

PENNSYLVANIA PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY REPORT TO AREA 3

March 3, 2018

Member Services: Recruitment/retention efforts continue in earnest at our state/chapter levels. The APA recently unveiled their Distinguished Fellowship application process for 2018. The Society is focusing on parsing out materials to eligible members and to chapter presidents/membership committee members to encourage application. Our chapters continue to hold various events to educate and inform member/nonmembers on networking opportunities, benefits of membership, malpractice insurance/risk management topics and on future PaPS leadership opportunities. For more information, check out our website.

Our annual scientific educational meeting was held on Saturday, November 11th at the Chubb Conference Center in Lafayette Hill (simulcast to the Doubletree Hotel and Conference Center in Pittsburgh). This CME event satisfies patient safety/risk management licensure requirements. It was well-attended and was another successful, informative event.

Advocacy: Governor Wolf unveiled his proposed 2018-2019 state budget in early February. After the inability of his administration to consolidate four departments, this year's proposal includes the consolidation of only the Departments of Health and Human Services (which have already consolidated many of their initiatives). PaPS is involved with the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Leadership Council in its efforts to address the crisis in public service psychiatry in the state as well with the Coalition for the Common Health to take advantage of plans to consolidate health and human services and to promote integration of physical and behavioral health. The constitutional deadline for enacting the state budget is June 30, 2018.

The Wolf Administration also continues to create initiatives to fight against the heroin/opioid overdose crisis. In early January, Governor Wolf issued a disaster emergency proclamation to address this public health crisis. Significant funding for the expanded use of Medication Assisted Treatment was included in this current proposed state budget. The Society has been working closely with the PA College of Emergency Physicians, the PA Medical Society (PAMED) and the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of PA (HAP) to oppose proposed legislation to amend current law to mandate involuntary commitment for substance use and any other proposals that negatively impact patient care, pose barriers to care or perpetuate stigma for individuals with substance use needs. For more information about our legislative agenda, contact our executive director.

Collaboration with our partners at the PAMED and with our fellow medical specialty organization colleagues continues a variety of issues, including on out of network billing, prior authorization, psychiatric bed tracking, mental health parity, criminal justice and Assisted Outpatient Treatment.

Opposing legislative efforts related to scope of practice expansion for CRNPs, social workers, marriage/family therapists and licensed professional counselors are a top priority for the Society. Senate Bill 530, with amendments seeking to allow diagnostic ability for licensed clinical social workers, licensed marriage and family therapists, and licensed professional counselors, is now on the fast track for approval in the House and enacted by the governor. Although we have been told that this is already a "done deal", the Society has expressed opposition and will be drafting a letter to send to key House staffers and legislators.

The Society is also looking into the city of Philadelphia's proposal to create Safe Injection Sites to reduce overdose deaths. Our council approved a motion to request that the APA provide guidance and/or research this issue if a position is not already in place. Stay tuned.

With a gubernatorial election and a dearth of retiring state House and Senate members, we anticipate a very busy year. Please contact Deborah Ann Shoemaker, Executive Director and Lobbyist, with any additional questions or if you need more information.

Respectfully Submitted,
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