

MPS NEWS

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Editor: Heidi Bunes

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

MPS News Design & Layout
Meagan Floyd

The MPS Council will meet next by videoconference on September 8 at 8 PM. All members welcome!

President's Column

Psychiatry's Role in Combating Racism

The last few months have been challenging ones for healthcare professionals, our local community, and our country as we have dealt with the novel coronavirus pandemic and our nation's embarrassing failure to do what is necessary to protect the health of its citizens. Longstanding problems with racism, police brutality, healthcare inequities, economic inequality, and the "othering" of fellow human beings have also been laid bare by recent events.

We are all appalled and saddened at the brutal murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and Rayshard Brooks. The multiple deaths of black Americans at the hands of people who should be protectors has a long history. Institutional and structural racism contributes to poverty, shortened lifespans, and healthcare disparities among the minority community. The differential effect of the novel coronavirus pandemic on the minority community has only served to highlight these issues. Clearly our nation and state must address the underlying structural issues that contribute to such suffering among our fellow citizens. As psychiatrists, we must do what we can to acknowledge and alleviate that suffering.

Recently there have been on-line town halls addressing psychiatry's role in combating structural racism. These have included one from the American Association for Community Psychiatry (AAPC) on June 3rd and the APA Member's Town hall on June 15th. The AAPC town hall included a wonderful talk by Dr. Ruth Shim, a psychiatrist at UC Davis, on "Why racial injustice is a community psychiatry

issue for patients, clinicians and health systems." Her talk along with other resources are available online at <https://www.communitypsychiatry.org/>. During the APA's town hall, Dr. Geller reviewed APA's own history of racism, and there were moving accounts of the trauma experienced by our black psychiatric colleagues due to racism. For those who missed it, the town hall is available online at <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/meetings/addressing-structural-racism-town-hall>.

Along with other psychiatric and medical organizations, the MPS has released a statement condemning racism in all its forms (<https://mdpsych.org/2020/06/mps-endorses-bpa-and-aamc-statements-condemns-racism-violence-and-police-brutality/>). We specifically endorsed statements released by the Black Psychiatrists of America and the American Association of Medical Colleges' Statements on Police Brutality and Racism in America. We are indebted to our Community Psychiatry and Diversity Coalition for their work on drafting our statement. [see [pages 4 - 6](#).]

However, I believe that we all know that statements and town halls are insufficient to address this issue. We have asked our Community Psychiatry and Diversity Coalition to take the lead on developing specific plans and actions that we can take as an organization to create meaningful solutions for change. **We also invite input from all of our members.**

I think we also need to reflect on our own practice and what each of us can do individually. It is well established that black patients when compared to whites are more likely to be diagnosed with psychotic disorders as opposed to mood disorders and more likely to be prescribed first generation anti-

(Continued)

psychotic medicines. Do we allow our patients the space to discuss their experience of racism or their secondary trauma observing the senseless public deaths of black citizens at the hands of the police? Are we doing enough to address the social determinants of health? For those of us tasked with educating the future generations of psychiatrists, are we teaching about racism's effect on mental health (<https://www.mededportal.org/doi/10.15766/mep.2374-8265.10618>) and have we done enough to support our minority trainees? I know that these recent events have caused me to become more aware of my own deficiencies in these areas, and I will strive to do better. After all, we have chosen a specialty that is dedicated to some of the most marginalized members of our society. We should be part of the solution to what ails our community.

Mark J. Ehrenreich, M.D.

MPS Members Out & About

Mark Komrad, M.D. published a commentary, [Medical Ethics in the time of COVID-19](#), in the July issue of *Current Psychiatry*.

Scott Aaronson, M.D. was featured in a Podcast entitled [Treatment-Resistant Depression: What is the role of Ketamine, DBS, VNS, TMS, and Psychedelics?](#)

Dinah Miller, M.D. published a commentary, [I Am Part of the Problem](#) on June 24 in Medscape.

2020-2021 Maryland Foundation for Psychiatry Officers and Directors

The Maryland Foundation for Psychiatry Officers and Directors for the coming year were approved unanimously by MPS Council on June 9.

PRESIDENT: Neil E. Warres, M.D.

VICE PRESIDENT: Arthur M. Hildreth, M.D.

SECRETARY-TREASURER: Thomas E. Allen, M.D.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Mrs. Carol Allen

Theodora G. Balis, M.D.

Joanna D. Brandt, M.D.

Mark S. Komrad M.D.

Merle McCann, M.D.

Elias K. Shaya, M.D.

Jonathan J. Shepherd, M.D.

Edgar K. Wiggins, M.H.S.

HONORARY DIRECTORS:

Jonas R. Rappeport, M.D.

Robert P. Roca, M.D.

William C. Wimmer, M.D.

Attention Newly Graduated Residents

Congratulations! If you haven't already, please complete the APA [membership advancement form](#). This lets us know if you are continuing in a fellowship or advancing to practice. As a General Member, you can access additional benefits, including [resources](#) for early career psychiatrists. Your MPS dues remain the same! The [form](#) takes less than 5 minutes to complete.

