

## PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY OF DELAWARE (PSD) - Report to Area 3 – March 23, 2019

### **MEMBER SERVICES**

Member recruitment, retention and engagement remain top priorities for our organization. PSD continues to encourage psychiatrists to be engaged in organized Psychiatry as well as other health-related organizations and initiatives within the State. We actively engage with other organizations, state agencies and professionals to realize common goals and to create a stronger mental health community in Delaware. Our annual symposium, biannual digital newsletter, *The Delaware Psychiatrist* and our monthly business meetings are all opportunities for interaction and sharing that support our recruitment and engagement goals. We are also exploring mentor groups and education opportunities that support and engage our psychiatry residents and early career psychiatrists.

### **ADVOCACY**

The 150<sup>th</sup> Delaware General Assembly (GA) officially convened on January 9, 2019. The midterm elections brought substantial turnover with several new members elected to the GA and Democrats gaining a seat in each chamber. Democrats now hold a 12-9 lead in the Senate and a 26-15 lead in the House. In addition, Kathleen Jennings, Esq. (Democrat) was elected Attorney General (AG) as well as Democrats taking the Auditor and Treasurer positions. A top priority will be to maintain our current relationships with legislators and to build relationships with new GA members and the AG. These relationships will be critical to our efforts related to mandatory reporting modernization, maintenance of certification (MOC), physician assisted suicide and scope of practice. We will continue to work in close collaboration with MSD and other stakeholders on these issues as well as other issues that impact patients and the practice of medicine to include:

**Collaborative Care:** Efforts are ongoing to expand access to mental and behavioral health care through the primary care setting. Collaborative care in private insurance legislation that would create a potential model for coverage for Psychiatric Collaborative Care Model (CoCM) codes is being considered. Discussions are currently underway with Delaware Medicaid about also reimbursing for the CoCM codes.

**Mental Health & Guns:** [HB302](#) is a 2018 piece of legislation that creates a mechanism to remove firearms from persons who are a danger to self or a danger to others, while ensuring due process. A last-minute amendment to the legislation had the unintended consequence of making the *Tarasoff* reporting statute for mental health professionals unworkable. The statute was already damaged from a procedural change under the Department of Justice (DOJ) settlement regarding treatment of the mentally ill, but HB 302 has made the need to revisit the statute immediate.

**Mental Health Parity:** [SB230](#) of 2018 imports federal mental health parity reporting requirements to the state level. The next step will be implementation of the parity legislation with the Delaware Department of Insurance (DOI) and Department of Delaware Division of Medicaid & Medical Assistance (DMMA).

**Primary Care:** [SB227](#) of 2018 sets the reimbursement floor for primary care services at Medicare. A Primary Care Reform Collaborative (PCRC) was created under the Delaware Health Care Commission to study and develop recommendations. Ongoing engagement through the legislative process will be critical to strengthening the primary care system in Delaware.

### **EDUCATION**

Planning is currently underway for the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Psychiatric Society of Delaware Symposium on Saturday, September 21, 2019 at MSD Conference Center in Newark, Delaware. Confirmed speakers and lecture topics include Kenneth Weiss, MD on forensics, Jeffrey Geller, MD on the future of mental health in a changing health care delivery system, Michele Angello, PhD on gender fluidity and Chris Streeter, MD on yoga as a mono and adjunctive addition to traditional treatment.

### **STANDARDS, QUALITY OF CARE AND HEALTH ECONOMICS**

The Behavioral Health Consortium (BHC) released its initial report in May 2018 outlining a multiyear strategy to combat addiction, increase integration of services, develop a strong workforce pipeline, eliminate the stigma of behavioral health, and prevent future Delawareans from struggling with addiction and a lack of needed services. The BHC continues to meet monthly to discuss addiction and mental health challenges and opportunities in the state and has formed six committees to address specific recommendations of the BHC report. The state partnered with Pew Charitable Trusts in July 2018 to improve access to addiction treatment in the state. PEW assessed the state's system and concluded the need to increase access to Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder especially within the correctional system. Their suggestions to improve the system are to adopt an assessment tool, reduce telemedicine prescribing restrictions for buprenorphine, increase the number of buprenorphine prescribers and allow more PAs to prescribe buprenorphine even if their supervising physician does not have a buprenorphine waiver. We will continue to work with PEW and other stakeholders to address Delaware's major addiction and mental health challenges in ways that balance access with quality of care and patient safety.

### **STRENGTH OF ORGANIZATION**

Member engagement, outreach and recruitment of non-member psychiatrists, advocacy and building and maintaining collaborative relationships will continue to be organizational priorities. PSD will continue to build upon the successes of its current programs and initiatives moving forward.

Respectfully submitted,

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