

# MPS NEWS

Volume 39, Number 8

Editor: Meagan Floyd

December 2025

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

## President's Column

### The Powerhouse Duo of MPS and Their Perspective on the Direction of the Organization

For the month of December, I decided to take time to highlight the work of our administrative team by interviewing our Executive Director, Meagan Floyd and our Membership, Meetings, and Publications Coordinator, Jora Hritz. The goal in doing so was two-fold. First and foremost, I wanted to ensure that the entire membership had the chance to hear from the two individuals that do the vast majority of the work to keep MPS running. Secondly, I wanted to hear their perspective when discussing topics that affect the future direction of MPS.

In my conversation with Meagan, we reflected on the history of MPS. Meagan has been with the organization for 23 years and offers a unique perspective on how the organization has changed. In particular, we discussed the current challenge of representing and attending to all members while also advocating for the practice of psychiatry and the needs of our most vulnerable patient groups. As noted in the recent addition of [The Maryland Psychiatrist](#), the APA is choosing to strike a balance in the current political climate by advocating for scientific fidelity but avoiding being an activist for broad social causes. This approach has received mixed reviews.

With Jora recently achieving her two-year anniversary with the organization, she was able to offer insight into managing competing demands when organizing meetings. Engaging early career members remains a challenge. Also, the post-pandemic struggle between in-person versus virtual meetings remains a dilemma.

As she noted, although many members request in-person, social engagement, virtual educational meetings for CMEs continue to be the most highly attended and least expensive to coordinate.

I welcome you to view our [monthly video interview](#) featuring both women. When thinking about what members want from the organization, the information that they offer might help manage expectations or inspire unique approaches in the future. Most importantly, I hope to demonstrate how hard they both work to support our organization. Their efforts will be front and center during the large, in-person CME that will be held on January 28, 2026 entitled the [2026 State of Psychiatry in Maryland](#). When you see them there, feel free to take a moment to say thank you.

If you ever have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, they are always happy to work with you to make the most out of your MPS membership and can be reached at [mfloyd@mdpsych.org](mailto:mfloyd@mdpsych.org) or at [jhritz@mdpsych.org](mailto:jhritz@mdpsych.org).

*Ronald Means, MD  
MPS President*

**The MPS Council  
will meet via Zoom on  
January 13 at 7:30 PM.  
All members welcome!**



## 2026 MPS Dues Notices

The 2026 MPS dues invoices were emailed the first week of October and have been sent via USPS.

To pay 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](http://www.mdpsych.org) (Select "Contact" and scroll to the "Pay Now" button).

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

## Ikwunga Wonodi Award Application Now Open!

The [Ikwunga Wonodi Social Justice and Health Equity in Psychiatry Award](#) is now open for application submissions. The Wonodi Award honors a Resident, Fellow, or Early-Career Psychiatrist who has demonstrated distinction in advocating for human rights and equity in psychiatric care for people with severe mental illness from historically marginalized and underserved communities through teaching, research, clinical work, and/or public health advocacy. For more information on the award and application guidelines, [click here](#) or [visit the MPS website](#). The deadline to apply is February 12, 2026. A winner will be announced prior to the Annual Meeting in April 2026. Any questions can be directed to [jhriz@mdpsych.org](mailto:jhriz@mdpsych.org).

## 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 2026! 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 January 31.** Electronic copies of posters are due **February 10.**

## 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 2025 Paper of the Year Award in three categories:

**Best Paper by an Early Career Psychiatrist Member (ECP):**

**Best Paper by a Resident-Fellow Member (RFM):**

**Best Paper by a Medical Student Member (MSM):**

Eligible psychiatrists are ECP, RFM, and MSM members who are first authors of papers published or in press in 2025. The winners of each category will receive a **\$200 cash prize** as well as a complimentary ticket to the MPS annual dinner in April 2026. 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 **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](mailto:mpeter42@jhmi.edu)

Traci Speed, M.D., Ph.D. [speed@jhmi.edu](mailto:speed@jhmi.edu)

Academic Psychiatry Committee Co-Chairs

## 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](mailto:mfp@mdpsych.org) by **January 9, 2026.**

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

## November MPS Council Meeting Highlights

Consent Agenda

Dr. Balis noted the Council Minutes for the September meeting, MPS Committee Chair meeting minutes, Climate CME report, APA Board of Trustees report and summary of actions and the November Executive Director's report. She reminded members with any outstanding disclosure forms to please complete them as soon as possible.