Member Updates and Survey

The MPS sent member information update forms and the [2020 member survey](#) in May. Please watch your US mail and return your information promptly!

Member Update Form

The MPS membership directory will be published in late Summer. Please ensure that your information on file with MPS is up to date. If you opt in, this data is also used for the online Find a Psychiatrist and the telephone patient referral service. Please indicate all insurance networks where you participate in-network. You can also log in to your member account on the MPS website to directly enter updates. **The deadline for directory changes is July 31.**

Member Survey

Please help guide how MPS committees, Council and staff will work for you in the coming year by completing the survey. **INCENTIVE:** Three respondents who complete the entire survey and include their names will be chosen at random for a **\$100 credit** that can be applied toward MPS dues or an MPS event. [CLICK HERE](#) to start – this should take less than 5 minutes!

Please call the MPS office at 410-625-0232 or email mps@mdpsych.org with questions.

Special Member Rate for 2020 MPS Directory Ad

MPS members can advertise their practice, new office location, specialty, new book, etc. for a special members-only rate of \$100 for 1/3 page in the directory. The 2020-2021 directory will be out in early fall 2020, so order soon!

For details, email Meagan at mfloyd@mdpsych.org.

June 9 Council Highlights

Executive Committee Report

- Dr. Ehrenreich reached out to the new Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) President Farooq Mohyuddin to follow up on Dr. McGuire's efforts with WPS President Phil Candilis to unify the voice of psychiatry in Maryland.
- Regarding leadership opportunities, we still need a chair for the Health Policy Advisory Group. FY21 committee chairs and members have been appointed. After nomination by MPS, **Joan Han, M.D.** was elected APA Area 3 RFM Deputy Representative. **Robert Herman, M.D.** is now officially registered with the Board of Elections as the Maryland Psychiatric Political Action Committee Chair.
- MPS has continued to advocate at the state and federal levels. We sent a letter supporting audio-only telehealth for Medicare to Senators Cardin and Van Hollen at APA's request. MPS signed on to a [Behavioral Health Coalition letter to Governor Hogan](#) with recommendations to lessen the COVID-19 impact in congregate settings. MPS also signed on to two funding-related Behavioral Health Coalition letters to Governor Hogan. The [first](#) asks that the FY21 budget retain the mandatory 4% rate increase for community behavioral health services. The [second](#) advocates preserving the Behavioral Health Administration's funding in the FY21 budget.
- To support members during this unusual time, MPS held a "Coffee, Cocktails and Conversation" zoom meeting on April 30 so members could gather and share tips and concerns. A virtual CME was held May 28 to discuss the Impact of Gun Violence on the Community and the movie "Charm City." Finally, an email was sent on June 4 asking members how the MPS can assist in the current situation.

Support for MPS Strategic Priorities

Addressing the priority of membership growth, Dr. Ehrenreich reviewed an idea to survey about 950 non-members practicing in Maryland at a cost of \$1K (not budgeted). We would share information about MPS and our activities and gather email addresses as well as attitudes toward MPS and APA. Council discussed ideas for possible participation incentives and noted that it may be possible to get valuable information without a mailing. Council agreed to defer action on the survey idea until September to allow a subcommittee to explore options. Drs. Lacap, Flaherty and Spitzer agreed to serve. [Others interested should email [Ms. Bunes](#).]

Executive Director's Report

- Ms. Bunes requested Council input on the comparison of telehealth provisions pre-Covid and during Covid to identify advocacy opportunities for the parity coalition.
- MPS applied for the 2020 APA DB Expedited Grant, which will end next year along with funding for DB Executives to meet in person (MPS sent a letter of objection to Area 3 Trustee Certa). There has been a lot of sharing

and support lately regarding the transition to virtual operations and COVID-19.

- The MPS office continues to operate remotely, with staff in the office one day per week.
- A computer network solution has been selected well within the amount that Council approved. It will incorporate laptops and cloud file storage for greater work flexibility.

Membership Committee Report

Dr. Lacap introduced herself as the new committee chair. Due to the extended drop deadline, the MPS was able to reduce the number of members lost for non-payment of dues to 30. Ms. Floyd congratulated the committee on these results as COVID-19 concerns have prevented renewals across the country and MPS has a relatively small number of drops compared to other DBs.

Assembly Representatives' Report

As a follow up to the Executive Session following the April meeting, Drs. Hanson, Zimnitzky and Shaya met with the Executive Committee and staff to draft a possible Action Paper for the November Assembly. It was sent to the Psychiatric Society of Virginia (PSV) for consideration. The PSV board voted unanimously on June 6 to endorse the paper with minor revisions. Dr. Shaya's motion to accept the PSV changes and add Dr. Kaul as an author, if Assembly rules allow, was approved unanimously by Council.

New Business

The proposed slate of officers and directors of the Maryland Foundation for Psychiatry for FY21 was reviewed and approved unanimously. [See [page 2](#).]

