

Your Practice Assessment and APA Dues at Work

2009 | *The Year in Review*

How were your American Psychological Association (APA) dues and APA Practice Organization (APAPO) Practice Assessment used in 2009 to support you and your colleagues in professional psychology? This publication for licensed members of APA and the APA Practice Organization provides many examples.

ADVOCATING FOR YOUR INTERESTS

- ▶ Persistent advocacy by APAPO and grassroots psychologists resulted in pending **health care and Medicare reform legislation** in December 2009 with favorable provisions for professional psychology including:
 - a mandate that **mental health and substance use services are a core benefit provided at parity** with physical health services by all plans that participate in a new insurance pool designed to extend health coverage to more Americans
 - **extension of a 5-percent payment increase for Medicare psychotherapy services** that APAPO first won for a two-year period beginning in 2008
 - **inclusion of mental and behavioral health providers on primary care teams** that deliver integrated services
- ▶ The APA Practice Organization collaborated with the New Jersey and California State Psychological Associations in **filing nationwide class action lawsuits against three of the largest managed care companies** in the U.S. The lawsuits, which allege that the companies used flawed databases that substantially reduced reimbursement to psychologists, seek to reform how the companies reimburse psychologists and to compensate those affected by underpayment.
- ▶ The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act, passed in February 2009, contains many of the **health records privacy and security provisions sought by APAPO**. We are advocating throughout the rulemaking process for appropriate implementation of this law.
- ▶ APAPO was active in **gaining a Fiscal Year 2010 appropriation of \$12 million for The Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA)**, a federal grant program to help states and localities improve mental health services delivery for non-violent offenders and reduce the criminalization of individuals with mental health disorders. Congress reauthorized MIOTCRA for \$50 million through 2014.
- ▶ APA formally requested that the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) include psychotherapy codes during its Five-Year Review of the Medicare fee schedule** beginning in 2010. Our letter to CMS established how these codes are undervalued relative to other Medicare services.
- ▶ The APA Practice Directorate co-sponsored the 12th annual **Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Psychology Leadership Conference** held in May 2009, which attracted approximately 160 VA psychologists. This year's conference focused on the rollout of a plan designed to **ensure comprehensive mental health services delivery throughout the VA health care system**.

A glimpse at 2010:

Professional psychology helped achieve legislation that temporarily blocked through February 2010 a scheduled 21.2-percent cut in Medicare payment. Our Government Relations team continues to work with grassroots practitioners around the country to keep pressure on legislators to extend blockage of this steep payment cut.

ADVANCING AND PROTECTING THE PROFESSION


- ▶ Nearly 600 psychology leaders from the U.S. and Canada convened in March 2009 for four days of leadership training, networking and legislative advocacy during the annual **State Leadership Conference (SLC)**. The conference culminated on Capitol Hill, where SLC participants had more than 300 meetings with their members of Congress and staff to **advocate for professional psychology**.
- ▶ In 2009 alone, the APA Practice Organization's Committee for the Advancement of Professional Practice (CAPP) provided **nearly \$500,000 to state, provincial and territorial psychological associations** supporting initiatives to protect the doctoral degree as the standard for psychologist licensure and advance and defend psychology's scope of practice.
- ▶ APA approved two new practice guidelines during 2009: **Guidelines for Child Custody Evaluations in Family Law Proceedings**, which addresses disputes over decision making, caretaking and access after the dissolution of marital or other relationships; and **Guidelines Regarding Psychologists' Involvement in Pharmacological Issues**, which assists psychologists with any level of involvement with their patients' pharmacotherapy.
- ▶ Other practice-related policies adopted by the APA Council of Representatives included:
 - An updated model curriculum known as **Recommended Postdoctoral Education and Training Program in Psychopharmacology for Prescriptive Authority**, along with a proposal to create a **new APA designation system** as a quality assurance mechanism for evaluating postdoctoral psychopharmacology programs and **Model Legislation for Prescriptive Authority**; and
 - A resolution **endorsing the concept of recovery for people with serious mental illness**. In passing this resolution, APA supports psychologists' roles within the recovery movement, with its focus on shared decision making, self-determination in life choices and community integration.
- ▶ APA provided comments on draft changes by the California Department of Public Health to their **proposed regulations governing psychologists' scope of practice in licensed health facilities**. This development marks the latest chapter in the longstanding fight for greater patient access to psychological services and ending discrimination against psychologists in California hospital settings.
- ▶ The APA Practice Directorate is engaged in ongoing efforts to learn about psychology practice patterns and trends. **Psychological assessment** and **professional stressors facing psychologists** were two areas of focus for 2009. The directorate uses aggregate information from related surveys to facilitate advocacy efforts in the health care marketplace and to identify timely educational opportunities for psychologists.