Support for Strategic Priorities

Dr. Balis provided an update on activities that support MPS Strategic Priorities. She reported that since September:

- Solicited support for November CME meeting
- Shared WPS meeting notices with MPS members
- Advertised MPS paper and poster contest to RFM and ECP members
- Distributed information on APA Fellowships to RFM members
- Began planning RFM trivia night for 2026
- Began planning collaborative in-person CME event for winter 2026

Executive Committee Report

Dr. Means presented the Executive Committee report. He reported that since the last Council meeting the MPS Published information regarding license renewals, Caelon update, Medicaid information due to government shut down and more in the MPS News. He noted that staff were working to schedule a meeting with Behavioral Health Administration representatives before the end of the year. MPS continues to share meeting and other information from allied organizations to MPS members in an effort to enhance collaboration. He noted that the annual October MPS Committee Chairs Meeting was held in person and Ms. Floyd is working to schedule the LAC 2026 kick off meeting for early December, and MPS will be hosting Advocacy Day in Annapolis in early 2026. Dr. Means concluded by noting that Jora celebrated her two-year anniversary with the MPS on November 1<sup>st</sup>! She is a great asset to the MPS, and we are lucky to have her!

Nominations & Elections Committee Report

Dr. Hackman presented the proposed 2026 election slate and asked for any additional nominations. Hearing none, Council closed the nominations and voted unanimously in favor of the proposal. Dr. Hackman then requested nominations from Council for the APA Assembly Rep and Nominations & Elections Committee vacancies, and noted some possibilities identified already. Due to an unexpected, last-minute candidate reconsideration the day of Council, the Nominations and Elections Committee did not identify an unopposed candidate to run for APA Assembly Representative. After discussion and a nomination from a Council member, two MPS members will run opposed for the one, open slot. One candidate's name will be removed from the list of Council nominations as they will be running for an Assembly position, and the Nominations and Elections Committee will work to identify an additional candidate. Council agreed to postpone the vote on the approval of the slate until more information can be gathered regarding changes that will need to be made. Ms. Floyd agreed to work with the Nominations and Election Committee to investigate this unique situation and provide a

complete slate for January's meeting.

MedChi Delegate's Report

Dr. Oviedo reported that the MedChi annual meeting began with a presentation titled "Good Nutrition, Good Health, and How to Get There: The Road to Better Preventative Medicine Health." Dr. Padmini Ranasinghe delivered the Report of the President highlighting the work that is being done in the area of AI in medicine. She encouraged physician participation in the development of AI so that we can shape it in a way that benefits doctors and patients. Mr. Gene Ransom delivered the Report of the CEO. He highlighted achievements of the past year, including implementing Maryland's new non-complete law impacting physician contracts. Finally, Eric Wargotz, MD was inaugurated as the 178<sup>th</sup> MedChi President.

Before the lunch break a few resolutions were reviewed, including Resolution 22-25 – Better Coordination for Medicaid Behavioral Health Services, which was adopted. This resolution supports a more coordinated, integrated behavioral healthcare model than that currently provided by the behavioral health carve-out for patients covered by the Maryland Medical Assistance Program. In an unexpected turn of events, upon returning from lunch we no longer had a quorum (50) to proceed with business as some members left the meeting. The remaining resolutions (approximately 25) had to be tabled and will be voted on at the Spring 2026 MedChi HOD meeting. There were three tabled resolutions pertaining to mental health on topics including childhood trauma, access to smoking cessation programs, and screening for tardive dyskinesia.

Old Business

The Maryland Foundation for Psychiatry re-presented the name for an appointment to their current Board of Directors. After much consideration and discussion, the nominee was not approved. Dr. Komrad will relay Council's discussion and decision to the Foundation Board members.