On behalf of the Community Psychiatry & Diversity Coalition (CP&D), Dr. Balis thanked Dr. Vidal and Ms. Floyd for their work to retool the May 28 CME on gun violence for a virtual format. She then presented the group's most recent work on identifying two statements for Council endorsement as well as plans to develop action steps that address racism, violence and police brutality. She thanked Drs. Vidal and Chad Lennon for quickly drafting a document for Council consideration. [See [page 4](#).] Reflecting the discussion in the CP&D meeting on June 8, it endorses the stances taken by the [Black Psychiatrists of America, Inc. \(BPA\), dated June 3, 2020](#) and the [American Association of Medical Colleges' \(AAMC\), dated June 1, 2020](#) and commits Council and the MPS to questioning our practices, listening to people of color in our community and designing a plan with specific actions that create meaningful solutions for change. It also makes a pledge to implement this plan. After discussion of the importance of this action at this time, the Council voted unanimously to accept the [document](#) as written.

The Impact Of Racism On Mental Health:



Feeling disconnected / lonely

Increase risk of depression and anxiety

Second-guessing things

Trauma (both from the present and triggering past instances / generational trauma)

Decreased hope (in the future, justice, the government etc.)

Increased "Survival Mode"

Existential questioning "How can the world be so cruel?"

Decreased trust

Worry

Feelings of powerlessness (You can do the right thing and still end up with a horrific outcome)

Panic

#BlackLivesMatter

@RealDepressionProject

THE DEPRESSION PROJECT

MPS Endorses BPA and AAMC Statements; Condemns Racism, Violence and Police Brutality

On June 9, MPS Council unanimously approved a [statement](#) endorsing the stances taken by the Black Psychiatrists of America, Inc. (BPA), dated June 3, 2020 and the American Association of Medical Colleges' (AAMC), dated June 1, 2020. Council committed the MPS to questioning our practices, listening to people of color in our community and designing a plan with specific actions that create meaningful solutions for change. It also made a pledge to implement this plan.

As leaders of mental health in our state, it is imperative that we ensure that we provide quality and equitable care to our black and brown communities, and that we go beyond that work, by working on the prevention of the social causes that lead to mental health disorders, including racism. The members of the Maryland Psychiatry Society will no longer be silent and complacent as we now come together with the rest of the world to eradicate racism.

Please click below to view:

[MPS Statement](#)
[BPA Statement](#)
[AAMC Statement](#)

The CBT of Racism

The purpose of modern psychiatry and psychology is to give an opportunity to understand ourselves. Learning about oneself requires an understanding of one's thoughts, feelings, and actions - a staple of therapy. The resource list below was created to work on all three of those domains as part of MPS efforts to create meaningful changes in ourselves and in our community.

The first part of your work is on your thoughts. We as people make assumptions about people that guide how we treat others - these assumptions are called biases. Videos such as "Systemic Racism Explained" and articles such as "1968 Lerner Commission" help to expand one's understanding of how the world and government see people who look different. Articles such as "Acknowledging Your Privilege and Becoming an Ally" allow one to look inward into how each individual sees people who look different. The second part is the examination of feelings. Feelings are best expressed in conversations. Videos such as "Uncomfortable Conversations with Black Men" and "How To Respond to Common Racist Statements" give one the opportunity to openly discuss those feelings or listen to the feelings of others to facilitate those tough conversations. Most of the links are given for the most important third part - action. Links to businesses including restaurants and bookstores, provide the chance to show support to people of color with your dollars as well as your heart.

Understanding yourself does not end in a moment, it continues by constantly seeking a higher level of understanding and self-knowledge. This list is only a start! We at MPS encourage all people reading this list to continue to learn more about themselves, have more conversations, and act with pride to uplift your family, friends, and communities to a greater place of self realization. We also hope that you share this list with people you care about so that they too can take on this challenge of making the world better by examining their own biases.

- Anti Racism Resources - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BRIF2_zhNe86SGgHa6-VIBO-QgirlTwCTugSfKie5Fs/mobilebasic
- Ways to Help - <https://blacklivesmatters.carrd.co/>
- 1968 Lerner Commission (The Cause of Rioting) - <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/1968-kerner-commission-got-it-right-nobody-listened-180968318/>
- 26 African American History Books to Read to Your Kids - <https://redtri.com/black-history-books-for-kids/>
- 10 Documentaries to Watch About Race - <https://www.docplay.com/articles/10-documentaries-to-watch-about-race-instead-of-asking-a-person-of-colour-to-explain-things-for-you/>

The CBT of Racism (Continued)

