

## **FROM KATHERINE B. MCGUIRE, APA CHIEF ADVOCACY OFFICER**

For the Week of June 28, 2019

APA action this week includes urging the Trump administration to provide proper care and humanitarian aid for immigrants, supporting research on key issues, protecting programs that fund psychology graduate education and advancing telehealth for Medicare patients.

Like Congress, the Weekly Update and many APA staff will be off next week to celebrate the Fourth of July holiday. Happy Holiday!

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### **Advocating for Humane Treatment of Immigrants**

APA CEO Arthur C. Evans Jr., PhD, sent a [letter](#) to President Donald Trump expressing the association's "shock and dismay about the burgeoning humanitarian crisis at the border and in U.S.-run detention facilities." Evans strongly emphasized the need for the Trump administration to work with Congress to enact legislation to increase funding to deliver care, improve nutrition and train personnel to provide proper care for these immigrants, especially the children. He cited empirical evidence of the psychological harm experienced when children and parents are separated and encouraged the president to honor his "commitment to a more humane practice of housing families together."

*For more information, contact Serena Dávila, JD, at [sdavila@apa.org](mailto:sdavila@apa.org).*

### **Preserving the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program**

More than 40 psychologists and students from 26 states advocated on Capitol Hill for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program under the Higher Education Act. The program provides loan forgiveness for those who make 120 loan repayments on their federal direct loans while working in qualified public service employment settings, including public schools, prisons, VA medical centers and community health centers. APA's team of Federal Education Advocacy Coordinators met with more than 100 congressional offices, highlighting how the program has reduced financial barriers for psychologists and expands access to critical behavioral health services. Their message was echoed by more than 650 members of APA's grassroots network who responded to an APA action alert, sending an additional 1,650 messages to Congress. As part of this advocacy effort, APA President Rosie Phillips Davis, PhD, met with Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), chair of the Senate committee rewriting the Higher Education Act, to seek his support. Thank you to all our APA advocates!

*For more information, contact Karen Studwell, JD, [kstudwell@apa.org](mailto:kstudwell@apa.org).*

### **Supporting Federal Investments in Graduate Study**

APA is also advocating that the revisions of the Higher Education Act increase federal investments in graduate study. APA sent a [letter](#) commending the reintroduction of the POST GRAD Act and signed on to a [letter](#) in support of the Grad PLUS Loan program in coordination with fellow education organizations. The POST GRAD Act, reintroduced by Rep. Judy Chu (D-Calif.) restores eligibility for the student loan interest subsidy to graduate students. The Grad PLUS Loan program offers federal loans to graduate students at lower rates than would be available through the private market. APA advocates in support of Grad PLUS and the POST GRAD Act as one way to improve access to graduate education for students pursuing study in doctoral psychology.

*For more information, contact Karen Studwell, JD, [kstudwell@apa.org](mailto:kstudwell@apa.org).*

### **Supporting Research on Cannabidiol and Marijuana**

More bills on cannabis have been introduced than ever before. APA understands the importance of these bills—especially those related to research—and the growing need to understand the basic pharmacology and effects of cannabinoids. Through the Friends of the National Institute on Drug Abuse coalition, APA drafted and solicited support for a [letter](#) to Sens. Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.), Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii), applauding their initiative to reduce regulatory burden and facilitate further research on cannabis through sponsorship of the [Cannabidiol and Marijuana Research Expansion Act \(S.1276\)](#). If enacted, [the bill would help expand the scientific research base](#) to answer critical questions about potential therapeutic effects and possible health consequences of cannabis and its constituent compounds.

*For more information, contact Geoff Mumford, PhD, at [gmumford@apa.org](mailto:gmumford@apa.org).*

### **Providing Input on the Future of Rehabilitation Research**

APA worked with Div. 22 (Rehabilitation Psychology) to submit [comments](#) to a National Institutes of Health committee that is updating the research plan for the National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research. The comments called for exploring the intersection of biopsychosocial factors related to disability; investigating both the impairment associated with the aging process and aging with disability; and expanding work on technologies that foster people's independence, such as automatic vehicles, mobile health technology and virtual reality. Div. 22 also provided NIH with extensive [supplemental information](#) for NIH's consideration.

*For more information, contact Craig Fisher at [cfisher@apa.org](mailto:cfisher@apa.org).*

### **Securing Psychology's Role in the Future of Artificial Intelligence**

The newly released strategic plan for federal research and development of artificial intelligence (AI) includes many of the priorities APA requested in its [comments](#) on the plan last fall. The new [plan](#) from the National Science & Technology Council's Select Committee on AI calls for:

- Bringing together computational, behavioral, cognitive and psychological scientists, engineers and technical experts from other domains to develop effective methods for human-AI collaboration.
- Considering the perspectives of the social and behavioral sciences to ensure inclusivity and account for varying cultural contexts, individual differences and potential adverse biases in addressing the ethical, legal and societal implications of AI.
- Involving experts from fields key to AI and machine learning in multidisciplinary teams including cognitive science and psychology, computer and information scientists, in developing the AI R&D workforce.
- Recognizing that the convergence between information science and psychology led to today's deep learning systems as the nation seeks to expand public-private partnerships to accelerate advances in AI.