MPS Signs Onto Preauthorization  
Comment Letter

The MPS, along with 14 other organizations [signed onto a letter](#) which submitted comments on the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) informal draft amendments to the preauthorization regulations, COMAR 10.25.17. Suggested changes included:

- Recommendation 1: Amend the definition of "internal coverage criteria" to align with Chapter 848 (Senate Bill 791).
- Recommendation 2: Explicitly identify in regulations the appropriate coverage criteria for MH and SUD benefits.
- Recommendation 3: Establish Clearer Policy Guardrails for the Use of Preauthorization, Concurrent Authorization, Step Therapy, and Quantity Limits, Consistent with Medicare Regulations

[Please click here](#) to read the letter in its entirety.

# 2026 State of Psychiatry in Maryland

**January 28, 2026** 6:00PM UNTIL 9:00PM

PANEL DISCUSSION FROM 7:00PM - 8:30PM LED BY MPS PRESIDENT, RONALD MEANS, MD

@ THE CONFERENCE CENTER AT SHEPPARD PRATT

**2 CME  
Credits**



**Rishi Gautam, MD**

Chair of Psychiatry,  
LifeBridge Health



**James Potash, MD, MPH**

Psychiatrist-in-Chief,  
Johns Hopkins Medicine



**Jill RachBeisel, MD**

Dept. of Psychiatry Chair,  
University of Maryland  
School of Medicine



**Elias Shaya, MD, DLFAPA**

Regional Medical Director,  
Behavioral Health -  
MedStar North



**Harsh K. Trivedi, MD, MBA**

President and CEO,  
Sheppard Pratt

Learn from some of the leading behavioral health experts in the state of Maryland who will address challenges and successes with delivery of behavioral health services in the current financial and political environment.

**\$20 Entry Fee**

**All Residents and Fellows can attend for free**

*LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED*

**REGISTER HERE**

Contact: [jhritz@mdpsych.org](mailto:jhritz@mdpsych.org)

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.

MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY

# TRIVIA NIGHT

**FOOD**

MARCH 3, 2026  
6:00PM - 9:00PM  
@HOMESLICE MT VERNON

FREE FOR ALL MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC  
RESIDENTS AND FELLOWS

**CASH  
PRIZES**

**\$200**

1<sup>st</sup> Place  
Team

**\$100**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place  
Team

**\$50**

3<sup>rd</sup> Place  
Team

**OPEN  
BAR**

**REGISTER HERE**

YOU MAY RESERVE UP TO 2 TICKETS

## Maryland News

### October 25th, 2025, MedChi House of Delegates (HOD) Highlights

The MedChi annual meeting began with a presentation titled "Good Nutrition, Good Health, and How to Get There: The Road to Better Preventative Medicine Health." Dr. Padmini Ranasinghe delivered the Report of the President highlighting the work that is being done in the area of AI in medicine. She encouraged physician participation in the development of AI so that we can shape it in a way that benefits doctors and patients. Mr. Gene Ransom delivered the Report of the CEO. He highlighted achievements of the past year, including implementing Maryland's new non-complete law impacting physician contracts. Finally, Eric Wargotz, MD was inaugurated as the 178<sup>th</sup> MedChi President.

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*Enrique Oviedo, M.D.  
MedChi Delegate*

### BHA Assisted Outpatient Treatment Comments Requested

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) is seeking informal public comment on [draft Assisted Outpatient Treatment regulations](#) ahead of the July 1, 2026 implementation date. There are public meetings to review the regulations on December 10th, 2025, 11.30a.m. - 1.00p.m. Please [register for either meeting using this link](#). MDH welcomes informal public comments on the proposed regulations. **Comments will be accepted through December 31st 2025;** please [use this link to submit written comments](#).

### New AHEAD Model

Last month, Maryland officially signed the updated amendment to the AHEAD State Agreement with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), marking a major milestone for Maryland's long-standing, nation-leading value-based health care model. For more than a decade, Maryland's global budget and all-payer system has been the method to pay Maryland hospitals. The updated agreement ensures this model continues with major changes. The new AHEAD model sets ambitious statewide goals for decelerating healthcare spending, increasing investment in primary care, and improving population health. The agreement reflects months of detailed negotiations with CMS and strong engagement from Maryland's hospitals, payers, physicians, and other health system partners.