- Systemic Racism Explained - https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10222815884646694&id=1263345617
- Social Justice Books - <https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/>
- 125 Black Owned Business to Support Right Now - <https://nymag.com/strategist/article/black-owned-businesses-support-shop.html>
- Black Owned Restaurants - <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.bonappetit.com/story/black-owned-restaurant-lists/amp>
- Uncomfortable Conversations with Black Men - <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=h8jUA7JBkF4>
- 44 Mental Health Resources for Black People - <https://www.self.com/story/black-mental-health-resources>
- Anti-Racism Resources for Parents and Kids - <https://www.healthline.com/health/parenting/anti-racism-resources-for-parents-and-kids#books>
- 25 Books By Black Authors - <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/entertainment/g32766962/best-books-by-black-authors/>
- 31 Children's Books for Diverse Children - <https://www.embracerace.org/resources/where-to-find-diverse-childrens-books>
- The Washington Post's "The black-white economic divide is as wide as it was in 1968" - <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/06/04/economic-divide-black-households/>
- 8 Everyday Ways to Fight Racism - https://nnedv.org/latest_update/8-everyday-ways-to-fight-racism/
- Five Ways to Reduce Racial Bias in Your Children - https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five_ways_to_reduce_racial_bias_in_your_children
- Talking Against Racism within Families - <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/publications/speak-up/among-family>
- How to Talk to Your Children about Protests and Racism - <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/01/health/protests-racism-talk-to-children-wellness/index.html>
- How to Talk to Kids about Racism and George Floyd - <http://huffp.st/JV7dtrr>
- Talking to Kids About Race - <https://www.national-geographic.com/family/in-the-news/talking-about-race/>
- How To Respond to Common Racist Statements - https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10157291166026334&id=530446333&sfnsn=mo
- How to Talk to Your Non-Black Family Members about Race, according to therapists - <https://www.insider.com/how-to-talk-to-non-black-family-race-therapist-tips-2020-6>
- CNN Sesame Street Town Hall - <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/06/app-news-section/cnn-sesame-street-race-town-hall-app-june-6-2020-app/index.html>
- How to Talk to White Relatives about Racism - <https://www.instyle.com/news/how-to-talk-white-relatives-about-racism>
- Teach The History of Policing - <https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/teach-history-of-policing/>
- "Acknowledging Your Privilege and Becoming an Ally": a Guide to Resources for White Folks - <https://goodblacknews.org/2020/06/04/acknowledging-your-privilege-and-becoming-an-ally-a-guide-to-resources-for-white-folks/>
- PBS Newshour's Race Matters in America - <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/series/race-matters-america-in-crisis>
- 47 Black Owned Bookstores - <https://ew.com/books/black-owned-bookstores-to-support/>
- U.S. Businesses Must Take Meaningful Action Against Racism - <https://hbr.org/2020/06/u-s-businesses-must-take-meaningful-action-against-racism>
- Resources for Asian and AAPI Students Experiencing COVID-19 Related Harassment - <https://ealc.fas.harvard.edu/news/resources-asian-and-aapi-students-experiencing-covid-19-related-harassment>
- Know Your Rights when Protesting - <https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=8nglfSpkxm0>
- White Privilege Glasses - <https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=share&v=swDQiUwmezg>
- Race & Privilege: A Social Experiment Regardless of Race - <https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=share&v=F2hvbGdg4w>
- 5 Countries (Besides America) that has Race Issues - <https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=share&v=UlrO67yHX8g>

The CBT of Racism (Continued)

- Can Latinos Benefit from White Privilege - <https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=share&v=bWt2vy9DHsc>
- Books for First Graders About Racism & Activism - <https://www.literacytrust.org/latest-news/booklist>
- 29 Movies, Shows, and Documentaries to Watch to Educate Yourself on Racial Injustice - <https://theeverygirl.com/movies-shows-documentaries-racial-injustice/>
- 21 Anti-Racism Videos to Share with Kids - <https://www.weareteachers.com/anti-racism-videos/>
- 30 Educators to follow on Instagram for Helpful Anti-Racism Resources - <https://www.boredteachers.com/resources/30-educators-to-follow-on-instagram-for-helpful-antiracist-resources>
- Two Thumbs Up: Movies and Documentaries to Use (and Avoid) When Teaching Civil Rights - <https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/two-thumbs-up/>
- 75 Books about Extraordinary Black Mighty Girls and Women - <https://www.amightygirl.com/blog?p=14276>
- U.S. Map of Black Banks & Credit Unions - <https://blackoutcoalition.org/black-u-s-banks/>
- Netflix Launches 'Black Lives Matter' Collection of Movies, TV Shows and Documentaries - <https://variety.com/2020/digital/news/netflix-black-lives-matter-collection-1234630160/>
- 6 Things White People Say That Highlight Their Privilege - https://www.huffpost.com/entry/things-white-people-say-highlight-privilege_l5edeafac5b637b87e22cee0
- Political Education, Toolkits and Other Resources - <https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/resources.html>
- Children's Books For Parents Who Want To Talk About Racism With Their Kids - <https://www.sittercity.com/parents/childrens-books-to-educate-about-racism>
- 'Plague of inequality' haunts U.S. 50 years after a landmark study on racial division - https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=share&v=4l9uMGgl_7l
- The best online LGBT exhibitions for pride month - <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/jun/10/the-best-online-lgbt-exhibitions-for-pride-month>
- Directory Of Black Psychiatrists - <https://blackmentalhealth.com/black-psychiatrists/>
- A History of Policing - An Online Class for Youth - <https://www.freedomlifted.com/blog/2020/6/10/a-history-of-policing-online-class-for-ages-12-18>
- Race & Racism in America (PBS) - <https://www.pbs.org/articles/2020/06/racism-in-america/>
- The Grey Challenge - <https://www.thegreychallenge.com/>
- Explaining the Southern Strategy - https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1350114631865863&id=452650521612283
- 'Defund the Police' Explained - https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10157354121626524&id=149475666523
- Black Owned Coffee and Tea Businesses That are Great Alternatives to Starbucks - <https://shoppeblack.us/2018/04/black-owned-coffee-tea-starbucks-alternatives/>
- 21 Cookbooks by Black Authors You Should Add to Your Shelf - <https://www.purewow.com/food/cookbooks-by-black-authors>
- Resources to Fight Racism and Unconscious Bias - <https://www.respectability.org/resources/racism-unconscious-bias/>
- Books on the History of Race Relations - <http://blog.yalebooks.com/2020/06/05/books-on-the-history-of-race-relations/>
- What Not To Say - https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2676340215938572&id=1447148065524466
- Black Parents Explain How To Deal with Police - <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=coryt8IZ-DE&feature=share>
- Why Cities are So Segregated - <https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=share&v=O5FBjyqfoLM>
- Racism and Inequities in Health Care for Black Americans - <https://psychnews.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.pn.2020.6b39>

