

MPS NEWS

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Editor: Meagan Floyd

January 2025

In This Issue

Dues Notice	p. 2
Anti-Stigma Advocacy Award	p. 2
MPS Advocacy Day	p. 2
Ikwunga Wonodi Award	p. 3
MPS Paper and Poster Contest	p. 3
Trivia Night	p. 4
Maryland News	p. 5
Key General Assembly Dates	p. 5
Member Accomplishments	p. 7
Climate Corner	p. 7
APA News	p. 8
Dec APA BoT Highlights	p. 8
Medicare Updates	p. 10
AMA Addresses Medicare Cuts	p. 11
<u>In Every Issue</u>	
Membership	p. 7
Classifieds	p. 11

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

President's Column

A New Year's Message: Reflecting, Connecting, and Moving Forward Together

As we step into 2025, we are given a fresh opportunity for reflection, growth, and renewed commitment to the vital work we do at MPS and our professional work as psychiatrists. The beginning of a new year invites us to not only set personal resolutions but also to renew our collective purpose as an organization. The MPS is dedicated to supporting psychiatrists' needs for networking, CME, advocacy, and information. Our vision is to foster high quality, accessible, culturally humble comprehensive, effective, and patient-centered care for Maryland residents living with mental health and substance use conditions. Our mission is to advocate for all Maryland residents living with mental health and substance use disorders; ensure that historically disadvantaged and marginalized individuals have access to culturally respectful, comprehensive treatment; serve the professional needs of Maryland psychiatrists, including underrepresented and diverse voices within the psychiatric community; and collaborate with other professional, community, and government organizations to advocate for our patients' rights and interests. In this message, I would like to share some thoughts on how we can use the new year to reconnect with our values, extend our support to one another, and further our mission through both individual and collective actions.

As an organization, we are entering 2025 with a renewed focus on connection, advocacy, and engagement. We have ambitious plans to strengthen our partnerships with other medical and mental health organizations. Collaboration is crucial to advancing our mental health

initiatives, advocating for policy changes, and ensuring better outcomes for patients. In 2024, we reestablished our connection with NAMI and supported Resident education and important research being done in our community. The coming year, we aim to build more bridges with fellow healthcare organizations like the Baltimore City Medical Society, Med Chi, and others, establishing joint initiatives that promote interdisciplinary care and research. I encourage all members to actively participate in these collaborative efforts as we work toward a more integrated and supportive mental health system.

With the upcoming state legislative session, advocacy will be a major focus. Our organization has always been at the forefront of mental health advocacy, and this year will be no different. We will be mobilizing efforts to advocate for policies that improve access to care, address mental health disparities, ensure parity in reimbursement, and strengthen scope of practice that our voices are heard in legislative discussions. As members, we can contribute by staying informed, participating in advocacy events, and reaching out to our legislators to support initiatives that align with our mission.

Another powerful way we can start this year is by volunteering our time and expertise to those who need it most. As psychiatrists, we are uniquely positioned to offer guidance, support, and expertise not only in our clinical settings but also to other mental health professionals and in community outreach. As leaders and experts in psychiatric care, the MPS will redouble efforts to specifically invite other medical and mental health professionals to our CME events to provide high quality education for other professionals treating patients.

Continues on next page

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

Presidents Column Continued

Ideas for community involvement are always welcome, and I encourage everyone to share ways we can collectively give back and extend our expertise where it's needed most. Additionally, volunteering to serve on committees or task forces within our organization can help us stay engaged and have a broader impact.

Our profession, as rewarding as it is, can also be demanding and isolating at times. As we navigate the challenges of clinical practice, research, or teaching, it's important to remember that we are not alone in this work. The new year should be a time where we build stronger bonds among our colleagues. Let us also make a commitment to foster an environment where we can all share concerns and offer help without hesitation. Whether it's discussing clinical approaches, advocacy strategies, or organizational decisions, each of us brings unique insights that can help shape a more inclusive and forward-thinking collective. Let's make a commitment to listen actively, engage respectfully, and remain open to the possibilities that emerge when diverse voices are heard.

This year, we are also excited to announce new opportunities for engagement. We will be hosting a series of events, including our Membership Council meeting in February, where the entire membership is invited to attend a Council Meeting to hear about current work being done, discuss new initiatives, share ideas, and provide feedback. This is a fantastic opportunity to become more involved in shaping the direction of our organization. In addition, we are planning a family picnic this summer—an event designed not only for relaxation and fun but also for fostering camaraderie among members and their families. It's a chance to unwind, connect on a personal level, and celebrate the work we do in a more informal setting. I encourage you all to join us, bring your loved ones, and take part in this wonderful community-building event.

