

ACTION PAPER

TITLE: Changing the name of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) to: The American Psychiatric Physicians Association (APPA)

WHEREAS:

*All members of the APA are medical students, residents in training, and physicians with 12 or more years of medical education and clinical training for general members and fellows

*The general public generally does not know the difference between psychiatrists and other mental health professionals who carry a title of Dr., including psychologists and a growing number of nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

*Psychiatric physicians are routinely lumped with non-physicians, and referred to as “providers”

*Psychiatric practice requires extensive application of medical knowledge and clinical experience for diagnosis, selection of appropriate treatment options, ongoing medical monitoring to assess the efficacy, safety, and tolerability of psychotropic medications and their interactions with non-psychiatric medications. This is in addition to training in a variety of psychotherapy techniques that can be used in conjunction with medical somatic treatments and pharmacotherapy .

*Major search engines such as Google display the American Psychological Association when the term “APA” is entered online

*Identifying psychiatrists as medical specialists in the name of our organization will emphasize that psychiatric disorders are medical disorders in the same way that hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disorders, etc. are medical disorders

*Seeking care from a physician rather than a non-physician mental health practitioner may increase the likelihood of seeking help among the millions who are reluctant to come forward for evaluation and treatment of psychiatric illness

*The original name of our association has been changed 3 times since its establishment 175 years ago, the last time a century ago in 1920 to APA, so there is precedent for this.¹ A number of APA district branches have also changed their names to include “Psychiatric Physician” or “Medical Association” in their names.²

BE IT RESOLVED

That the APA Board will initiate a study to explore the financial, organizational, and public relations implications, as well as the membership's interests in changing the name of our organization to The American Psychiatric Physicians Association (APPA) and report back to the Assembly on its findings at the November 2020 Assembly meeting

¹ Walter E. Barton: The History and Influence of the American Psychiatric Association. American Psychiatric Press, 1987

Nasrallah HA: 20 Reasons to celebrate our APA membership in 2020. Current Psychiatry 19: 6-9, 2020

² DB's that use “Psychiatric Physicians” in their name are those in the following states: **AL, GA, IA, ME, MO, OH, OK, OR, TX, WY, e.g. “Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association”**.

DB's that use “Medical Association in their names” are in: HI, KY, LA, NM, e.g. Hawaii Psychiatric Medical Association, Psychiatric Medical Association of New Mexico.

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