*Chad Lennon, M.D.
Public Psychiatry and Diversity Coalition*

Maryland News

New Maryland Laws Effective July 2020

HB0262 *Criminal Procedure - Examination of Defendant by Maryland Department of Health - Access to Judicial Records* requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to have access to Judicial records concerning criminal defendants who are (1) subject to an MDH examination after being found incompetent to stand trial (IST) or not criminally responsible (NCR); (2) committed to MDH after being found IST or NCR; or (3) on IST/NCR conditional release. Prior to this exchange of information, the Judiciary and MDH must establish an agreement to address which individuals will have access to this information, what information is accessible to these authorized individuals, and the appropriate uses for the accessed information.

HB0277 *State Department of Education - Guidelines on Trauma-Informed Approach* requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in consultation with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Department of Human Services (DHS), to develop trauma-informed approach guidelines for schools. A "trauma-informed approach" is a method for understanding and responding to an individual with symptoms of chronic interpersonal trauma or traumatic stress. MSDE must distribute the guidelines to local school systems and publish the guidelines on its website.

HB0847 *State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs* establishes a State Coordinator for Autism Strategy in the Department of Disabilities (MDOD) to (1) identify and evaluate existing services for individuals with autism and their families; (2) develop a strategic plan for addressing autism-related needs by July 1, 2021; (3) identify national benchmarks and other performance measures; and (4) monitor and evaluate the implementation of the strategic plan and the success of the State in addressing autism-related needs. Beginning on July 1, 2021, the coordinator must submit annual reports to the Secretary of Disabilities, the Governor, and the General Assembly on the development, implementation, and effectiveness of the plan.

SB0103 / HB0259 *Health Occupations - Diagnostic Evaluation and Treatment of Patients - Disciplinary Actions (The Patient's Access to Integrative Healthcare Act of 2020)* prohibits a health occupations board or disciplinary panel from (1) reprimanding a licensee or certificate holder; (2) placing a licensee or certificate holder on probation; or (3) suspending or revoking a license or certificate solely on the basis of using a diagnostic evaluation or treatment that is integrative, complementary, alternative, or nonconventional (i.e. Lyme disease and tick-borne illness).

SB0501 / HB0998 *Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Physicians and Physician Assistants - Administration and Funding* transfers oversight of the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program (MLARP) for Physicians and Physician Assistants from the Office of Student Financial Assistance within the Maryland Higher Education Commission to the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). The bill also establishes a stakeholder workgroup that must review and report information pertaining to a permanent funding structure for MLARP and requires the MDH to produce an annual report on the program beginning October 1, 2021.

Special Enrollment Period Deadline Extended to July 15

The Maryland Health Benefit Exchange has [extended the deadline](#) of its Coronavirus Emergency Special Enrollment Period to July 15 for uninsured residents to enroll in health coverage through Maryland Health Connection, the state's health insurance marketplace. More than 43,000 residents received coverage during the special enrollment that began in March. Those who enroll through July 15 will have coverage as of July 1.

An additional special enrollment for Maryland tax filers runs through July 15. The Maryland Easy Enrollment Health Insurance Program gives tax filers the option to share information, like household size and income, with the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange to see if they are eligible for free or low-cost health insurance. Those who check the box on state tax forms (502 and 502B) will receive a letter from Maryland Health Benefit Exchange with their eligibility for free or low-cost health coverage. To date, nearly 4,000 Marylanders have enrolled in health insurance under this innovative program.

Latest Resources for Maryland Psychiatrists During COVID-19

The MPS maintains a comprehensive set of [coronavirus resources for Maryland psychiatrists](#) with links to detailed requirements for telehealth, state agencies, general COVID-19 information and other information.

See [MedChi's Coronavirus Resource Center](#) for more info that Maryland physicians need to know.

Visit the Maryland Department of Health [COVID-19 webpage](#) for daily updates on the outbreak. The site has information, FAQs and resources for a wide range of settings.

