw the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO): "As leading medical organizations representing more than 600,000 physicians in the United States, we share the goal of safe, healthy, and disease-free patients and communities. Remaining part of the WHO is one way we can ensure our nation's success in achieving this goal for all the patients we care for."

Join the 2025 APA Advocacy Challenge

Want to engage in [friendly competition](#) with colleagues while working to advance the psychiatry profession and patient care? From now until **October 31**, every action you take from [APA's Advocacy](#) scorecard will be tracked. APA will highlight the top advocates from each Area in November, and the top three leaders overall will win sponsored attendance at the 2026 State Advocacy Conference. For questions, email advocacy@psych.org.

Apply for APA Fellowships

The [APA/APAF Fellowships](#) application is open through **March 17**. 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.

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.](#)

APA Early Bird Rates End February 12

Join the APA **May 17 through May 21** for sessions, courses, and more at this year's annual meeting in **Los Angeles**. [Register](#) ASAP for the lowest rates for the in-person experience.

Medicare Updates

CERT Educational Resources

New resources have been developed to assist providers in understanding, navigating and meeting CERT (Comprehensive Error Rate Testing) requirements.

- Read the [CERT Insider's Guide](#) to learn more about the CERT program and the improper payment rate calculation.
- Read the [Fast Facts: CERT documentation submission](#) for helpful information about additional documentation requests (ADRs) regarding the CERT program.

MIPS Reminders

Data Submission: 2024 Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) data is being accepted open through April 1. Be sure to sign in at the [Quality Payment Program site](#) to submit and review your 2024 data by the deadline.

2025 Eligibility: Check whether you're currently required to participate in MIPS by entering your 10-digit National Provider Identifier (NPI) into the [QPP Participation Status Tool](#). The participation threshold in 2025 remains:

- Bill more than \$90,000 a year for professional services under Medicare; AND
- Furnish services to more than 200 Medicare Part B beneficiaries; AND
- Provide more than 200 services under Medicare.

2025 Payments: Last year each participating clinician received a 2023 MIPS score that impacts their Medicare payment in 2025. A positive, neutral, or negative MIPS payment adjustment in 2025 applies if:

- Clinician type is included in MIPS;
- Enrolled in Medicare prior to January 1, 2023;
- **Were not** a Qualifying Alternative Payment Model (APM) Participant;
- Were a Partial Qualifying APM Participant that elected to participate in MIPS; **and**
- Met one of the following criteria:
 - Individually exceeded the low-volume threshold;
 - Practice exceeded the low-volume threshold at the group level and submitted group or APM data; or
 - Were part of an approved virtual group.

CLASSIFIEDS**OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE**

Ellicott City for Mental Health Practitioners seeking a professional and inviting space. Amenities: Wi-Fi, copier, fax, waiting rooms, staff kitchen, adequate parking, and handicapped access. Available Full/Part time with a comfortable and friendly atmosphere with Active in-office Listserv for referrals and consultations (40-50 current members). Easily accessible via routes 40, 29, 32, 70, and 695. Contact: Dr. Mike Boyle at 410-206-6070, psycmike@gmail.com for more details.

Office Space for Sublet \$1250 - available 5/1/25. Sunny with large windows in Class A Building. Available partly furnished or unfurnished. Dave Rich, LCSW-C drich@everydaydbt.com. 1122 Kenilworth Dr Towson - (410) 404-0021

Advertise Position Openings and Office Space with MPS!

The MPS offers timely ads in [MPS News](#) (includes online post), [The Maryland Psychiatrist](#) and the MPS [home page](#). [Click here](#) for ad rates. Please help MPS generate non-dues income by using MPS ads to connect with psychiatrists.

Psychiatrists with Immediate Patient Openings Available

The MPS maintains a list of members who can see new patients quickly. An *updated* "[MPS Members Actively Taking New Patients: Appointments Within 1-2 Weeks](#)" will appear on <https://mdpsych.org/> later this month. Please email mfloyd@mdpsych.org to be included (include name, patient types, insurances accepted, phone number/email, etc.) and/or consider referring patients to this resource. Patients can also try [Find a Psychiatrist](#), but the wait time may be longer.

Join the MPS Listserv

MPS members are encouraged to join the listserv to easily share information with colleagues. An email message sent to the listserv goes to all members who have joined. Posts can be questions, information, thought-provoking articles and more. To join the listserv, please go to: <http://groups.google.com/group/mpslist> or email mps@mdpsych.org. The listserv is open to members only so you will have to wait for membership approval and will be notified by email. If you have any trouble, please call or text the MPS office at 410-625-0232.

ANNOUNCING 2025 Package Options

Advertising with MPS is an effective way
to reach psychiatrists with your message



See which new MPS Package
option is best for you

Contact jhritz@mdpsych.org with any questions

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:

Service Chief for Emergency Psychiatry Services

GBMC - A Sheppard Pratt Partner | Towson, MD

Service Chief

Adult Autism and Intellectual Disability Unit | Towson, MD

Service Chief

The Center for Eating Disorders | Towson, MD

Scan QR code to
see all openings



At Sheppard Pratt, you will be surrounded by a network of the brightest minds in psychiatry led by a bold vision to change lives. We offer:

- Robust resources to develop your career
- Cutting edge research and technology
- A generous compensation package with comprehensive benefits

For more information, scan the QR code or contact Kathleen Hilzendeger, Director of Professional Services, khilzendeger@sheppardpratt.org or 443-465-6142.

About Sheppard Pratt

Consistently ranked as one of the top ten psychiatric hospitals by *U.S. News & World Report*, 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.*