At a high level, the final agreement includes:

- Stability in the early years: only modest adjustments in 2026 and 2027, with CMS's new global budget methodology beginning in 202
- EQIP extended in perpetuity: A major win for physicians and the stat
- Protection of Maryland's global budget system: CMS and Maryland reaffirm the all-payer model and commit to a smoother, phased transition to the updated CMS global budget framework
- Greater flexibility on choice and competition requirements, including extended implementation timelines
- Alignment with Medicaid: creating a pathway for Medicaid rates to track with Medicare global budget rates as federal rulemaking progresses
- Lower threshold for services under global budgets: reduced from 90% to 85%, while retaining the ability for Maryland to set Maryland-specific rates for certain carved-out services

Governor Moore has established a state regulatory working group to coordinate and resolve these issues, with a final set of recommendations due in June 2026.

Gene Ransom, III

### Annual ORF Report

As you will see in the report, Maryland has made \$34,162,060.84 in [Opioid Restitution Fund](#) expenditures at the state and local level through the previous fiscal year (FY 2025). Additionally, \$56,717,392 was allocated for future spending at the state level. A summary of this information can also be found on the [Settlement Overview](#) and [Use of ORF Funds](#) pages on the website.

# Maryland News

## ORF Settlement Dashboard Coming Soon

MOOR (Maryland's Office of Overdose Response) is collaborating with partners at the Maryland Department of Health to develop a new dashboard, which will illustrate how prescription opioid settlement funds are being used in Maryland. The dashboard will be made available in the near future and will be hosted at [StopOverdose.maryland.gov](http://StopOverdose.maryland.gov).

## MHAMD 2026 Legislative Briefing and Reception

Join Mental Health Association of Maryland in Annapolis on February 16<sup>th</sup> (President's Day) for a moderated conversation with world-renowned presidential historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Doris Kearns Goodwin! In these challenging and uncertain times, Ms. Goodwin will bring a historian's perspective to a conversation about how we can work together to improve our collective well-being. Join us as we look back at pivotal times in our nation's history, examine the leaders who have navigated us through rocky waters, and consider how government and the public can align to move our state and country forward. [MHAMD's annual Legislative Briefing and Reception](#) brings together hundreds of legislators, behavioral health professionals, business and nonprofit leaders, advocates, and concerned citizens to learn about the most important public policy issues impacting mental health in Maryland and the actions necessary to drive meaningful change.

## Maryland Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee Seeking Physician Members

The Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee is seeking a licensed physician to join as a committee member. The terms are 3 years and more information about P&T can be found at this [link](#). If you have any members who may be interested in joining please share their information with [Michelle Morningred](#) from the Office of Appointments and Executive Nominations.

## 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](mailto: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.

## Free CME Opportunity

Open Dialogue: A Novel Approach to Care for Early Psychosis and Other Crises

Tuesday, December 16, 2025, 10AM – 2:30PM

Bon Secours Conference & Retreat Center, Marriottsville, MD 21104

Join fellow behavioral health professionals for a conversation with Dr. Mary Olson, Founding Director of the Institute for Dialogic Practice. Pioneered in Finland in the 1990s, the **Open Dialogue model has been shown to dramatically reduce incidence of long-term disability**. Open Dialogue is not a treatment model, but rather an approach to care across mental health service delivery. Dr. Olson leads the first center in the U.S. providing world class training in this SAMHSA-recognized model. She will share practical pathways to embed elements of Open Dialogue within existing systems of care, lessons learned from implementations in the States, and recommendations for an incremental approach that builds upon the realities and strengths of service delivery in the U.S.

This program is offered in partnership with On Our Own of Maryland and the Maryland Department of Health's Behavioral Health Administration. **Space is limited and there is no cost to attend.** [Register now to reserve your spot.](#)

## MHCC Report: Pharmacogenomic Testing

During the 2025 legislative session, Senate Bill 961—Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance—Pharmacogenomic Testing—Required Coverage was introduced. While it did not pass, the Senate Finance Committee sent a letter to the Maryland Health Care Commission asking them to study the issue and the impact of this mandated benefit, and that information is noted below. The MHCC voted to accept the report with no discussion.

- [Report](#)
- [Slide deck](#)

# APA News & Information

## APA Advocacy Update

The last few months have seen significant movement across a broad array of issues. Learn more by reading the full [2025 Advocacy Update](#).