I look forward to working alongside each of you as we embrace these resolutions and continue the important work of psychiatry. Let's make this year one of growth, connection, and positive change.

Wishing you all a healthy, joyful, and fulfilling new year.

*Theodora Balis, M.D.
MPS President*

2025 MPS Dues Notices

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!

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, 2024 to January 9, 2025. 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 15, 2025**.

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

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](#).

Member Spotlight Submissions

Recently worked on an exciting research project, reached a milestone in your career, or have advice for younger psychiatrists? Submit a short article and photo [here](#) to showcase your experiences. We will share your responses on social media and in our newsletter. If you have any questions please call or text 410-625-0232.

Ikwunga Wonodi Award Application Deadline EXTENDED

The [Ikwunga Wonodi Social Justice and Health Equity in Psychiatry Award](#) is now open for application submissions. Announced in March 2024, the Wonodi Award will honor a Resident, Fellow, or Early-Career Psychiatrist who has demonstrated distinction in advocating for human rights and equity in psychiatric care. For more information on the award and application guidelines, [click here](#) or [visit the MPS website](#). The deadline to apply is December 15, 2024. A winner will be announced prior to the Annual Meeting in April 2025. Any questions can be directed to jhritz@mdpsych.org.

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.

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.

Best Paper Award: Apply Now!

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 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 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 MPS annual dinner in April 2025.

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. 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 2025.

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. 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 2025.

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 2025! 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](#).

Maryland Psychiatric Society

TRIVIA NIGHT

JANUARY 28, 2025

6:00PM TO 9:00PM

@HOMESLYCE PIZZA BAR-MT VERNON

Free for all Maryland Psychiatric Residents and Fellows



\$200

First Place Team



\$100

Second Place Team



\$50

Third Place Team



Register
Here

You may reserve up to 2 tickets

Maryland News

Optum E&M Rates Corrected

An error was identified in the posted [Substance Use Disorder Fee Schedule effective July 1, 2024](#), for dates of service July 1, 2024 – August 31, 2024. When the SUD fee schedule was updated with the 3% rate update for community-based providers for FY25, the 3% update was applied to the E&M rates for PT 50 in error. E&M rates are set by the Maryland Department of Health and changes are announced via transmittal. The error to the posted schedule has been corrected to the impacted E&M rates for PT50.

This updated fee schedule now reflects the correct, reduced E&M rates for dates of service July 1, 2024 – August 31, 2024, for the following service codes: 99202, 99203, 99204, 99205, 99211, 99212, 99213, 99214, and 99215.

Claims that were approved and paid at the incorrect rate will be reprocessed. This reprocessing will result in a retraction of the overpayment or could result in a negative balance to providers if there are insufficient claims to offset the reduction.

If you have questions about the information contained in this alert, please contact Optum Maryland customer service at 1-800-888-1965.

Carelon Behavioral Health Provider Registration Support

This is a reminder that effective January 1st the Administrative Services Organization (ASO) for the Maryland Public Behavioral Health System transitioned from Optum Maryland to Carelon Behavioral Health. Providers should have received their Carelon Provider IDs by email, fax or US postal service. If you are a provider and have yet to receive your Provider ID, please contact Carelon Behavioral Health Provider Relations Team at MDHtransitionsupport@carelon.com. If you have received your Provider ID, and are having issues registering through Carelon's Provider Digital Front Door (includes ProviderConnect and Availity Essentials), please contact Carelon Behavioral Health Provider Relations Team at: MDHtransitionsupport@carelon.com.

General Assembly to Convene

The Maryland General Assembly, including several newly elected legislators, will start the 90-day session on January 8, 2025 is expected to be busier than usual and the MPS Legislative Committee has already been working on bill drafts. As a member of the Behavioral Health Coalition, MPS is also involved with the Coalition's 2025 Behavioral Health Crisis Prevention Platform. More to follow in the coming months.