*For more information, contact Shannon Wood at [swood@apa.org](mailto:swood@apa.org).*

### **Supporting Increased Funding for HIV Research**

Since 2003, funding for NIH HIV/AIDS research has failed to keep up with overall increases to the NIH, leaving fewer resources to fund promising new research. As a member of the Research Work Group of the Federal AIDS Policy Partnership, APA signed a letter to Senate appropriators urging them to support increased funding for HIV/AIDS research in the FY 2020 Labor, Health, and Human Services and Education appropriations bill. The letter calls for an overall FY 2020 funding level of at least \$41.6 billion for NIH, per the research coalition request. It also urges the committee to direct NIH to increase funding for HIV/AIDS research commensurate to the same percentage increase in NIH overall funding for the Office of AIDS Research.

*For more information, contact Leo Rennie at [lrennie@apa.org](mailto:lrennie@apa.org).*

### **Advancing Telehealth and Receiving Appreciation for Advocacy**

Rep. Suzan DelBene (D-Wash.) [recognized APA's advocacy](#) at the House Ways and Means Committee review of Chairman Richard Neal (D-Mass.) and Ranking Member Kevin Brady's (R-Texas) health-care legislation, the Beneficiary Education Tools, Telehealth and Extenders Reauthorization Act of 2019, ([H.R. 3417](#); BETTER Act). The bill includes Medicare legislation psychologists advocated for during the APA Practice Leadership Conference in March (The Medicare Mental Health Telemedicine Expansion Act, [H.R. 1301](#)). APA sent a [letter of thanks](#) to committee leadership for including these provisions. Significantly, the telehealth provision advanced by the committee now includes CPT code 90832 (30 minutes psychotherapy) along with CPT codes 90834 and 90837 (45 and 60 minutes) for the delivery of Medicare telehealth services in a patient's home.

*For more information, contact Laurel Stine at [lstine@apa.org](mailto:lstine@apa.org).*

### **Speaking About Animal Research at Research Society on Alcoholism Meeting**

APA gave a presentation at the annual meeting of the Research Society on Alcoholism (RSA) about the need for more advocacy on research with animals. Basic research with nonhuman animals is under attack from several organizations with close ties to Capitol Hill, including People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and White Coat Waste. Scientific organizations such as APA urge their members to speak more openly about the importance of animal models. RSA and APA work together on these issues in an APA-led coalition, Supporting Truth about Animal Research.

*For more information, contact Pat Kobor at [pkobor@apa.org](mailto:pkobor@apa.org).*

### **Celebrating Funding Wins for Psychology and Mental Health**

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a five-bill funding package for Fiscal Year 2020 that includes significant increases for APA-supported programs and policies. Critical provisions in the bill would increase research funding at National Science Foundation and the Department of Justice, advance APA's priorities for veterans and improve the criminal justice system's response to communities, including victims of violence and people with mental illness and substance use disorders. The funding package now heads to the Senate, where APA will advocate to maintain these important funding streams.

*For more information, contact Amalia Corby at [acorby-edwards@apa.org](mailto:acorby-edwards@apa.org).*

### **Supporting Access to Treatment for Substance Use Disorder in Jails and Prisons**

APA endorsed bipartisan efforts to help correctional facilities provide medication assisted treatment (MAT) in jails and prisons. The [CREATE \(Community Re-Entry through Addiction Treatment to Enhance\) Opportunities Act](#), sponsored by Reps. Anne Kuster (D-N.H.) and Senator Ed Markey (D-Mass.), creates a funding stream for jails and prisons to provide MAT to justice-involved individuals. The legislation also requires recipients to connect those individuals to ongoing treatment upon re-entry into society. MAT programs delivered in correctional facilities can reduce overdose deaths upon re-entry by 60% and increase the chances for people in the justice system to experience a successful and safe return to their communities.

*For more information, contact Amalia Corby at [acorby-edwards@apa.org](mailto:acorby-edwards@apa.org).*

### **Safeguarding Psychologists in the Fight to Lower Health-Care Costs**

This week, the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee passed a revised version of the [Lower Health Care Costs Act of 2019 \(S. 1895\)](#). APA [submitted comments](#) supporting the draft version of the bill but recommended changes to protect psychologists against potentially burdensome new requirements. The committee incorporated most of APA's recommendations, including provisions that would strengthen the enforcement of parity for mental health and substance use disorder coverage, require health plans to update their provider directories, include efforts to lessen the burden on providers in billing for services and give cost-sharing information to patients in a timely manner. The legislation is expected to be considered on the Senate floor by summer's end. *For more information, contact Ian Clark at [iclark@apa.org](mailto:iclark@apa.org), Amalia Corby at [acorby-edwards@apa.org](mailto:acorby-edwards@apa.org) or Laurel Stine at [lstine@apa.org](mailto:lstine@apa.org).*