Maryland News

Health Carriers Propose 2021 Premium Rates

The Maryland Insurance Administration [announced](#) that carriers seek a range of changes to premium rates they will charge consumers for plans sold in Maryland's Individual Non-Medigap (INM) and Small Group (SG) markets in 2021. **For the Individual Non-Medigap market**, the filed average annual rate change is a **decrease of -4.8%**. **For the Small Group (50 or less contracts) market**, the filed average rate change is **an increase of +5.3%**. Please [click here to review details by carrier, plan, dental, etc.](#) Before approval, all filings undergo a comprehensive review of the carriers' analyses and assumptions. Public comments are considered part of the review process. Commissioner Birrane will hold a quasi-legislative virtual public hearing on Wednesday **July 15 from 2 to 4 PM**. Written testimony may be submitted via email by 5 PM on July 14. Please [click here for information](#).

ERPO Toolkit

A [toolkit](#) is available for professionals, individuals, and families with resources and information about Maryland's Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) law. It includes an informational brochure and postcard that outlines the process to file an ERPO, as well as an archived webinar, "Extreme Risk Protection Orders: A Health Intervention for Preventing Firearm Suicide."

Proposed Regulatory Amendments to Community Behavioral Health Programs and Services

The Behavioral Health Administration is providing an informal comment period for proposed amendments to the regulations governing community behavioral health programs and services, COMAR 10.63 Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs and Services. The proposed draft is the culmination of a multi-year process aimed at amending current COMAR 10.63 regulations to ensure statutory compliance; language clarification; and federal, state, and accreditation quality standards. The draft amendments are posted [here on the BHA regulations webpage](#).

The deadline for comments is July 30.

MPS Advocates with Maryland Congressional Delegation

In conjunction with the Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition, the MPS sent a [letter to Maryland's Congressional Delegation](#) urging their assistance in directing federal funding to community behavioral health providers and in ensuring the continuation of increased flexibility in the delivery of telehealth and medication for opioid use disorders after the coronavirus pandemic is officially over. The letter demonstrates broad and unified support for these recommendations across Maryland's behavioral health community.

Medicaid/CHIP Provider Relief Fund Payments

Providers who treat patients under the Medicaid/CHIP program may be eligible for federal financial assistance supporting healthcare-related expenses or lost revenue attributable to COVID-19.

HHS expects to distribute \$15 billion to eligible Medicaid and CHIP providers. The payment to each provider will be at least 2 percent of reported gross revenue from patient care; the final amount each provider receives will be determined after the data is submitted, including information about the number of Medicaid patients providers serve. Please note that the application requires income information as well as lost revenue and increased expenses due to COVID-19. Payer mix and other financial data is needed as well. Before applying through the [enhanced provider relief portal](#), applicants should:

[Read the Medicaid Provider Distribution Instructions - PDF](#)
[Download the Medicaid Provider Distribution Application Form - PDF](#)

HHS contracts with UnitedHealth Group to facilitate delivery of the funds. HHS plans to make publicly available the names of payment recipients and the amounts received.

Maryland Medicaid Pharmacy Program PDL Changes for July 1

The Office of Pharmacy Services issued Provider Advisory #214 regarding changes to Maryland's Preferred Drug List (PDL) effective July 1. A couple of the changes relate to Antipsychotics and Stimulants. Please [click here](#) and scroll down to see the changes highlighted in yellow. Please [click here](#) for a complete PDL.

APA News & Information

Tell Congress Psychologists are NOT Physicians

As Congress looks for ways to expand access to mental health services, it may consider H.R. 884 the *Medicare Mental Health Access Act* - legislation that would **change Medicare's definition of "physician" to include psychologists**. We need you to tell your U.S. Representative that psychologists are NOT physicians! [Take Action Today!](#)

The American Psychological Association is advocating to allow clinical psychologists to practice independently in inpatient or partial hospital settings. As actual physicians, you know that patients in those settings are among our most vulnerable. Their care requires medication management and management of comorbidities, neither of which psychologists have the medical training to do! Please warn your U.S. Representative that H.R. 884 is both unnecessary and dangerous to patient safety! [Write your lawmaker today!](#)

APA Department of Government Relations

Stress & Trauma Toolkit for Treating Marginalized Populations

The APA developed a [Stress and Trauma toolkit](#) to help providers understand the unique circumstances facing historically marginalized populations, and the impact that the sociopolitical climate in the U.S. has on their mental health. These populations share some commonalities: historical trauma, impact from the current sociopolitical climate, and biopsychosocial risks for anxiety, depression, and trauma. This [toolkit](#) provides recommendations for screening and treatment and tools to connect people in nine different populations to community resources. The groups include African Americans, Asian Americans Hispanics, Indigenous People, Jewish Americans, LGBTQ, Muslims, Undocumented Immigrants and Women.

Free CME on Racism and Black Mental Health

This APA e-learning opportunity prepares psychiatrists to practice with an anti-racism framework in the care of all patients, and especially Black Americans. Contemporary issues affecting Black patients are emphasized, along with discussion of effective interventions for addressing the institutional, interpersonal, and internal manifestations of racism. [Click here](#) for details or to register.

APA Guidance on Admission, Discharge of Psychiatric Patients During COVID-19

The APA Board of Trustees issued the following [guidance](#) on how hospitals should manage patients in psychiatric inpatient settings during the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidance is "in response to efforts to either deny admittance to or prematurely release psychiatric patients under the guise of avoiding COVID-19 infection."