**APA's 2025 Federal Advocacy Conference:** On October 7, 164 psychiatrists attended the APA's Federal Advocacy Conference in Washington, D.C., where they held nearly 200 congressional meetings representing 46 states and the District of Columbia. [Click here to read more.](#)

**APA Opposes Changes to Exchange Visitor Visas:** APA sent a letter to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Noem on September 29 requesting the administration to exclude physicians from any changes to the exchange visitor visa proposed rules. [Click here to read more.](#)

**APA & AMA Urge Physician Exemption to H-1B Visa Changes:** APA joined more than 50 medical organizations in a letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) urging a physician exemption to the recent White House proclamation entitled "Restriction on Entry of Nonimmigrant Workers." [Click here to read more.](#)

**Congress Passes SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act :** On September 18, the Senate passed the *SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act*. [Click here to read more.](#)

**House Passes VA Telemedicine Bill:** On September 15, the House passed the Protecting Veteran Access to Telemedicine Services Act of 2025 (H.R.1107) led by Representatives Steve Womack (R-AR), Sanford Bishop (D-GA), Ken Calvert (R-CA), Don Davis (D-NC), Joe Neguse (D-CO), David Valadao (R-CA), Jen Kiggans (R-VA), Rob Wittman (R-VA), and Hal Rogers (R-KY). [Click here to read more.](#)

**APA Leads MHLG Letter for Extension of Telehealth Flexibilities:** APA led a letter with the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), urging Congressional leadership to extend Medicare telehealth flexibilities for at least 2 years. [Click here to read more.](#)

**APA Urges Extension of Enhanced Premium Tax Credits:** APA has urged Congress, joining [AMA](#) and [MHLG](#) letters, to pass an extension of the enhanced premium tax credits and protect access to affordable, quality health care. [Click here to read more.](#)

**APA Supports Barriers to Suicide Act:** APA endorsed the *Barriers to Suicide Act (H.R. 3505)* introduced by Representatives Don Beyer (D-VA) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA). [Click here to read more.](#)

**APA Endorses House Mental Health Emergency Package:** APA endorsed a comprehensive Mental Health Emergency Package introduced by Representatives Yassamin Ansari (AZ-03) and Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ-12) on World Mental Health Day. [Click here to read more.](#)

## 2025-2026 APA Foundation PASS Ambassador

The APA Foundation's (APAF) **Psychiatry Ambassadors and Student Scholarships (PASS) Program** provides funding opportunities for APA residents and medical student members to attend the APA Annual Meeting.

Please visit the Ambassador program [website](#) for more information. The deadline to apply is **December 1, 2025**. The application link is [here](#).

## For ECP and RFM Members

### ECP Caucus

The newly launched [RFM/ECP Caucus](#) continues to grow, now engaging more than 500 members and counting. This month, we're excited to kick off a social media campaign to raise awareness and welcome even more resident and fellow members into the community.

### ECP Workgroups Update

The Early Career Psychiatrist (ECP) Work Group, convened in 2024, has expanded into several focused subgroups to prioritize and implement the core group's recommendations. These efforts include initiatives centered on leadership development, mentoring and coaching, and launching clinical practice. For questions, please contact LaToya Coles at [lcoles@psych.org](mailto:lcoles@psych.org) or Katie Putnam at [kputnam@psych.org](mailto:kputnam@psych.org).

## 2026 APA Billing and Documentation Update for Psychiatrists

Join us on Tuesday, January 6th at 1:00 p.m. ET for a billing and coding webinar for psychiatrists. We will highlight new and revised billing codes for 2026, along with reviewing how to select the most appropriate code. This webinar will also explore key documentation considerations to help participants craft notes that serve multiple purposes, such as effectively communicating critical information to third-party readers, enhancing patient care, and supporting billing requirements based on telehealth policies for 2026. [Registration Link](#)

### 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 News & Information

### Register Today for the 2026 Annual Meeting

**APA's Annual Meeting** is returning to **San Francisco, May 16-20**, bringing together psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, social workers, and allied professionals for 4.5 days of collaboration and clinical growth.

With **400+ sessions** across **40+ topic areas**, attendees have an array of opportunities to earn CME or CE credits while connecting with colleagues who bring diverse perspectives to mental health practice.