Carelon Overview Info Series

Carelon is hosting its first of three events in its "What's New?" informational series on Monday, January 6, from 2-3:30PM. This virtual forum will provide an overview of Carelon and its systems as the new Administrative Services Organization (ASO) for Maryland's Public Behavioral Health System (PBHS). The series aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the ASO's structure, functions, and impact on behavioral health in Maryland. It will also include a tour of the new Carelon website and an interactive question-and-answer (Q&A) session. Please [use this registration link](#) to sign up for the series. Providers can register for the entire series (all three sessions) or individual sessions as preferred. Each session will build upon the content of the previous session/s, so while attendance is not required at all three sessions, it is strongly recommended.

Questions: please email provider.relations.MD@carelon.com to contact the Carelon Behavioral Health Provider Relations Team.

Key General Assembly Dates

The Maryland General Assembly will convene at noon on January 11. Several key dates of interest include:

- January 15: Final date for Governor to introduce budget bill and capital budget bill
- February 3: Any Senate bills introduced after this date will be referred to the Senate Rules Committee
- February 7: Any House bills introduced after this date will be referred to the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee
- March 17: Opposite Chamber Bill Crossover Date - Each Chamber must send to other Chamber those bills it intends to pass favorably Opposite Chamber bills received after this date subject to referral to Rules Committees
- March 31: Budget bill to be passed by both Chambers
- April 7: Adjournment "Sine Die"

Curbside Conversations is a listing of MPS members with expertise in specific areas who facilitate informal chats with fellow members seeking information. These are not formal consultations but a collegial resource offered voluntarily to the MPS community. Contact information for experts is available to MPS **members only** via email to mps@mdpsych.org.

Maryland News

Maryland Extends Pause on New Addiction and Mental Health Licenses

The Maryland Department of Health announced at the end of December the pause on new licenses for certain types of addiction and mental health providers will continue for another six months as the state continues to investigate suspected Medicaid fraud, waste and abuse. The moratorium, [first announced in June](#), was originally set to expire at the end of 2024. The affected licenses are for psychiatric rehabilitation, partial hospitalization and intensive outpatient programs.

In December of 2024, a news article revealed that state officials failed to vet and audit addiction treatment operators properly, allowing for a flood of new programs, some of which used tactics officials described as unscrupulous and illegal. [The investigation](#) looked into PHA Healthcare, a government-funded addiction treatment program that provided little help to its patients and put them in free housing where many relapsed and overdosed.

Halting the issuance of new licenses is one step the state is taking to try to address problems in the field. The health department said in a December news release that it is also rewriting regulations, moving to a new vendor to process Medicaid payments, analyzing services which may be underutilized and exploring new services with lower costs.

Free PCSS-MOUD Half & Half MOUD Training

On Friday, January 10th, MACS for MOMS is hosting a PCSS-MOUD Half & Half Training. This course provides an overview of the FDA-approved medication buprenorphine prescribed for the treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD). The course trainer will conduct an overview of prevention, identification, and treatment of SUDs emphasizing OUD.

The 8-hour buprenorphine training is offered in a 'half and half' format: 4 hours of in-person training from 8AM to 12:15PM on January 10 followed by 4 hours of online training through the PCSS-MOUD portal that must be completed within 30 days of this course. **Completion of both components of this training fulfills the 8-hour substance use training required for DEA registrants and renewals as mandated in the MATE Act.** To register for this training, visit: <https://bit.ly/4eujMxG>

MACS for MOMs supports maternal health providers in addressing the needs of their pregnant and postpartum patients with substance use disorders (SUDs). MACS for MOMs is a statewide program that is free to all providers. For more information about MACS for MOMs, visit: www.macsformoms.org.

Gender and Racial Wage Gaps Persist for Maryland's Physicians

MedChi's latest physician salary survey indicates that pay gaps persist between male and female physicians in Maryland. Conducted by Berkeley Research Group's Healthcare Transactions & Strategy practice, on behalf of MedChi, the survey tracks compensation, benefits, and practice metrics of Maryland physicians with a new emphasis on measuring transparency in compensation structures. It benchmarks compensation among Maryland physicians by gender, age, ethnicity and practice status, and also examines how Maryland physicians' compensation has changed since the pandemic.

Despite overall improvements in compensation since 2021, racial and gender disparities still exist in salaries for Maryland physicians who identify as Black/African American. Gender-based compensation disparities between Maryland physicians have not changed much since 2020, when males earned 50% more than females. Today, males surveyed report earning 45% more than females on average.

