

PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY OF DELAWARE (PSD) - Report to Area 3 – March 10, 2018

MEMBER SERVICES

PSD continues its efforts to encourage psychiatrists to be engaged in organized Psychiatry, contribute to the profession, and to serve the professional needs of its members through the programs and initiatives that we offer. We value cooperation and inclusion; we are actively working to engage and collaborate with other health-related organizations and professionals to realize common goals. Our biannual digital newsletter, *The Delaware Psychiatrist*, offers PSD members, members of the Delaware Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (DCCAP), and psychiatry residents at Delaware Psychiatric Center (DPC) the opportunity to share articles, news and opinions with their colleagues. Our annual symposium continues to offer high quality mental health education on timely topics of interest to psychiatrist and other mental health professionals. PSD continues to work in close cooperation with the Medical Society of Delaware (MSD) on priority legislative and regulatory issues such as mandatory reporting modernization and maintenance of certification (MOC).

ADVOCACY

The 149th Delaware General Assembly reconvened on January 9, 2018 and is shaping up to be a busy legislative session. PSD is tracking and working on several bills to include:

Guns (HB302): This legislation is similar to the HB88 of 2013 which PSD helped draft in concert with the Attorney General's office. It turned on behavior rather than on any specific diagnosis. Although that legislation passed the House unanimously, it failed in a surprising vote in the Senate. As the issue is revisited years later, two substantially-similar bills have surfaced based off of HB88. PSD has worked with the Delaware State Sportsmen's Association (DSSA) in drafting a HB285. HB302 picks up where HB88 left off and it appears that HB302 will be the bill that moves forward. PSD supports HB302 but will work with both to ensure that they balance due process rights of persons with mental health issues with regulating gun access.

Physician Assisted Suicide/Medical Aid in Dying (HB160): The Delaware End of Life Options Act provides for physician assisted suicide for terminally ill adults nearing their death and the patient steps necessary for making the request. PSD and MSD jointly oppose this bill as antithetical and a detriment to the entire care delivery system in Delaware. Our position has and continues to be that aid in dying should not be part of a treatment plan; doctors should be distinct and apart from intentionally ending life and doing so should always be unacceptable to the house of medicine. PSD supports efforts to improve and expand access to palliative care for the terminally ill.

Recreational Marijuana (HB110): The proposed Delaware Marijuana Control Act regulates and taxes marijuana in a similar manner as alcohol. It allows individuals over age 21 to possess, recreationally use, purchase, or transport one (1) ounce or less of marijuana. PSD continues to oppose legalization of marijuana based on the lack of sufficient data to make informed, evidence-based decisions regarding safety, efficacy, tolerability, drug-drug interactions, and psychiatric ramifications.

Benzodiazepine: A draft bill has been circulated but not filed concerning the use and education of co-prescribing opiates and Benzodiazepine and Nonbenzodiazepine Hypnotics. It would require practitioners to obtain consent from minor patients' parents prior to prescribing these drugs, and pharmacists to include a cautionary statement explaining the risks associated with the long term use of these drugs. PSD is against the legislature practicing medicine and this bill would be substantially burdensome to patients.

Insurance Denials: We support new regulations being promulgated by the AG's office related to medical necessity approval for addiction treatment. We favor reducing the barriers to improve access and to expedite care. More efforts in this important area are expected and PSD hopes to continue to serve as a positive partner.

EDUCATION

Planning is currently underway for the 7th Annual Psychiatric Society of Delaware Symposium on Saturday, September 22, 2018 at MSD Conference Center in Newark, Delaware.

STANDARDS, QUALITY OF CARE AND HEALTH ECONOMICS

Delaware continues to make progress in the adoption of value-based payment reform strategies and has made investments in transitioning to value-based payment models. The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) has proposed the health care spending benchmark plan, Delaware's Road to Value, which is designed to transform health care and improve health in Delaware. While we understand the need to keep care affordable and accessible for patients, PSD has reservations about the DHSS proposed benchmarking plan. The need for transparency in all fee/monetary issues related to physician incentives and risk-bearing is paramount. PSD will continue to support MSD efforts in addressing the cost question, while working to avoid any intentional or unintentional "anti-provider" orientation.

STRENGTH OF ORGANIZATION

PSD successfully amended its bylaws effective October 20, 2017. We remain firm in our efforts against Maintenance of Certification (MOC) and are supportive of alternative, non-exclusionary, pathways to demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning. We will continue to represent the interest of our membership on this issue and support an Action Paper to abolish MOC. Other top priorities are member engagement and outreach and recruitment of non-member psychiatrists. PSD will continue to: advocate for our profession; build and maintain collaborative relationships; provide professional education and other opportunities for our members to engage and network with colleagues; communicate important information and resources and; serve as an outlet for psychiatrists to be heard.

Respectfully submitted,

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