Expect new experiences such as the **Biological Sciences Hub**, returning favorites like the **Community Psychiatry Hub**, and relevant educational sessions like these AM25 highlights:

- [ADHD Across the Lifespan](#)
- [New Vistas in Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders](#)
- [Sleep: From Childhood to Aging](#)

Register today to be part of the conversations that connect disciplines and **save up to 25% when you register by December 17**.

### Medicaid Work Requirements: APA Resources

H.R. 1 was passed on July 4, 2025, and includes significant funding cuts and policy changes to Medicaid and the ACA marketplace, physician payment, and medical student loans. Below is information to help you understand the impact of H.R. 1, specifically tying [work requirements to Medicaid eligibility](#) as well as resources for you to utilize in your advocacy to your state agencies and governor.

The Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) is required to issue an interim final rule on implementing and setting standards for community engagement requirements by June 1, 2026.

In addition, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced on July 17, 2025, that it would not approve or extend Section 1115 demonstration waivers for workforce initiatives, which use Medicaid dollars to fund job training or employment-related activities.

- [Timeline of Select Provisions of H.R. 1](#)
- [Overview of the Medicaid Community Engagement Requirements](#)
- [State Landscape of Work Requirements](#)
- [Talking Points When Speaking with State Medicaid Directors or Governors Offices](#)
- [Sample Letters and Communications](#)
- [Additional Resources](#)

## National Grief Awareness Week

National Grief Awareness Week, **observed December 2–8**, is a time to acknowledge the impact of loss and to support those who are grieving. This week aims to break the stigma surrounding grief, acknowledging that it is a natural response to loss and can affect individuals in various ways. This week provides an opportunity to offer support to those who are grieving, foster understanding, and promote open conversations about this often-sensitive topic.

Grief is the emotional, mental, and physical response to a loss involving a wide range of reactions. Grief is deeply personal and a natural process that affects everyone differently and can influence physical, emotional, and mental well-being ([SAMHSA, 2025](#)). While grief is a natural response to loss, prolonged or complicated grief can increase the risk of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts.

### Additional Resources for Holiday Grief:

- [Grief.com](#): Offers resources, education, and support for people navigating loss, including articles, videos, books, and programs for both those grieving and professionals who support them.
- [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#): Call or text 988 for free, 24/7 emotional support for yourself or someone you know.
- [Dougy Center](#): Provides grief education, peer support, and materials for children, teens, and adults.
- [Hospice Foundation of America](#): Shares educational materials and webinars about understanding and navigating grief.
- [National Alliance for Children's Grief](#) (NACG): Offers resources and guidance for supporting grieving youth and families.
- [What's Your Grief](#): Offers articles, podcasts, and coping tools for managing grief during the holidays.

## PRMS Case of the Quarter

### Q3 2025 Case of the Quarter

Attached please find PRMS' latest "Case of the Quarter" column, a sample case study highlighting best practices in actual scenarios encountered through PRMS' extensive experience in litigation and claims management. This newest resource covers the topic of reporting board complaints to your malpractice carrier promptly. Current and past cases can also be found on our website [here](#).

### PRMS Blog

Our most recent blog articles include research by resident members of the Florida Psychiatric Society, and a reflection from an Early Career Psychiatrist in Queens County Psychiatric Society on his choice of working with incarcerated individuals. Read more at [PRMS.com/blog](#).

# Medicare Updates

## 2026 Policy Changes for the Quality Payment Program

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has issued its [Calendar Year \(CY\) 2026 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule \(PFS\) Final Rule](#), which includes policies for the Quality Payment Program (QPP) for the 2026 performance year (PY) and beyond.

Below are some of the key QPP policies that CMS finalized:

### Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) (General)

We finalized policies for the 2026 performance period for the MIPS performance categories, which include:

- The addition of 5 new **quality measures**, substantive changes to 30 quality measures, and the removal of 10 quality measures.
- **Changes to the Alternative Payment Models (APM) Performance Pathway (APP) Plus quality measure set** to maintain alignment with the MIPS quality measure inventory.
- The establishment of a **2-year informational-only feedback period for new cost measures**, allowing clinicians to receive feedback on their score(s) and find opportunities to improve performance before a new cost measure affects their MIPS final score.
- The establishment of a **measure suppression policy for the MIPS Promoting Interoperability performance category** and the **Medicare Promoting Interoperability Program**.
- The **suppression of the Electronic Case Reporting measure for the current CY 2025 performance period/2027 MIPS payment year** for the **MIPS Promoting Interoperability performance category** and the **Medicare Promoting Interoperability Program**.