- Premature discharge of patients from psychiatric hospitals and inpatient psychiatric units is unreasonable as this practice exposes patients, families, and the community at large to the risks of harmful and adverse outcomes irrespective of communicable disease outbreaks.
- During communicable disease outbreaks, referral of patients to any psychiatric setting should balance efforts to match patients' mental health needs with the appropriate level of care while considering the potential risks of the communicable disease at each level of care.
- Each level of psychiatric care during such outbreaks should provide safe and appropriate treatment, including adequate protection from the risk of infection from the communicable disease.

APA Ethics Committee Responds to COVID Questions

The APA's Ethics Committee has received several questions related to ethical practice during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, "*How much personal risk are psychiatrists expected to take while attending to the treatment of patients during the COVID-19 crisis, and what extra duties might psychiatrists have in this environment?*" Recent questions and answers appear in *Psychiatric News*. More opinions are posted [here](#). APA members who have questions about ethics issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic can send them to the Ethics Committee [here](#). The committee will respond directly to those who submit questions.

Free Members' Course of the Month

Due to updates to APA's Learning Management System, there will be no Course of the Month in July. There will be **two** courses of the month in August to account for this. Each Members Course of the Month will be available free to members for the duration of the applicable month. The course will continue to be available for a fee after the month expires. [Click here to access](#).

APA News & Information

APA Advocates for Some Telehealth Changes to Become Permanent

The APA sent a [letter](#) urging CMS to make permanent many of the regulatory changes that have helped expand telehealth services during the coronavirus pandemic. To ensure continuity of care and continued improved access to mental health and substance use care, the letter calls for:

- Removing limitations around originating site and geographical restrictions for mental health services.
- Including all services on the expanded Medicare-approved telehealth list, including group psychotherapy.
- Maintaining coverage of and increased payment for telephone evaluation and management (E/M) services (99441-99443) that matches reimbursement for traditional outpatient E/M services that may be provided in person or via telehealth. Additionally, removing frequency limitations imposed under those codes to allow those patients who receive all their care via the telephone alone (and not in person or via telehealth) as often as is medically necessary, which could be more frequently than once every seven days.
- Allowing the use of audio-only (telephone) communications for E/M and behavioral health services, including care for opioid use disorders, when it is in the patient's best interest. Reimbursement for audio-only care should be no less than what was established during the emergency.
- Removing frequency limitations for existing telehealth services in inpatient settings and nursing facilities.
- Allowing teaching physicians to provide direct supervision of medical residents remotely through telehealth.

APA also urged CMS to resume regulations "that require general supervision of nurse practitioners and physician assistants by a physician and implement policies to advance the use of physician-led, team-based care, such as evidence-based integrated care models and telehealth, to improve access to quality care."

Are you a General Member? Become an APA Fellow!

Are you ready to take the next step in your career? Fellow status is an honor that enhances your professional credentials and reflects your dedication to the psychiatric profession. Dues rates remain the same. **The deadline is September 1.** Visit the [APA website](#) for more details and a link to the [application](#).

Medicare Updates

Relief for 2020 MIPS Participants

In response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, CMS is announcing flexibilities for clinicians participating in the Quality Payment Program Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) in 2020. **Clinicians who are significantly impacted by the public health emergency may submit an [Extreme & Uncontrollable Circumstances Application](#) to reweight any or all of the MIPS performance categories.** This essentially allows a complete or partial opt-out for 2020. Review the [2020 Exception Applications Fact Sheet](#) and visit the [QPP Exception Applications webpage](#) before December 31. Contact the Quality Payment Program at 1-866-288-8292 or QPP@cms.hhs.gov with any questions.

Medicare to Cover Some VNS

According to [NCD 160.18](#) CMS will cover FDA-approved Vagus Nerve Stimulation (VNS) devices for Treatment Resistant Depression (TRD) through Coverage with Evidence Development (CED) when offered in a CMS-approved, double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial with a follow-up duration of at least one year with the possibility of extending the study to a prospective longitudinal study when the CMS-approved, double-blind, randomized placebo controlled trial has completed enrollment, and there are positive interim findings. There are specific study and patient criteria that must be met. VNS is non-covered for the treatment of TRD when furnished outside of a CMS-approved CED study.

CMS Guidance on In-Person Care

Under the direction of President Trump, CMS released a [guide](#) for patients and beneficiaries as they consider in-person care options. CMS is also providing [recommendations](#) for re-opening facilities to ensure that non-emergency healthcare resumes safely. Recommendations cover a range of topics, including testing and sanitation protocols, personal protective equipment and supplies, and workforce availability. As with Phase 1 recommendations, decisions to reopen should be consistent with federal, state, and local orders, CDC guidance, and in collaboration with state and local public health authorities.

Preview Physician Compare Data

Physicians can now preview 2018 Quality Payment Program performance information before it appears on [Physician Compare](#). Access the secure preview through the [Quality Payment Program](#) website.

