

FROM KATHERINE B. MCGUIRE, APA CHIEF ADVOCACY OFFICER

For the Week of Jan. 13–17, 2020

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Providing a Statement on the Regulatory Burden for Cannabis Researchers

On Jan. 15, the House Energy and Commerce Committee’s Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled “Cannabis Policies for the New Decade.” A [memorandum](#) from Committee Chair Frank Pallone (D-N.J.) set the stage for the hearing and outlined the bureaucratic hurdles facing scientists who are interested in studying the effects of cannabis. APA submitted a [statement](#) for the hearing record echoing those themes and challenging the role of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), which sets unnecessarily stringent security requirements for the storage of cannabis and requires redundant scientific protocol reviews that are also conducted by local institutional review boards and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The subcommittee heard testimony from the [DEA](#), [FDA](#) and the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#), which is currently the sole supplier of research-grade cannabis.

For more information, contact Geoff Mumford, PhD, at gmumford@apa.org.

Expanding Early Childhood Mental Health Services through Head Start

Rep. Mark DeSaulnier (D-Calif.) introduced [H.R. 5569](#), the Early Childhood Mental Health Support Act of 2020, with APA’s endorsement. The [press release](#) features a quote from APA CEO Arthur C. Evans Jr., PhD, who stressed the critical importance of early childhood in setting the foundation for healthy development. The legislation creates grants to implement evidenced-based and promising programs at Head Start centers, which promote healthy social-emotional development in young children. APA worked with Rep. DeSaulnier’s office to develop and strengthen the bill, including its emphasis on trauma-informed, culturally and developmentally appropriate interventions.

For more information, contact Cynthia Whitney, MPA, at cmalley@apa.org.

Sharing Suicide Prevention Priorities with the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute

APA advocacy staff were invited by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), the federal agency dedicated to funding studies “that can help patients and those who care for them make better-informed health-care choices,” to share priorities around suicide prevention at a recent stakeholder workshop. [Workshop](#) topics included the effectiveness of crisis services, the need for more data to inform suicide screening measures, and concerns about ethical and scientific issues in the use of predictive analytics. APA staff raised additional priorities around how suicidality on social media is handled and the need for more data to inform current legislation focused on suicide prevention in a variety of populations. The archived webinar is available on PCORI’s [website](#).

For more information, contact Angela Sharpe, MG, at asharpe@apa.org or Heather O’Beirne Kelly, PhD, at hkelly@apa.org.

Building Momentum in Campaign to Increase Access to Mental Health Services

APA’s federal-state campaign to secure 100 co-sponsors for the bipartisan Medicare Mental Health Access Act ([H.R. 884/S.2772](#)) has now yielded a record 53 House co-sponsors. Rep. Dean Phillips (D-Minn.) and Rep. Tom Emmer (R-Minn.) co-sponsored this critical legislation that would eliminate Medicare’s requirement that clinical psychologists first obtain physician approval before seeing patients in certain settings. The two Minnesota Congressmen are first time co-sponsors and signed onto the bill after district meetings with psychologists in their state. They join 51 other congressional colleagues in co-sponsoring this legislation.

For more information, contact Laurel Stine, JD, at lstine@apa.org or Scott Barstow, MS, at sbarstow@apa.org.

Advocating for Regulatory Changes

APA submitted comments to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on scope of practice issues in response to a Request for Feedback from the agency. APA asked CMS to support the bipartisan Medicare Mental Health Access Act ([H.R. 884/S. 2772](#)), legislation that removes burdensome physician oversight requirements in Medicare, and highlighted specific regulatory changes. Additionally, APA advocated for finalizing a previously proposed regulation to allow funding for psychology internship training and clinical training programs.

For more information please contact Diane Pedulla, JD, at dpedulla@apa.org

Welcoming New Members of APA's Advocacy Coordinating Committee

APA's Advocacy Coordinating Committee (ACC) held its first meeting to welcome five new members. The 14-member committee leads APA's efforts to advance the recently adopted [advocacy priorities](#) and to seek input from APA's diverse membership on the policy issues that are most important to the discipline and work of psychologists.

The ACC members are: Chair: Sara Jo Nixon, PhD (2019–20), Past Chair: Antonio Puente, PhD (2019-20), Tara Behrend, PhD (2020–22), Sharon Berry, PhD (2019–20), Ayli Carrero Pinedo, MA (2020–22), Kathleen Brown, PhD (2019–21), Zeeshan Butt, PhD (2019–20), Lucinda DeGrange, PhD (2019–20), Robert G. Frank, PhD (2019–21), April Harris-Britt, PhD (2019–21), Chuck Hollister, PhD (2020–22), Steve Kozlowski, PhD (2019–21), Karen Postal, PhD, ABPP-CN (2020–22), William Stoops, PhD (2020–22).