### Maintaining Stability in MIPS

- **We maintained the current performance threshold policies**, leaving the performance threshold set at 75 points through the 2028 performance year.

### Advanced APMs

- We added a **determination of Qualifying APM Participant (QP) status at the individual level for all eligible clinicians in Advanced APMs**, in addition to determinations at the APM Entity level. As part of the effort to simplify this process, we are also adding a calculation based on Covered Professional Services as the set of services used for QP determinations.

### **For More Information**

Learn more about the [CY 2026 Medicare PFS Final Rule](#) and QPP policy changes by reviewing the following resources:

- [2026 Quality Payment Program Final Rule Fact Sheet and Policy Comparison Table \(PDF\)](#) – Provides an overview of QPP policies in the CY 2026 Medicare PFS Final Rule, and a comparison table showcasing the changes to current QPP policies.
- [2026 Finalized MIPS Value Pathways Guide \(PDF\)](#) – Highlights the finalized MVP policy changes, beginning with the 2026 performance year.
- [Medicare Shared Savings Program Fact Sheet](#) – Documents information about finalized policies specific to Medicare Shared Savings Program (Shared Savings Program) Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs).

## Medicare Participation for 2026

As you plan for next year, CMS reminds you:

- You're paid the full Medicare Physician Fee Schedule allowed amount. If you're a non-participating provider, Medicare pays 5% less than the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule allowed amount.
- Medicare pays you directly (on an assignment-related basis).
- Medicare forwards claim information to Medigap (Medicare supplement coverage) insurance (if any).

By December 31, 2025, all physicians, practitioners, and suppliers – regardless of their Medicare participation status – must decide whether to participate for CY 2026.

You don't need to do anything if you're:

- Already participating in Medicare, and you want to continue your participation
- Not currently participating, and you don't want to participate

See the [Annual Medicare Participation Announcement](#) webpage for more information on how to change your Medicare participation.

**National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) Taxonomy:** Please check your data in [NPPES](#) and confirm that it still correctly reflects you as a health care provider with the appropriate taxonomy and correctly reflects your current practice address. Incorrect data in NPPES may lead to unnecessary inquiries about your credentials and delay enrollment with Medicare and health plans.

# Medicare Updates

## Medicare Claims Impacted During the Government Shutdown

Multiple expiring Medicare statutory payment provisions lapsed on October 1, 2025, due to the absence of Congressional action. With the passage of the Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026 (Pub. L. 119-37), Congress retroactively restored many of these payment provisions, effective from October 1, 2025, through January 30, 2026. This includes retroactively restoring the suspension of statutory provisions that restrict payment for telehealth services provided to beneficiaries in their homes and outside of rural areas.

During the shutdown, in general, the Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) processed claims consistent with the pricer software, fee, and payment schedules available on cms.gov. CMS has instructed the MACs to perform mass adjustments to any paid claims that are inconsistent with the most recent Congressional action, including a payment adjustment for low volume inpatient hospitals and a payment adjustment for the Medicare-dependent hospital program.

On November 6, 2025, CMS instructed the MACs (see [Update on Processing of Telehealth and Acute Hospital Care at Home Claims](#)) to return a subset of telehealth claims submitted on or before November 10, 2025, that, at that time, were no longer payable because the statutory provisions temporarily suspending various Medicare telehealth requirements expired on October 1, 2025, or were claims CMS could not identify as payable under current law. For professional claims, those claims were returned with the following messages: CARC 16 and RARC M77. These claims are now payable, provided they meet all applicable Medicare requirements. Practitioners may resubmit those returned claims to CMS, as well as submit any other telehealth claims held in anticipation of possible Congressional action. Practitioners are also encouraged to identify which beneficiaries were charged for telehealth services with dates of service on or after October 1, 2025, that are retroactively payable and instead submit applicable claims to Medicare, refunding any overpayment to beneficiaries. Their instruction to practitioners to append the GY modifier on certain telehealth claims is rescinded and providers may resubmit previously denied claims. Similarly, beginning on November 10, 2025, CMS instructed the MACs to return claims for the Acute Hospital Care at Home initiative for dates of service of October 1, 2025, or later. Hospitals may resubmit those claims to CMS.