MedChi's Gender Pay Equity Committee identified compensation transparency as a key element of pay equity and recommended that this year's survey include questions that aimed to measure the impact. Transparency within an organization can help close gender- or race-related gaps in compensation while potentially improving employee sentiment around whether their compensation is fair and reasonable. Maryland physicians at practices with compensation transparency, particularly during the hiring process, are more often paid higher salaries.

The full survey report can be accessed in the members-only section on our website. Additionally, you can watch an depth review of Physician Employment Trends here, where Gene Ranson and Matt Katz, MCK Health, review the most recent, available data [here](#).

*MedChi News
12.10.24*

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!

Engage with Digital Options

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

Member Shoutouts

Congratulations to **Renz Juaneza, M.D., Carmen López-Arvizu, M.D., Karen Swartz, M.D., Arman Taghizadeh, M.D.,** and **Michael Young, M.D.** for being named one of Baltimore Magazine's 2024 Top Doctors! See the [complete list of doctors here](#).

Paul Nestadt, M.D. was named an inaugural JHU Provost's Fellow for Public Engagement. The fellowship is meant to support him in communicating his research to a broader audience and expanding the impact of his work. Training provided to the 16 fellows chosen will include a two-day workshop by the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science.

From Cheers from the Chair

Congratulations to **Todd Peters, M.D.**, the Chief Medical Officer at Sheppard Pratt, for being recognized in Becker's Hospital Review as one of the "Chief Medical Officers to Know in 2025"! [Read more about Dr. Peters' work here](#).

Approved DFAPA and FAPA Members

The following MPS members have been announced as newly approved Fellows and Distinguished Fellows:

Distinguished Fellows

This status reflects exceptional abilities, talents, and contributions to the psychiatric profession.

Traci Speed, M.D., Ph.D.
Denis Antoine, M.D.
Constance Lacap, D.O.
Cynthia Lewis, M.D.

Fellows

Vittoria DeLucia, M.D.
Elizabeth Wise, M.D.
William Narrow, M.D., MPH
Jaskirit Gill, M.D.
Zhihong Guo, M.D.

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.

Reinstatement

Julie Newman-Toker, M.D.
Helen Bellete, M.D., M.P.H.
Lauren Evans, M.D.
Rebecca E Gauer, M.D.

Transfer Into Maryland

Radha Tara Nagireddy, M.D.

CLIMATE CORNER

I hope you had a peaceful end to 2024! 2025 ushers in a new legislative season at the Maryland General Assembly (1/8 to 4/7) and thus a new opportunity to make a difference at the state level. MPS will keep you updated about legislation explicitly related to mental health in Maryland. In this column, I will keep you updated about climate and environmental legislation that can have public mental health benefits.

Two bills that I highlighted in March's [column](#) did not pass last year, but they stand a very good chance of passing this year. If you agree that they are important, you can help ensure their passage by emailing or calling your legislators now to elicit their support. Your voice truly matters. To find contact information for your representatives, go to <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/members/district> and click "Lookup" to enter your address. I have provided a script for two bills below. When you message a representative in the House, reference the House Bill (HB) number. When messaging your Senator, reference the Senate Bill (SB) number.

Reclaim Renewable Energy Act: Dear Senator/ Representative: As a psychiatrist in your district, I support The Reclaim Renewable Energy Act [SB0010/HB0220](#). Currently, trash incineration is eligible for the same state subsidies as wind and solar under the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards (RPS), even though it produces more greenhouse gas emissions relative to other power sources and emits toxic air pollutants. Research shows that air pollution is associated with [slower cognitive processing speed and more externalizing behaviors in prenatally-exposed children](#) as well as a [higher incidence of dementia](#) in adults. Passing this bill will safeguard the brain health of our children and seniors by shifting tens of millions of dollars in state subsidies from incineration companies to truly clean energy sources like wind or solar.

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (AKA the Bottle Bill): Dear Senator/ Representative: As a psychiatrist and constituent in your district, I support the Bottle Bill (SB# pending, [HB0232](#)), which instates a beverage container reuse and recycling program that does not cost the State any money and that saves money for local municipalities through reducing litter and landfill. This reduction also has important environmental health benefits. Plastics pollution has been identified as a [potential threat](#) to our collective brain health. By reducing plastic bottle litter, we can reduce the amount of microplastics and related chemicals that end up in our waterways

If you want to learn more about these and other pending environmental bills, register for Maryland's virtual [Legislative Summit for Climate and Environment](#) 1/4-5 from 1-5pm.