A glimpse at 2010:

APAPO will widely publicize the results of a nationwide survey of members concerning their level of satisfaction with the nation's largest insurance and managed care companies. Survey participants rated how well the companies perform on issues such as patient access to mental health services, authorization of treatment and protecting patient privacy.

How can APA and the APA Practice Organization better meet your professional needs?
Email practice@apa.org or call toll-free, 1-800-374-2723.

DEMONSTRATING THE VALUE OF PSYCHOLOGY TO THE PUBLIC

- ▶ APA and APAPO engaged in several activities during 2009 to begin educating employers and the public about the federal mental health parity law that takes effect in January 2010:
 - Our **Employer's Guide to the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act** (available online at phwa.org) provides initial guidance for the business community and outlines how the steps employers take in complying with the law can improve organizational outcomes.
 - Educational material for consumers and psychologists about the new parity law is available on the **Psychology Help Center** at apa.org.
 - A **radio media tour** in October on the parity law garnered more than 2.5 million listeners.
- ▶ In just the first few days after its release, APA's **2009 Stress in America Survey** made headlines around the globe as survey results reached nearly **28 million people through 850 stories** on TV and radio, and in newspapers, blogs and news and health Web sites. High-profile coverage included **NBC's Today Show, MSNBC, USA Today, the Wall Street Journal blog and the Chicago Tribune**. Among the survey's principal findings: Stress related to school pressure and family finances has a greater impact on young people than parents believe.
 

The graphic is a blue rectangular box with a white border. On the left is a circular icon containing a white Greek letter psi (Ψ). To the right of the icon, the text reads: 'AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION' in small white capital letters, followed by 'Stress in America' in a larger white font, and 'Mind/Body Health: For a Healthy Mind and Body, Talk to a Psychologist' in a smaller white font at the bottom.
- ▶ APA expanded a partnership with the **National YMCA** that facilitates community-based public education. The organizations jointly developed a workshop, "Making Healthy Choices for Your Family," that is now available to APA members and the more than 2,600 YMCAs throughout the U.S.
- ▶ The APA Practice Organization's **inaugural Psychologically Healthy Workplace Conference** in Washington, DC, held February 28 – March 2, 2009, provided a forum for employers and psychologists to share effective strategies for fostering healthy, high-performing organizations. Conference participants attended APA's **2009 Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards** ceremony, where exemplary organizations were recognized for their achievements in promoting employee health and well-being and organizational performance.
- ▶ Increasingly, APA and APAPO are using **social media to enhance community outreach efforts and foster connections among psychologists and others**. Both the Public Education Campaign and the Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program have incorporated social networking tools including Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter into their communications strategies.
- ▶ Staff of the **APA Disaster Response Network (DRN) collaborated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** to prepare educational materials for the public about psychological aspects of H1N1 influenza. A new Online Deployment Kit for DRN members who provide crisis support in their local communities includes resources on cultural awareness and self-care.

A glimpse at 2010:

"Faces of Practicing Psychologists," a new element of APA's Public Education Campaign, will emphasize psychologists' roles in health promotion and disease prevention and illustrate many ways that psychologists help people develop skills and implement strategies for healthier living.

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Important Information

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Introducing PRACTICE CENTRAL

The APA Practice Organization is pleased to announce the launch of a new online home for members. Our revamped Web site, **Practice Central at apapracticecentral.org**, offers one-stop access to a wide variety of resources and products tailored to practicing psychologists, including:

- **Continuing Education (CE) courses** and other professional development resources
- Guidance and updates on **legislative and legal issues** for practitioners
- How to use **billing codes and other practical pointers** on reimbursement
- Information to help **build, manage, market and diversify** your psychology practice
- and much more

New resources are being added regularly, so please visit often!



apapracticecentral.org



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