

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

For the Week of November 4–8, 2019

### In this issue:

- **Securing Senate Introduction of the Medicare Mental Health Access Act—[Help Us Now!](#)**
- **Partnering with Div. 19 on Advocacy Strategies for More Impact**
- **Urging Congress to Support the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program**
- **Calling for Congress to Support Clinical Effectiveness Research**

### **Securing Senate Introduction of the Medicare Mental Health Access Act—[Help Us Now!](#)**

This week, Sens. [Sherrod Brown \(D-Ohio\)](#), Susan Collins (R-Maine) and [Kirsten Gillibrand \(D-N.Y.\)](#) introduced the Medicare Mental Health Access Act (S. 2772), legislation that would eliminate Medicare's requirement that clinical psychologists first obtain physician approval before seeing patients in certain settings, such as outpatient rehabilitation programs and partial hospitalization programs. APA has been diligently working behind the scenes with several Senate offices to secure introduction of the legislation as the companion to the House bill (H.R. 884) introduced earlier this year by Rep. Judy Chu (D-Calif.), a psychologist, joined by Reps. Markwayne Mullin (R-Okla.), Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) and Jason Smith (R-Mo.). Medicare's physician approval requirement is unnecessary, harmful to patients and outdated; no other health insurance provider requires physician approval before a patient can see a psychologist.

**You can help further this legislation now by [emailing](#) your senators and representatives to ask them to co-sponsor this legislation.**

*For more information, contact Laurel Stine, JD, at [lstine@apa.org](mailto:lstine@apa.org), or Scott Barstow, MS, at [sbarstow@apa.org](mailto:sbarstow@apa.org).*

### **Partnering with Div. 19 on Advocacy Strategies for More Impact**

APA's Div. 19 (Society for Military Psychology) joined forces this week with the DC Psychological Association to host their first Washington, D.C., Advocacy Summit on military psychology, focusing on such key issues as trauma and suicide prevention. APA President Dr. Rosie Phillips Davis and advocacy staff outlined APA's strategic goals for advocacy and impact; highlighted areas of ongoing collaboration with the division; and updated attendees on federal advocacy efforts related to military personnel, families, caregivers and the psychologists who serve them. On the first day of the summit, chairs of Div. 19's new internal "think tanks" presented briefs and advocacy ideas for topics including military suicide prevention, trauma and moral injury, leadership and coaching, and personnel selection. On the second day of the summit, Div. 19 members offered consulting services to community nonprofits serving military and veteran populations.

*For more information, contact Heather O'Beirne Kelly, PhD, at [hkelly@apa.org](mailto:hkelly@apa.org).*

### **Urging Congress to Support the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program**

APA joined the Coalition to Preserve PSLF for its advocacy campaign in support of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. The two-day event included meetings with select congressional offices, as well as video interviews with professionals in public service who rely on PSLF. The videos will be used by the coalition in future advocacy efforts to put a human face on the issue. Dr. Eddy Ameen of APA joined participants from five other organizations representing teachers, public defenders and veterinarians. "Psychologists fill a vital need in society but amass a high burden of student debt along the way. Communities benefit from placing us in areas of great public need, so we're on the Hill to ensure that lawmakers remain committed to this critical program," Ameen said.

*For more information, contact Kenneth Polishchuk at [kpolishchuk@apa.org](mailto:kpolishchuk@apa.org).*

### **Calling for Congress to Support Clinical Effectiveness Research**

APA is urging Congress to reauthorize the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), established in 2010 to investigate the relative effectiveness of treatments. In a letter to the [House](#) Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce committees and the [Senate](#) Finance Committee, APA and the [Friends of PCORI Reauthorization](#) asked Congress to maintain PCORI's funding and continue the institute's mandate to conduct

comparative clinical effectiveness research (CER). PCORI is the only research organization dedicated to funding CER. The extension of the PCORI Trust Fund in the recently passed Continuing Resolution ([H.R. 4378/Public Law 115-59](#)) did not include the funding mechanisms necessary to allow PCORI to receive fiscal year 2020 funding. Without this funding, PCORI is unable to fund new research.

*For more information, contact Angela L. Sharpe, MG, at [asharpe@apa.org](mailto:asharpe@apa.org).*