Elizabeth Ryznar MD MSC
Elizabeth.Ryznar@SheppardPratt.org

APA News & Information

December APA Board of Trustees Meeting Highlights

The information below constitutes unofficial highlights of the meeting prepared by the Administration and is subject to change.

Report of the CEO and Medical Director: Dr. Marketa Wills, MD shared her written report highlighting the Administration's work for the past quarter (the report can be [found here](#)). In the update on the 2024 Board-approved strategic priorities, Dr. Wills emphasized two key areas where the Administration is making strong progress. The first is fostering a culture of trust, transparency, and cooperation within governance, the Assembly, APA Components, the membership, and staff, to strengthen the organization and the second focuses on enhancing sustainability through improved execution, budget and operational discipline, increased annual meeting sponsorships, and an internal policy library. Dr. Wills presented a new strategic reserve policy for approval that introduces two reserve funds. She concluded her report by sharing a timeline for the development of the strategic plan with an anticipated proposed draft for review and approval to the Board in December 2025.

Report of the Treasurer: Dr. Steve Koh, MD Treasurer, provided a financial report as of October 31, 2024. Three of the five key financial metrics met expectations for the year. The exception is that the total forecasted revenue of \$54.8M is \$1.2M below the full year budget of \$56M. This reflects the below-budget revenue for the annual meeting, which resulted in a shortfall of \$2.7M in revenue mainly due to lower sponsorship and exhibit sales.

2025 Budgets: The Board considered the 2025 budget in light of APA's experiences over the past two years and losses resulting from our Annual Meeting and the Mental Health Services Conference. The Board approved a 2025 APA budget that prioritizes supporting members and programming, while limiting expenditures on APA-sponsored in-person meetings through increased use of virtual solutions.

To that end, the Board will hold half of its meetings virtually and reduce the cost of the two in-person meetings significantly. In addition, the Assembly Executive Committee and Area Councils will meet virtually, and the cost of the November Assembly meeting will be substantially reduced. The Joint Reference Committee, Councils, and District Branch Executives will also meet virtually. While the Board recognized the benefits of in-person meetings, it also acknowledged that during the pandemic, the organization managed to conduct all its business virtually. The Board approved the 2025 budget with the proposed strategic initiatives and capital expenditures.

Mental Health Services Conference Transition: For more than a decade, APA has sustained substantial out-of-pocket

losses at the Mental Health Services Conference, in which a limited number of APA's members participate. Recognizing the immense value of our community psychiatrists and the dire need for the important work that they do, APA will continue to support education and fellowship among community psychiatrists and engage others in that work by transitioning the 2025 Mental Health Services Conference to a robust community psychiatry track at the 2025 Annual Meeting in Los Angeles.

Early Career Psychiatrist Work Group Update: Tanuja Gandhi, MD, FAPA, Chair of the Membership Committee and Early Career Psychiatrist (ECP) Work Group, presented a high-level review of strategic recommendations based on the three-pronged approach to improve ECP engagement. The prioritization and implementation phase of the initiative is slated to begin early 2025.

Vote in APA Elections

2025 APA national election voting began **January 2** and runs until **January 31**. Read candidate biographies and platform information, watch video messages from president-elect, treasurer, and trustee-at-large candidates, and download the 2025 Guide to the Candidates with detailed information at psychiatry.org/election. [Cast a ballot](#) or vote through the email link provided by APA during the week of January 2.

The APA Nominating Committee, chaired by Petros Levounis, M.D., M.A., reports the following slate of candidates (in alphabetical order) for the 2025 Election.

President-Elect

- [Rahn Bailey, M.D.](#)
- [Mark Rapaport, M.D.](#)
- [Harsh K. Trivedi, M.D., M.B.A.](#)

Secretary

- [Gabrielle Shapiro, M.D.](#)
- [Eric Williams, M.D.](#)

Minority/Underrepresented Representative (M/UR) Trustee

- [Mansoor Malik, M.D., M.B.A.](#)
- [Kamalika Roy, M.D., M.C.R.](#)

Area 3 Trustee

- [Kenneth Certa, M.D.](#)
- [Mandar Jadhav, M.D.](#)

Resident-Fellow Member Trustee-Elect (RFMTE)

- [Craig Perry, M.D.](#)
- [Tariq Salem, M.D.](#)

APA News & Information

APA 2024 Federal Advocacy Wins

In 2024 APA has worked closely with Congress, the White House, and Federal agencies to ensure access to care for persons with mental illness. Before leaving for their December recess congressional leaders proposed a healthcare package in addition to a resolution to keep the government open. While APA hoped for a much-needed end-of-the-year healthcare package, Congress did not bring it to the floor for a vote and instead passed a very limited short-term continuing resolution to keep Federal agencies operating with just a few other extensions. One of these extensions was the Medicare telehealth flexibilities that included delaying the 6-month in-person requirement until March 31.