## AMA Releases 2026 Medicare Final Rule Summary

On Oct. 31, 2025, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released the Calendar Year (CY) 2026 Payment Policies under the Medicare Physician Payment Schedule (PFS) and Other Changes to Part B Payment and Coverage Policies final rule, implementing significant payment policy changes that will take effect on Jan. 1, 2026.

To help physicians understand the impact of the final rule, the AMA developed a detailed [summary and analysis](#) (PDF), which explains how:

- All physicians will benefit from the positive conversion factor updates for 2026, including a 3.77% increase for advanced alternative payment model (APM) qualifying participants (QPs) and a 3.26% increase for all other physicians.
- For many physicians, the benefits of the positive update will be at least partially offset by the finalized practice expense and efficiency adjustment cuts, which are broken down in the summary.
- Physicians who treat hospital inpatients and nursing facility patients through telehealth, those who provide services requiring direct supervision, and teaching physicians who virtually supervise residents in the delivery of telehealth services will all benefit.
- Maintaining the Merit-based Incentive Payment System performance threshold to avoid a penalty at 75 points for the next three years introduces much-needed stability and predictability into a program that costs \$12,800 per physician per year to comply.

The analysis provides additional information about individual code changes and valuations, skin substitutes, geographic practice cost indices, the Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program, the Medicare Shared Savings Program, MIPS Value Pathways, and the Ambulatory Specialty Model, among others. The AMA has also developed a [two-pager](#) (PDF) to explain the problematic efficiency adjustment and practice expense payment policies. More context and background about Medicare physician payment is available on this [AMA webpage](#).

## Telehealth Services Extended

Recent legislation authorized an extension of many of the Medicare telehealth flexibilities through January 30, 2026. Please [review this helpful article](#) for the most recent updates.

## Member Publications

**Paul Nestadt, M.D.** and **Cynthia Major Lewis, M.D.** published "[Near-Term Risk for Psychosis and Non-Psychosis -Related Suicide: A Retrospective Examination of the Last 30 Days of Life.](#)" The retrospective exploratory study determines that for optimal clinical management and suicide prevention clinicians need a better understanding of near-term risk for suicide and to focus assessment and clinical care accordingly.

**Haroon Burhanullah, M.D.** co-authored a publication in the *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* titled "[A randomized controlled trial of the safety and efficacy of dronabinol for agitation in Alzheimer's disease.](#)" The study analyzed the safety of efficacy of dronabinol (THC) and determined that the drug may be relatively safe and effective in reducing agitation symptoms in people with moderate to severe AD.

## Member Shoutout

Congratulations to **Denis Antoine, M.D.** who received the Elizabeth Hurlock Beckman Award! The award recognizes academic faculty who have inspired their students to make a significant contribution to the 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.*

**REINSTATEMENT**

Melanie Rowson, MD

**Early-Career Psychiatrist WhatsApp**

The MPS ECP WhatsApp Group is a way for members who are within 7 years of completing their training to communicate and collaborate with each other. This group is similar to our MPS Listserv but dedicated to *only* our ECP members.

[Fill out this form to join](#) and, once approved, we will send an invite link for access to the group.

**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.

**CLASSIFIEDS****OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE**

**Ellicott City:** Full/part time office space with amenities and active in-office listserv for Mental Health Practitioners. Easily accessible via routes 40, 29,32, 695. Contact Dr. Mike Boyle at 410-206-6070, [psycmike@gmail.com](mailto:psycmike@gmail.com).

**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](mailto: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.



Southern Psychiatric Association & Maryland Psychiatric Society Annual Conference

September 16 – 19, 2026

Royal Sonesta Harbor Court Hotel, Baltimore, MD



# 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:

## Psychiatrist

The Center for Eating Disorders | Towson, MD

## Medical Director

Outpatient Mental Health Center | Baltimore, MD

## Service Chief

Adult Service Line | Towson, MD

Scan QR code to  
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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

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For more information, scan the QR code or contact Kathleen Hilzendeger, Director of Professional Services, [khilzendeger@sheppardpratt.org](mailto: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](http://sheppardpratt.org) to learn more about our services. EOE.