The [Physician Compare Preview Period User Guide](#) may be helpful. To learn more, visit the [Physician Compare Initiative page](#). **The preview period will close on August 20.** Questions, please contact PhysicianCompare-Helpdesk@AcumenLLC.com.

AMA Advocacy Alert - Tell Congress to Support Telehealth After COVID-19

Please contact your Senators and Representative and tell them that any new COVID-19 relief legislation should include the telehealth provisions outlined below. [This link](#) will take you to a site that facilitates this communication.

The current COVID-19 health crisis has put a massive strain on our health care system. During this time telehealth services have emerged as a critical tool to provide care to patients while supporting physical distancing efforts and reducing the spread of COVID-19 by avoiding unnecessary outpatient visits. Physicians and patients all over the state have experienced positive effects of expanded telehealth. While some patients may need face to face treatment, it is important to recognize that expanded telehealth options should have a permanent role in our health care system.

While Congress considers new "phase-four" COVID-19 relief legislation they should ensure that telehealth services are covered and remain available after the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Specifically, Congress should permanently lift the geographic and site restrictions on telehealth technologies so all Medicare beneficiaries have access to telehealth services, including from home, regardless of where they live.

July 9 Webinar - Tools for Behavioral Health Staff

SMI Adviser is sponsoring the free CME webinar "[Practical Tools for Behavioral Health Staff Supporting the Medical Care of People with Serious Mental Illness](#)" on **Thursday, July 9**, from 3 to 4 PM. This webinar will examine the mortality gap in those with serious mental illness and activities to support better health and medical care for these patients.

Publication Education on MAT

A new public education initiative, *asked & answered*, explains the value of Medications for Addiction Treatment (MAT). An 11-minute video is available on the website at <https://opioidmatanswers.com/>. The video answers five critical questions about MAT through personal testimonials and the expertise of Dr. Yngvild Olsen. The site is funded by a grant from The Maryland Opioid Operational Command Center.

Risk Management Courses from APA, Inc.

APA's medical liability insurance partner offers free CME risk management webinars for members. [Learn More](#)

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Spectrum Behavioral Health in Annapolis, Arnold and Crofton MD is seeking a psychiatrist for its growing private practice. Position includes attractive compensation, collegial multi-disciplinary staff, full administrative support, professional autonomy and premium windowed office space! This exciting opportunity offers a great income, stimulating teamwork, desirable location, and meaningful community impact. If interested please visit www.spectrum-behavioral.com or email Scott E. Smith, Ph.D. at sbhmgmt18@gmail.com.

PSYCHIATRY POSITIONS: MedStar Health is seeking psychiatrists to work in the Baltimore area in a variety of settings. Our hospitals provide inpatient, outpatient, intensive outpatient, partial hospitalization and consult liaison services. We offer flexible hours with competitive comp plans and benefits including CME reimbursement, 7 weeks paid time off, holidays and personal leave, 403 B match, medical benefits and paid malpractice ins. and much more! Please email CV to stephen.pasko@medstar.net.

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GREENSPRING STATION/Lutherville--Desirable Joppa Green Townhouse office areas (2-3 offices or a full suite) suited to rent individually or to join an existing 25 year private practice. Excellent amenities, location and access. Call Stuart at 443-617-4560.

Member Spotlight Opportunity

Have you recently worked on an exciting research project? Reached a milestone in your career and want to share it with other MPS members? Have some good advice for younger psychiatrists who are just starting their careers? Submit a short article and photo through this [Google Form](#) to showcase your experiences with the MPS community.

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About Sheppard Pratt

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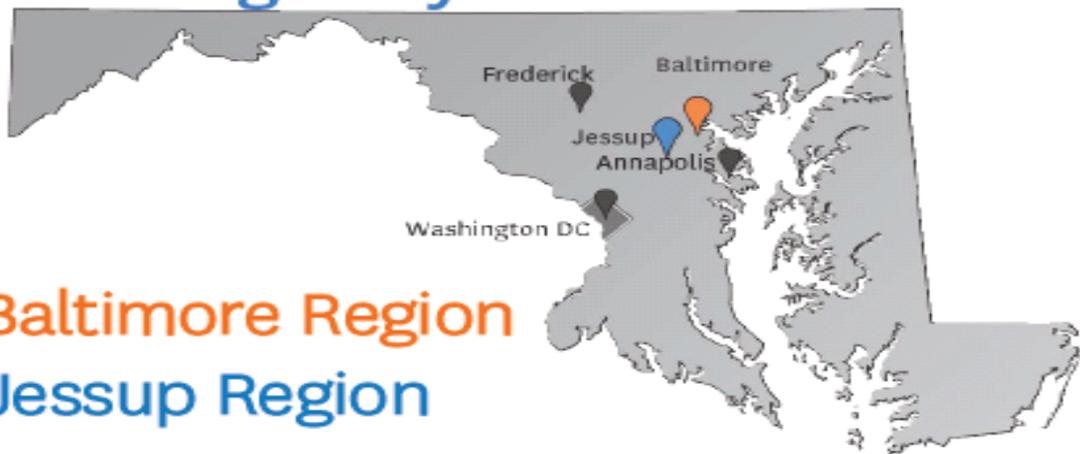
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