Although Congress did not advance much healthcare legislation this year, APA noted some key regulatory advocacy successes in 2024 including:

- **Equal pay for tele health and in person care:** Care provided via telehealth will now be reimbursed by Medicare at the same rate as in-person care using existing evaluation and management codes for outpatient care.
- **Prescribing Controlled Substances via telehealth:** The Drug Enforcement Administration and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued a third extension of COVID-19 telehealth flexibilities for the prescribing of controlled substances, to be effective through December 31, 2025.
- **Supervision via telehealth:** The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services extended for another year the ability for residency training programs to supervise residents virtually when all parties are virtual.
- **Removal of Barriers to Clozapine:** The re-evaluation of the Clozapine REMS program, concluding in a vote of the FDA's advisory committees, to effectively remove barriers to access the highly effective medication.
- **Closing MHPAEA Loopholes:** The Department of Labor released its final rule, strengthening enforcement of the 2008 Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act by requiring insurers to provide data illustrating that their beneficiaries have access to mental health services.

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 Updates Practice Guidelines on the Treatment of BPD

The new guideline provides recommendations on evidence-based assessment, treatment planning, psychosocial interventions, and pharmacotherapy. The complete practice guideline and appendices are available [free online](#) or for [purchase in print](#). Additional educational resources such as training slides, clinician and patient/family guides, and case vignettes will be available to practitioners and the public soon. [READ THE GUIDELINE](#)

Apply for 2024-25 APA Fellowships

The [APA/APAF Fellowships](#) application is open through March 17, 2025. 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

Area 3 Award Nominations Now Open

[William W. "Bill" Richards Rural Psychiatry Award:](#) Recognizes individuals who have made exemplary contributions to the treatment of patients and the practice of psychiatry in rural and/or remote geographic areas. Send recommendations and documents to Dr. Randall Gurak at rgurak@aol.com

[Please click here](#) to view a list of all APA award opportunities.



Medicare Updates

Check Your MIPS Eligibility

Your eligibility status may have changed, so please use the [QPP Participation Status Tool](#) to confirm your final 2024 Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) eligibility. The look up tool also identifies clinicians who qualify for reweighting under the automatic Extreme and Uncontrollable Circumstances policy, as outlined in the [2024 MIPS Automatic EUC Policy Fact Sheet](#).

The tool also includes the initial 2025 eligibility status for MIPS based on these thresholds:

1. Bill more than \$90,000 a year in allowable charges for covered professional services under Medicare; **AND**
2. Furnish covered professional services to more than 200 Medicare Part B beneficiaries; **AND**
3. Provide more than 200 covered professional services.

2024 MIPS Data Submissions

The CMS data submission period for 2024 Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) eligible clinicians begins January 2. Data can be submitted and updated through 8:00 PM on April 1. **Note:** Clinicians who are unsure about their eligibility to participate in MIPS for 2024 can check their final status using the [QPP Participation Status Tool](#). Clinicians and groups that are opt-in eligible will need to make an election to opt-in or voluntarily report before they can submit data. (No election is required for those who don't want to participate in MIPS.)

To Submit 2024 MIPS Data:

- Go to the [Quality Payment Program sign in page](#).
- Sign in using your QPP access credentials.
- Submit your 2024 MIPS data or review the data reported on your behalf by a third party. **(You can't correct errors after April 1, so be sure the data submitted is accurate.)**

Submission resources will be posted to the Resource Library in January.

Opioid Treatment Programs: 2025 Updates

CMS updated Opioid Treatment Program information has been updated for 2025, including:

- [What's new](#)
- [Payment rates](#)
- [Locality rates](#)

2025 HPSA Bonus Payment

Please see the following links for details and ZIP codes designated in 2025 as Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) that are eligible for a Medicare Physician Bonus:

- Go to [Physician Bonuses](#)
- Review the [Health Professional Shortage Area Physician Bonus Program](#) fact sheet
- Use the [Medicare Physician Bonus Payment Eligibility Analyzer](#)

See the CMS [instruction to Medicare Administrative Contractors](#) for additional information.

Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule Summary

For Behavioral Health Services For CY 2025, CMS is [finalizing actions](#) to support access to behavioral health, in line with their Behavioral Health Strategy:

- Separate coding and payment under the PFS describing safety planning interventions for patients in crisis, such as those with suicidal ideation or at risk of suicide or overdose, including:
 - *HCPCS code G0560, for safety planning interventions performed by the billing provider in a variety of settings, billed in 20-minute increments
 - *Monthly billing code, HCPCS code G0544, when you use specific protocols to provide postdischarge follow-up contact with a patient discharged from the emergency department for a crisis encounter, billed as a bundled service describing 4 calls in a month
- 3 new HCPCS codes (G0552, G0553, and G0554) for approved digital mental health treatment devices provided incident to professional behavioral health services used with ongoing behavioral health treatment under a plan of care.
- 6 new HCPCS codes (G0546–G0551) for interprofessional consultation by practitioners in specialties that mirror current interprofessional consultation CPT codes used by practitioners who are eligible to bill E/M visits.

2025 Medicare Fee Schedules Available

Novitas announced the [2025 Medicare physician fee schedule](#) is available for download in PDF, Excel and TXT formats in their [online tool](#). Individual code lookups were available beginning January 1, 2025.

Medicare Updates

Qualified Clinical Data Registries

[Qualified Clinical Data Registries](#) (QCDR) and [Qualified Registries](#) Qualified Postings approved for 2025 are now available in the [Quality Payment Program \(QPP\) Resource Library](#). The qualified postings assist clinicians with selecting a QCDR or Qualified Registry that will collect and report clinical data to the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) program on their behalf. The qualified postings provide the names of approved QCDRs and Qualified Registries, including the applicable QCDR measures and MIPS quality measures, Promoting Interoperability measures and objectives, improvement activities and MIPS Value Pathways (MVPs) that they are approved to support.

AMA Issues Statement Regarding Medicare Cuts

At the end of December, Congress adjourned, leaving in place a 2.83 percent cut for doctors. It did not provide a rational permanent, inflation-based update as the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission recommended. With this new cut going into effect next year, Medicare payment rates have fallen by 33 percent over the past two decades, when adjusted for the costs of running a practice, leaving physicians struggling to figure out how they can continue to provide needed care to their elderly and chronically ill patients.

Congress also inexplicably missed an opportunity to improve patient care by refusing to include prior authorization reform in the final package – a reform with vast bipartisan support in both chambers. Leaving it on the cutting room floor is an unnecessary gift to the insurance industry at the expense of our patients. Physicians have unique training and expertise when prescribing appropriate care, and don't need insurance companies to delay and interfere with patients' vital treatments.

With another cut almost certain to take effect, Congress must enact meaningful long-term reforms. The American Medical Association has put forward many [substantive solutions](#) and is eager to work with the new Congress and administration.

Bruce A. Scott, M.D., President
American Medical Association

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.

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.

Are You Still Depressed?



NIH National Institute of Mental Health



JOIN A STUDY

Protocol #001602
Carlos A. Zarate, M.D.,
Principal Investigator

NIH Research Study Opportunity! If you have been treated for depression and still feel depressed, you may be eligible for this 12- to 14-weeks inpatient research study testing the effectiveness of an investigational new drug, HNK, which comes from ketamine.

If you are currently depressed even after trying antidepressants, are ages 18 to 70 years old, and otherwise healthy you may be eligible to participate. The inpatient study includes psychological and cognitive tests, IV medication, and brain scans. Some participants may have the option to complete parts of the study as an outpatient.

No cost to participate, health insurance is not needed. The study takes place at the NIH Clinical Center in Bethesda, MD. We help make travel arrangements and pay for travel costs (arrangements vary by distance and circumstance).

1-877-646-3644

(1-877-MIND-NIH) TTY: 711
moodresearch@mail.nih.gov



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:

Medical Director, Emergency Psychiatry Services

GBMC - A Sheppard Pratt Partner | Towson, MD

Service Chief

Child and Adolescent Day Hospital | Elkridge, MD

Medical Director of Psychiatry, Calvert Health

Calvert Health - A Sheppard Pratt Partner | Prince Frederick, 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, please contact:

Emily Patrick, Director of Provider Recruitment, epatrick@sheppardpratt.org.

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*.